**PART 4: HEART and SPIRITUAL PREPARATION**

***13****Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*(1 Peter 1:13)*

**Welcome to Heart and Spiritual Preparation**. We treat this preparation as seriously as we do support raising, buying plane tickets, and packing lists. Engaging your heart in preparation for this summer is one of the best ways that you can get ready.

**CONTENTS**

* **How to Use This Material**
* **The True Gospel Story**
* **Walking in the Spirit**
* **Who I am in Christ**
* **Three Enemies**
* **Fighting the Battle**
* **Crossing Cultures**
* **Team Unity**
* **The *Jacked* Study**
* **Other Resources**

**How to Use This Material**

This material is split into seven sections as well as reading *Jacked,* a book you will receive in your acceptance packet. There are two sections for March, three for April, and another two for May. We suggest you set aside three or four times each month to sit down and really spend good time on this. It could be during a quiet time or on a weekend. Whatever time works best for you to engage with God’s word as well as how he is working in your heart. Then for the book you’ll need about five weeks to work through one devotional each day. **You’ll need this packet, a Bible, notebook/journal, and pen.** We suggest you use a journal you’d be willing to bring on with you.

We’ve dedicated May and June (until you leave) to read *Jacked*. It’s not long, but if you think you’ll need more time, start as soon as you want. Just be sure to give yourself enough time to both read and reflect on each chapter before boarding your plane.

**Reflection Questions:** Be sure to work through the questions in the box at the end of each section. These are what your coach will use to check in on your progress.

**DISCLAIMER:** Even if you’ve been on an MK2MK Summer Mission before, you still need to complete this preparation. We’ve edited and updated it, so read on to see what’s new.

**MARCH Part 1: The True Story of the Gospel**

“A richer way to understand the gospel is as a *story* – the true Story that speaks to our purest aspirations and deepest longings. This Great Story has four chapters.” \*

**CREATION: THE WORLD WE WERE MADE FOR**

* **Read Genesis 1:1-31** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What does it say about God?
* What does it say about Man?
* What does it say about God’s Creation?

“The story begins, not with us, but with God. Deep down, we have a sense that this is true. We sense that we are important – that there is something dignified, majestic, and eternal about humanity. But we also know that we are not ultimate. Something (or Someone) greater than us exists.

The Bible tells us that this Someone is the one infinite, eternal, and unchanging God who created all things out of nothing **(Genesis 1:1-31)**. This one God exists in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit **(Matthew 28:19).** Because God is Triune in his being, he wasn’t motivated to create the world because he *needed* something – be it relationship, worship, or glory. Rather, he created out of the overflow of his perfection – his own love, goodness, and glory. God made human beings in his image **(Genesis 1:27),** which is what gives us our dignity and value. He also made us *human*, which means we are created beings, dependent on our Creator. We were made to worship, enjoy, love, and serve him, not ourselves.

In God’s original creation, everything was good. The world existed in perfect peace, stability, harmony, and wholeness.” (p. 7-8)

**FALL: THE CORRUPTION OF EVERYTHING**

* **Read Genesis 3:1-7** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What does it say about God?
* What does it say about Man?
* What do does it say about Sin?
* **Read Romans 6: 15-23** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What does it say about Sin?
* What does it say about righteousness?

“God created us to worship, enjoy, love, and serve him. But rather than live under God’s authority, humanity turned away from God in sinful rebellion **(Genesis 3:1-7, Isaiah 53:6).** Our defection plunged the whole world into the darkness and chaos of sin. Though vestiges of good remain, the wholeness and harmony of God’s original creation is shattered.

As a result, all human beings are sinners by nature and by choice **(Ephesians 2:1-3).** We often excuse our sin by claiming that we’re “not that bad” – after all, we can always find someone who is worse than we are! But this evasion only reveals our shallow and superficial view of sin. Sin is not primarily an *action*; it’s a *disposition*. It’s our soul’s aversion to God. Sin is manifested in our pride, our selfishness, our independence, and our lack of love for God and others. Sometimes sin is very obvious and external; other times it’s hidden and internal. But “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” **(Romans 3:23).**

Sin brings two drastic consequences into our lives. First *sin enslaves us* **(Romans 6:17-18).** When we turn *from* God, we turn *to* other things to find our life, our identity, our meaning, and our happiness. These things become substitute gods – what the Bible calls idols – and they soon enslave us, demanding our time, our energy, our loyalty, our money – everything we are and have. They begin to rule over our lives and hearts. This is why the bible describes sin as something that “masters” us **(Romans 6:14 NIV).** Sin causes us to “serve created things rather than the Creator” **(Romans 1:25 NIV).**

Second, *sin brings condemnation*. We’re not just enslaved by our sin; we’re *guilty* because of it. We stand condemned before the Judge of heave and earth. “The wages of sin is death” **(Romans 6:23)**. We are under a death sentence for our cosmic treason against the holiness and justice of God. His righteous anger toward sin stands over us **(Nahum 1:2; John 3:36)**.” (p. 8)

**REDEMPTION: JESUS COMES TO SAVE US**

* **Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What is the gospel according to Paul here?
* **Read 1 John 4:7-21** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What does it say about God?
* What does it say about Man?
* What does it say about God’s love?

“Every good story has a hero. And the hero of the Gospel Story is Jesus. Humanity needs a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer to free us from the bondage and condemnation of sin and to restore the world to its original good. This Rescuer must be *truly human* in order to pay the debt we owe to God. But he can’t be *merely human* because he must conquer sin. We need a Substitute – one who can live the life of obedience we’ve failed to live, and who can stand in our place to bear the punishment we deserve for our disobedience and sin.

This is why God sent Jesus into the world to be our substitute **(1 John 4:14).** The Bible teaches that Jesus was fully God – the second person of the Trinity – and also fully human. He was born to a human mother, lived a real flesh-and-blood existence, and died a brutal death on a Roman cross outside Jerusalem. Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to God **(Hebrew 4:15),** making him the only person in history who did not deserve judgment. But on the cross, he took our place, dying for our sin. He received the condemnation and death we deserve so that, when we put our trust in him, we can receive the blessing and life he deserves **(2 Corinthians 5:21).**

Not only did Jesus die in our place, eh rose from death, displaying his victory over sin, death, and hell. His resurrection is a decisive event in history; the Bible calls it the “first fruits” – the initial evidence – of the cosmic renewal God is bringing **(1 Corinthians 15:20-28)**. One of the greatest promises in the Bible is **Revelation 21:5**: “Behold, I am making all things new.” All that was lost, broken, and corrupted, in the fall will ultimately be put right. Redemption doesn’t simply mean the salvation of individual souls; it means the restoring o f the whole creation back to its original good.” (p. 9)

**A NEW PEOPLE: THE STORY CONTINUES**

* **Read Romans 8:1-17** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What does it say about God?
* What does it say is true of man “in the spirit”?
* Contrast (list the differences) between “the flesh” and “the spirit.”

“So how do we become a part of the story? How do we experience God’s salvation personally and become agents of his redemption in the world? By faith or trust **(Ephesians 2:8-9)**. What does that mean? We trust a taxi driver when we count on him to get us to our destination. We trust a doctor when we agree with her diagnosis and entrust ourselves to her care. And we trust in Jesus Christ when we admit our sin, receive his gracious forgiveness, and rest entirely in Jesus for our acceptance before God. Faith is like getting in the taxi. It’s like going under the surgeon’s knife. It’s a restful, whole-hearted commitment of the self to Jesus **(Psalm 31:14-15).** This is what it means to believe the gospel.

When we trust in Jesus, we are released from sin’s condemnation *and* from its bondage. We are free to say “no” to sin and “yes” to God. We are free to die to ourselves and live for Christ and his purposes. We are free to work for justice in the world. We are free to stop living for our own glory and start living for the glory of God **(1 Corinthians 10:31).** We are free to love God and others in the way we live […].

God has promised that Jesus will return to finally judge sin and make all things new. Until then, he is gathering to himself a people “from every nation, tribe, people, and language” **(Revelation 7:9 NIV).** As part of that called-and-sent people, we have the privilege of joining him in his mission **(Matthew 2:18-20)** as individuals and as part of his spiritual family. By grace, we can enjoy God, live life for his glory, serve humanity and make his gospel known to others through our words and actions.

This is the good news – the True Story – of the gospel.” (p. 9-10)

\* All quotations taken from *Gospel Centered Life for Teens* by Robert H. Thune and Will Walker (2014.

**Reflection Questions**:

1. From this section, what have you learned about God?

2. From this section, what have you learned about yourself (man)?

3. What role did Sin have to play in this story? What role has sin played in your story?

4. What does the Gospel do in our lives? How have you seen the truth of this True Story affect your own life and story?

**MARCH Part 2: Walking in the Spirit**

**I. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

* **Read John 14:15-21, 25-27 and 15:26-16:15** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* According to these passages, who is the Holy Spirit? What is he called, what names is he given?
* What does the Holy Spirit do?

“The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. You need to know He is a person. He can be grieved (Eph 4:30); lied to (Acts 5:3); teach us (Luke 12:12); lead and direct us (Acts 20:28). Thus, He has volition, emotion, and intellect. He is a person distinct from the Father and the Son. He came to glorify Christ and He works in Christians to conform them to the image of Christ.” (from: Cru.org)

**II. WHO RECEIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

* **Read Romans 8:1.** The book of Romans is written to believers or “saints” who are in Rome. Now **Read Romans 8:9.** What do you learn about these believers?
* **Read John 7:39 and Acts 2:38** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* Who receives the Holy Spirit?

“All Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the moment they trust Christ (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor 12:13). The moment you trusted Christ, the Holy Spirit entered your life and will never leave you. We have to know this to understand how we can enjoy the empowerment of the Spirit.” (from: Cru.org)

**III. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?**

* **Read John 14:12-14 and Acts 1:8** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What do these verses say will happen with the Spirit?

Imagine that you are a glass of plain milk. When you believed in Christ, He identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). That’s like squeezing chocolate syrup into the glass of milk. The chocolate is in there, but settled at the bottom of the glass – you can’t necessarily see a changed life. Being filled with the spirit, however, is a constant *walk* with the spirit. It’s like stirring up the chocolate until the milk is transformed and looks like Chocolate milk. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_teYa2iGk8>).

When you believe in Jesus you receive the Holy Spirit. He “indwells” you or lives within you. However, this indwelling alone doesn’t mean you are walking with the spirit or living full of the spirit. You won’t be receiving the fruit of the spirit if the spirit has settled down at the bottom of your life just like milk doesn’t become chocolate milk while the syrup is settled at the bottom. You’ve got to stir it up and that takes a bit more intentionality.

* What do you think it looks like to “stir your chocolate milk” or walk in the spirit?

When we talk about different ways we stir our milk or walk in the spirit we sometimes call them “Spiritual Disciplines.” Use the following verses to take a look at five of these. For each, list out what the practice is and identify one way in your life you can practice this.

1) **Philippians 4:8, Psalm 1:2, Joshua 1:8**

a. What is the practice?

b. How can you practice it?

2) **Matthew 6:5-15**

a. What is the practice?

b. How can you practice it?

3) **Psalm 147:1, Matthew 4:10**

a. What is the practice?

b. How can you practice it?

4) **Galatians 5:13, Matthew 23:11**

a. What is the practice?

b. How can you practice it?

5) **Psalm 46:10, Psalm 62:5**

a. What is the practice?

b. How can you practice it?

* **Read Galatians 5:16-26** and answer the following questions in a journal.
* What does v. 17 tell you about the desires of the flesh and the desires of the spirit?
* Look at the list in v. 22-26. What do you think it means that these are “fruits” of the Spirit? How do these come as a result of being filled with the Spirit (stirring the milk)?

**Reflection Questions**:

1. How and when does someone receive the Holy Spirit?

2. In your life, how “stirred up” is your chocolate milk? Do you see the Holy spirit work in your life? How so?

3. Which Spiritual Discipline is easiest for you to practice? Which is more challenging? Why?

4. Which of the fruits of the spirit do you want to live out more? Pray and ask for that now.

**APRIL Part 1: Who I am In Christ**

Now that you’ve explored the story of the Gospel and walking in the Spirit we want to move on to explore our Identity as believers in Christ. When you step from death to live in Christ the core of who you are changes. It’s no longer just you, but Christ who lives in you.

Below is a list of things that are true about you in Christ if you profess faith in Him. First, Take a moment to read through that list. Many of us “know” these things are true. But there is a different between knowing and believing. When I know something, it doesn’t change me. But when I believe something, I’m living as if it is true. Having read that list, **can you honestly say that you fully believe everything on that list?** NO! No one can, but we aren’t stuck in unbelief. “I believe, help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

**Pause for a moment and pray. Ask the spirit to reveal to you where you are not believing. Ask for help to believe more each day.**

Take a second pass through and do the following:

* Look up the verse associated with each statement (feel free to split this up into a couple of days).
* Choose one from each section (Accepted, Secure, Significant) that are either most meaningful to you, or are the *hardest* for you to fully believe.
* **Write those 3 down in a journal as well as the verse that goes with them**.
* Post these somewhere that you can see them. Read them every morning and night for the next month and see what God does.

God’s word does not go out and come back without accomplishing it’s purpose (Isaiah 55:11). So as you read and re-read His word is working – that’s a promise. Whether or not you feel it or notice it, change is going to take place in your heart.

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**Who I am in Christ**

Taken from Living Free in Christ by Dr. Neil Anderson. C1993 Regal Books.

**I am Accepted. . .**

I am God’s Child. John 1:12  
I am Christ’s friend. John 15:15  
I have been justified Romans 5:1  
I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him. 1 Corinthians 6:17  
I have been bought with a price. I belong to God. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

I am a member of Christ’s body. 1 Corinthians 12:27  
I am a saint. Ephesians 1:1  
I have been adopted as God’s child. Ephesians 1:5  
I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 2:18I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. Colossians 1:14I am complete in Christ. Colossians 2:10

**I am Secure…**

I am free forever from condemnation Romans 8:1-2  
I am assured that all things work together for good. Romans 8:28

I am free from any condemning charges against me. Romans 8:31-34  
I cannot be separated from the love of God. Romans 8:35-39  
I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22  
I am hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:3  
I am confident that the good work God has begun in me... Philippians 1:6

I am a citizen of heaven. Philippians 3:20I have not been given a spirit of fear… 2 Timothy 1:7  
I can find grace and mercy in time of need. Hebrews 4:16  
I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me. 1 John 5:18

**I am Significant…**

I am the salt and light of the earth. Matthew 5:13-14  
I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life. John 15:1-5  
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. John 15:16  
I am a personal witness of Christ. Acts 1:8  
I am God’s temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16  
I am a minister of reconciliation for God. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21  
I am God’s co-worker. 1 Corinthians 3:9  
I am God’s workmanship. Ephesians 2:10  
I may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12  
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

**Reflection Questions**:

1. What lies (things that don’t line up with this list) do you struggle with believing?

2. Which 3 of these statements stood out to you (1 from each section)? Are they related to the lies you believe?

3. Where did you post your 3 statements?

3. What are some reasons you thing those stood out to you? What are some reasons they are hard to believe fully?

**APRIL Part 2: 3 Enemies**

This project is going to put you on the front lines of spiritual battle. We want first encourage you that though spiritual battle is hard, it is such a lovely sign that God is working and doing amazing things in and through you. We want to help prepare and equip you for this fight with the Enemy.

This section is going to focus on who the enemy is and how to recognize the battle. The next section will focus on how God has prepared us as believers for this battle.

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Ephesians 6:12 says, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

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In spiritual warfare there are **Three Enemies: Satan, The World, and The Flesh**. This should prepare you for the fight and diminish fear.

**1. Satan:** Read the following verses and jot down what you learn from each.

A. Who is Satan?

* 1 Peter 5:8
* 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
* Revelation 12:10
* John 8:44
* John 12:31; Ephesians 2:2
* Revelation 9:11
* Matthew 4:3
* 2 Corinthians 4:4

B. What kind of power does Satan actually have?

* Luke 11:14-20
* Revelation 2:13
* 1 John 5:19
* Job 1:10-12
* Ephesians 6:11-12

C. What are some of Satan’s strategies or tactics?

* Genesis 3:1-6
* 1 Timothy 3:7
* John 13:2
* Mark 4:15
* 1 Thessalonians 2:18
* Revelation 12:10
* Matthew 4:1-4

D. We are assured of victory because of Jesus’ triumph and have been legally set free from Satan’s power through salvation. Therefore, what is now true for us?

* Romans 8:38-39
* 1 Peter 5:8
* James 4:7
* Hebrews 2:13-14
* 1 John 5:18

**2. The World**

Here “the world” does not refer to the earth or people. It refers to the world system, which leaves God out and is a rival to Him. Read the following passages and answers each question.

* 1 John 2:16. The world operates though what 3 avenues? (we could call them passions, possessions, and positions)
* The
* The
* The

**3. The Flesh**

The flesh” refers to the sinful nature still present in believers and the things done apart from God working in and through them. This includes those desires that are not God’s desires (Galatians 5:16-25).

* **Read Romans 8:1-11**
* What are the differences between living in the flesh and in the spirit that this passage points out?

People who do not have a personal relationship with Christ are slaves to sin and the flesh (Romans 6:17). However, when people receive Christ, their sins are forgiven (Colossians 1:13-14) and the old self has been crucified with Christ; therefore, Christians are no longer slaves to sin (Romans 6:5-7) and they are given a new nature by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14-17).

The power to say “no” to sin and “yes” to God comes from dependence upon the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives believers the power to “put off” or choose not to obey the old self, but rather “put on” or choose to obey the new self (Ephesians 4:22-24).

* **Read Galatians 5:16-17 and Ephesians 4:22-24**
* What do you think it means to no longer be a slave to sin?

**Reflection Questions**:

1. How may our passions, possessions, and positions (1 John 2:16) derail us from living filled with the spirit?

2. When you experience temptation do you feel like you have the power to say “yes” or “no”? How does living filled with the Holy Spirit help empower you to do that?

3. How does it make you feel that you have an enemy hoping for your failure?

4. Are there any ways you feel like the enemy is already attacking you now?

5. Take a moment and pray against those attacks and speak truth over the situation.

**April Part 3: Fighting the Battle**

Now that you’ve gotten up close and familiar with the battle you’re in, how do you fight it? We learn in scripture that, through the Holy Spirit, we have been prepared to fight this battle. In fact, we have been commanded to fight against the enemy.

**Summarize each passage in the column below. Then go back and highlight or underline what is similar in each passage.** Then answer the questions below in a journal.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ephesians 4:25-32** | **James 4:6-12** | **1 Peter 5:5b-11** |
|  |  |  |

* What do these passages say about our words or speech? (Eph 4:25, 29, 31; Ja 4:11)
* What commands do you see in these passages? (“do not” OR do like in Ja 4:7)

**Each following category shows up in the passages above in some form.** The categories are possible strategies the enemy uses against us. Use these questions to take inventory of how the enemy might already be searching for a “foothold” (a secure position from which progress can be made).Record your thoughts in a journal.

**Fear**

* What fearful thoughts or feelings are you already experiencing on this journey?
* In what areas do you find yourself worrying or being anxious most?

**Disappointment/Discouragement**

* How do you deal with situations when they do not go as expected?
* What expectations do you have for this summer? (ministry, friends, fun etc.)
* How do you think you’ll respond if those expectations are not met?

**Pride**

* In what ways do you find yourself being prideful?
* How have you been relying on yourself instead of God so far in this process (because we all do it all the time, just name a few).

**Judging Others**

* Where do you find yourself judging others in daily life (big or small)?
* How do you think your personal judging tendencies might impact the relationships you develop this summer?

**Complaining Spirit**

* Think about today – what have you complained about? (continue to notice throughout this week – it’ll be convicting).
* How could a critical or complaining spirit or attitude affect your ministry and relationships this summer?

**Luckily for us we’re not left with just the knowledge that the enemy is searching for a foothold in our lives. We’re commanded to resist him AND we’re given some tools to use in the battle.**

**Read Ephesians 6:10-17** and answer the following questions in a journal.

* What are the five pieces of the armor of God?
* How do the commands you listed above fit into each piece of armor?

**Read Ephesians 6:18**

* What weapon is mentioned here?

Prayer is our greatest weapon in the battle against the enemy. Prayer keeps us in communication with God and focused on Him, the one who has the power to fight this battle (1 John 4:4). It can be hard to know what to pray sometimes so we’ve included below ideas for how to pray aligned with the armor of God.

**Read through these and pick 1 that stands out. Copy it out and post it where you’ll see it ever day for the rest of the month.**

**Helmet of Salvation**

*I put on the helmet of salvation. Lord, protect me today from the power of sin. Keep the enemy from successfully tempting me in any way. Help me, Holy Spirit, to keep every thought under the control of the Lord Jesus. Help me today to recognize the temptations and lies of the enemy every time he tries to trick me or get me to believe a half-truth or to be suspicious of someone. Let me think only your thoughts. Control my tongue so that I speak only your words. Let my words be edifying (positive and building up) to everyone. Let me only speak the truth and do so in your love. I submit my will to yours so that I only do what you want me to this day.*

**Breastplate of Righteousness**

*Lord, I put on your righteousness to protect me in all I do this day. Let everything I do be done in a right way. Let me be squeaky clean in all I do, say, or think. Let me walk in your righteousness and not try to walk in my own power. Holy Spirit, show me any time I am trying to live in my own goodness, strength, and abilities rather than yours.*

**Belt of Truth**

*Lord Jesus, you are Truth. I therefore put on truth to cover every act, every expression, every word I say. Help me not to compromise or shade the truth in any way. Let your truths be foundational to all I do this day. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Reveal to me the areas that I am not perfectly believing your truth about myself, others, and about you. Help me to believe, to live out your Truth today.*

**Shoes of the Gospel of Peace**

*Father, I need the peace of Jesus to saturate all my day, to be part of everything I do and say. I need your peace in my mind, no matter what the situation. As I look at you and not the situation, let your peace rule my heart and mind. Thank you that you will help me to walk in peace throughout my day. I am available to share your peace with anyone you want me to.*

**Shield of Faith and Sword of the Spirit**

*Help me to use my shield of faith in a strong, effective way today to stop all the fiery darts of the enemy in whatever form they may take. When I face temptations, help me to use my faith to resist and quench his attempt to make me doubt you or to view myself or others in a negative way. Cause my faith to be strengthened as I use it, and as I see you and who you are in each and every situation I encounter. Bring to my mind appropriate verses to help quench every fiery dart of the wicked one. Let your Word be a sharp instrument in my mouth to come against all the lies and deceptions of the enemy.*

**General**

*Father, as I walk through this day, let me walk in confidence that I am prepared for this day’s battle, for I have on my armor. More importantly, I know that you who indwell me are greater than he who is in the world and is my enemy. Help me to remember that he is a defeated foe and only roars as a lion does, that he has no ability to touch me apart from your permission. Help me also to remember that I am a victorious soldier in this warfare today because of who I am in Jesus and who He is in me. Thank You for the great confidence these truths give me to face all that this day will hold. I place this day in your hands and give you permission to change my plans for this day in whatever way you see fit. May you be glorified in all I say and do today.*

**Here are some others ways to pray in preparation for this summer:**

* Pray according to God’s desire that all people be saved (2 Peter 3:9), and His promise to answer (1 John 5:14-15).
* Pray specifically. Pray by name for the salvation of people you meet or for those you see as you go on a prayer walk. Perhaps no one has ever prayed specifically for those people!

**Reflection Questions**:

1. From these passages, how do you think you can “resist the devil” or not give him a foothold (a secure position from which progress can be made)?

2. Which of the five categories (fear, disappointment, pride, judging, complaining) is most present in your life? What does that look like for you or how does that affect you?

3. Which piece of the armor of God do you feel like you need most in daily life? How can you practically begin to “put on” that armor?

**May and June: JACKED**

In your acceptance package you received the book titled “*Jacked: An irrepressible passion to share the Gospel*” by Shelby Abbott. You can choose whatever pace you want, but you must have finished this book before you come on mission.

**Structure:**

*Jacked* is designed to be a daily devotion. You’ll see it’s split into five main section. Each section has seven chapters or daily devotions. They’re short, just a couple pages, and have questions at the end of each.

We suggest that you take five weeks and do this each day. **Please ensure you read the scriptures and answer the questions at the end of each day.** These questions would be what you might discuss with your coach.

**Why this Book?**

*Jacked* is all about sharing the Gospel. That is the primary purpose of this summer mission and needs to be a primary part of your preparation. This book will help you prepare to share your faith, to understand your faith, and to overcome fear and intimidation. It will also help you to start building a habit of spending time in God’s Word each day, which is something you’ll continue to do on Summer Mission.

**May Part 1: Crossing Cultures**

You’ve entered into a lot of spiritual preparation in the previous sections. That is no light thing and the work doesn’t start there. Continue to pray, to be in scripture, and every day to refocus on Christ. We are not leaving that behind, but the next two sessions on culture and unity are going to dig into a little bit more of the particulars of a summer mission trip.

**DISCLAIMER**: We know you’re an MK and therefore have likely crossed many cultures and are used to cross-cultural living. However, don’t skip this or tune it out. Entering someone else’s culture on a summer mission is a whole new thing and you need to prepare your heart, mind, and body for that just as you did spiritually. This is a matter of giving respect and dignity to the relationships you’re about to enter into.

**Cultural Overview**

Culture refers to the way of life of a particular group of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes. It is the customs, language, material artifacts, and shared systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation.

One goal of your project is to communicate the gospel in a culturally relevant way. To do that you need to first be aware of some of the ways your own culture(s) has shaped who you are and the way you think, talk, and act.

**Get to know *your* culture:**

* **All people have the Same Basic Needs** You know this. This is why you are able to relate to anyone from any culture on some level.
* **What are some basic needs that all people share in the following categories?**
* Physical
* Mental
* Emotional
* Social
* Spiritual
* People have different ways to meet these basic needs. As you you spend time in a new culture, you relate over similarities, but also begin to identify and encounter differences. These differences are reflected not only in obvious and observable traits and activities, but also in underlying attitudes.
* **How does your culture, as you experience it, meet needs in the following categories?** (your culture may be that of the country you live in, or your parents, or something in between or other. Answer this based on how these needs are met in your life).
* Physical
* Mental
* Emotional
* Social
* Spiritual
* Take some time to do some research about the city you’re going to on Summer Mission. See what you can learn about their culture and how they might address theses same needs.
* **After that research, what did you learn about how the culture you’ll encounter on Summer mission might meet the following needs?**
* Physical
* Mental
* Emotional
* Social
* Spiritual

Remember that when you’re entering a new culture it is your job to be the learner, it is not the host culture’s responsibility to make room for you. So before you head out on Summer Mission prepare yourself and your heart to go in and observe, learn, and respect. As MKs we can be used to being “in the know” culturally and we may be quick learners, but we are *not* the experts and we need to make sure to lay aside any pride and be willing to make mistakes. Because we will, we’re not perfect, and that’s ok.

**Principles to Apply**

* **Love beyond cultural difference:** Culturaldifferences can turn you off. The way people look, the music they listen to, or even the way they talk can scare you and make you hesitant to try to reach out and start a conversation. Instead of letting these differences get you stuck, let them make you curious. Approach differences and unknowns with the goal of learning about another person. Taking an interest in them as an individual is loving well.
* **Remember God’s concern is for people’s hearts:** The external factors are not nearly as important to God as they are to you. His primary concern is to reach those people who are genuinely seeking Him. To help with this, meditate on the words of 1 Samuel 16:7: “for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”
* **Like God, live contextually:** A huge part of ministering to someone well is knowing how to communicate and act toward them. You have to know your context. This is not just an idea we came up with. **Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**. Even Paul varied or “contextualized” his ministry, his style, his words based on who he was talking to and we have to do that too. Not just overseas, but at home too. You wouldn’t talk to a five year old the same way you do to a fifteen year old. Or you wouldn’t act the same toward a friend as you to toward your parents
* **Use the Bible as your standard:** There are two kinds of issues we might be talking about with someone. **First** are going to be the “absolutes” or the things that are addressed in scripture and are the same across cultures. Though we may communicate these things differently based on context (contextualize) we stand firm on them. **Second** are areas the Bible does not address. In these areas of difference we need to withhold judgment and wait. Our *cultural* solution is *not* the standard by which all people should live.
* **Have the attitude of a learner**: Throughout this project, remember that you are going to give of yourself and share spiritual truths, but you are also going to learn. You will find that as you seek to learn, people will be more responsive and willing to learn from you as well. This is where we really have to exhibit humility. We do not know everything, we don’t have a solution to everything, and even sometimes the things we’ve worked hard to prepare need to be changed because they are not what is best. Hold your knowledge, skills, and plans with an open hand being ready for them to need to change.

**Guidelines for Communicating Cross Culturally in Ministry**

* God has provided a great opportunity for you to share your life and faith in Christ with the people of Albania and Thailand. We want to be a good ambassadors for God in this community.
* During this mission trip, you will have the opportunity to share your story/testimony. You will be preparing your story during the project briefing (the first few days of project). Also, you will be making friends with many local students. Remember these specific points when speaking to both youth and adults.

1. **Be friendly and gracious.** People in other countries are often eager to get to know foreigners, but may be hesitant. Be approachable and willing to initiate with them.
2. **Speak simply and slowly.** While some do speak English, they often cannot understand it if you speak as you normally would. Be careful not to use unusual words. They may have limited vocabulary, especially with Christian terms such as “born again” or “salvation”. Depending on your location, an interpreter may sometimes be available. Avoid culturally specific figures of speech or else explain them.
3. **Compliment the people you meet and their community.** Do this at the beginning of conversations. It is very important that you show your interest in them. They are curious about how you view them and their community. Be honest, always looking for the positive.
4. **Avoid using materialistic expressions.** Don’t compare your house, car, or vacation with theirs. Rather, focus on relationships and people; talk less about things.
5. **Don’t brag about yourself or your accomplishments.** Be transparent and humble about yourself and your lifestyle.
6. **Learn to use the word “you” more than “us” or “me”.** Learn to focus on their work and accomplishments, not yourself. Ask them questions about themselves. Remember, they are hosts and we are guests.
7. **Don’t discuss political views or ideology.** Our only message is Jesus Christ and new life in Him.
8. **Do not criticize any church or denomination or traditions.** Do not get into theological issues. The people you meet, even Christians, will likely have different backgrounds. Getting stuck in a theological debate derails the ministry you’re trying to have.
9. **Do not be pushy, boastful, or overly demonstrative with hugs or loud talk.** Such behavior may be offensive to them. Always be gracious and courteous. Observe how nationals act to know how you should act and how you should be treated.
10. **Do not dominate the conversation.** Be aware of this especially if you are talkative. Draw others out and be sensitive. Be sure to ask questions and listen more than you talk.

**Take a moment to write out in your journal 4-5 questions you have about the culture you’re going to enter into this summer. Bring these with you and seek out the answers when you get there.**

Just as there are many things you want to learn about the people you will meet, they will have the same questions about you. Most teenagers will be interested in your lifestyle and values. Therefore, be confident and enthusiastic as you communicate with students and others you will be reaching out to.

**Reflection Questions**:

1. As you enter a new context and culture what can you do to make sure you’re looking at or valuing the heart rather than what is on the outside? (1 Samuel 16:7)

2. How can you practice being aware of someone else’s context and how it is different than your own?

3. Analyze your own cultural context. Where do you live? What opportunities are open to you? Who are the important people in your life? What resources are available to you? How are your needs met?

4. How might your cultural context be different from the one you’re entering into?

**May Part 2: Team Unity**

You’re almost there. It’s probably only a couple weeks before you board a plane. So what’s left? How else can you prepare to come on this MK2MK Summer Mission and have an amazing summer? Team life. That’s what we’ll talk about now.

**Draw Close to God**

This mission’s experience can be a life-changing experience for both you and those who you minister to. In each new opportunity, remember to draw close to, learn about, and trust God. He will direct you each step of the way. You’ll also draw close to other members of your team as you grow and minister together.

Let us first say that your primary reason for coming on this trip is the ministry you are doing in the community around you. That is the first focus and you need to be willing to put that first. Even when you aren’t in the small group you’d hoped for or on a ministry team with your close friend etc., the ministry is the reason you’re there. If you keep that in mind, team unity will come much easier. That said, let’s consider what it looks like to be a unified team.

**Read Ephesians 4:1-16**

* v. 2 Lists five things we are commanded to do/be. How would these help our team of students and leaders to be unified on summer mission?
* v. 4-5 List seven “ones.” What are they? How do these unify us as a team?
* What is the result of unity found in v. 14?
* v. 16 Says that all in the body are equally under the head, which is Christ. Though each part is different, they support each other and each part does it’s work. What does that mean for our team this summer?

One of the most valuable aspects of your experience will be learning what it means to work on a team. Your attitude as a team will greatly affect your overall success in fulfilling the purpose of your project. Remember, the project is not designed for a bunch of individuals to each do their own thing.

**Read the following verses** and write what they say about unity or being a team in a journal.

* Philippians 2:1-11
* Ephesians 5:15-21
* John 17:20-21

**Reminders:**

* Accept your team and leaders as God’s sovereign plan for you.
* Have the attitude, “You can’t make it tough enough for me to complain.”
* Have a spirit of abiding prayer.
* It is by the power of the Holy Spirit in your life and in the lives of others that love and unity exist. If you stop walking in His power, it will be obvious to you and your teammates that there is not unity. Only God’s Spirit can build a unity on your team. It is important to walk in the Spirit moment by moment.

**Guiding Principles**

**Leadership**

* **Read Hebrews 13:17**

Your leaders during this summer mission have not been appointed there lightly. Just like you’ve applied, raised support, and prepared to come, so have they. The Bible commands us to support, respect, and diligently follow our leaders. Choosing to trust and respect your leadership even when they make mistakes will have a huge affect on your Summer.

Your leaders keep watch over you and give an account for you. They do not teak decisions lightly, but rather put a lot of though and intentionality into the way things are done. There’s usually a lot that has gone into a decision that doesn’t appear on the surface, but there is not usually time or reason for you to know all of that. Therefore, it needs to be a choice you make to listen, respond respectfully, and follow your leaders. If for some reason you have an issue that needs to be discussed, some to the leader afterward and respectfully present your opinions.

**Pray for your leaders, believe the best, know that God is in control, and have fun! Your time will be SO much more restful and enjoyable if you choose to trust.**

**Servanthood**

* **Read Philippians 2:3-4**

Projects work well when everyone goes in with an attitude of serving. Philippians 2:3-4 says that each person must “look out for the interests of others.” Leaders are to seek the best for the team, and team members are to encourage, support and affirm each other. You’d be surprised how much changes when you are constantly seeking the good of others.

**Teamwork**

**Read the following passages.** What appears in these verses that a team can share?

* Numbers 11:11, 16-17
* Hosea 4:6
* Ecclesiastes 11:4
* Galatians 5:22

A united group is committed to carrying out the overall goal or mission. Several things are essential to teamwork: shared burden, shared knowledge, shared commitment, and shared walk in Christ. Each of us has something to offer or release in this area.

**Obstacles to Overcome**

Any time a group of people works together as a team, there will be obstacles to love and unity.

**What are some of the obstacles that could arise on a team that would hinder love and unity?** Below we’ll look through some of these together.

**Expectations**

* Unspoken, but deeply held values
* **Example**: You were expecting to choose your own roommate and instead it was assigned and you didn’t end up with the person you’d hoped.
* **Response**: Be honest about this with a leader and pray with them. Try and realign your priorities and take this unexpected change as an opportunity to get to know someone new.
* **What are some of your expectations for this project?** (can be like the one above or related to ministry, outcome, feelings etc.)

**Conflict with Peers**

* Things that drive you nuts.
* **Example**: Your evangelism partner always talks first and dominates the conversation so you feel like you’re just along for the ride.
* **Response**: Before confronting someone, ask yourself if it’s just something that bugs you but isn’t necessarily wrong (someone’s laugh annoys your or the way they organize their stuff etc.). If it is, then use this as an opportunity to learn to be more tolerant and adjust to other people and their particularities.

However, if it is a **recurring** situation like the one described above that you feel needs to be addressed – go straight to the person (and not in front of others). Use this model of communication to talk to them about it in a way that respects you both:

- Describe the behavior: When you\_\_\_\_\_\_\_...

- Explain your feelings: I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_...

- Empathize with them: I understand that you \_\_\_\_\_...

- State a desired change: I would prefer \_\_\_\_\_\_...

- Invite another perspective: How does that sound to you?

“When we are sharing the Gospel with someone on the beach you tend to jump in and speak first each time. When you do that I feel like I’m not participating or like I can’t be a part of sharing. I understand you’re excited about this and feel super ready to go and that’s great. But I would prefer if you could slow down enough to let me take the lead some of the time. Does that sound ok to you? Or is there something I’ve missed?”

* **How do you usually deal with conflict or confrontation? How do you feel about using this model?**

**Disagreements**

* Differences in opinion.
* **Example:** You want to stay and finish a conversation with a student at the school where you are ministering. But the leaders are telling you it is time to go.
* **Response**: Let your leader know you’re in a really good conversation and ask if there’s a possible way you could stay just a few more minutes. Respect whichever answer they give and respond accordingly. Choose to believe the best.

**Inappropriate Relationships**

* Relationships are important to make teamwork possible. To ensure healthy relationships on the project, team members are **not** permitted to date or establish “favorite friends”.
* Those who are in an existing dating relationship are asked to forego any handholding, kissing, or public display of affection.
* We desire that the project be a place where everyone can be comfortable with everybody. Exclusive relationships cause others to feel left out instead of included. Instead, seek to see those around you and include those who are on the outside of groups.
* **There is never any reason for a romantic or physical relationship of any kind between a leader and a student. Bring any concerns about yourself or others to the team leader and they will know how to proceed.**

**Project Norms**

One of the ways that we maintain unity and a good environment on project is through our project norms. We will be talking about these and/or others specific to your context during briefing but please look these over so you are prepared to do life together.

* We will all work together as a team, cooperating with one another.
* We will all be involved in ministry and discipleship.
* We will all submit ourselves to the project leaders and our team leaders, even when we may not agree with them (see Philippians 2:1-5).
* We will all maintain a teachable spirit, willing to admit our mistakes, and make corrections in our lives when necessary.
* We will all be faithful to complete the responsibilities assigned to us.
* We will attend every project function and be on time unless excused by a leader.
* No participant will date or spend exclusive time with another person.
* We will all take our complaints only to the appropriate person, after we know our attitude is right. We will not be critical of others and will not allow bad feelings or bitterness to build up. We will seek to be quick to forgive.
* We will honor the Lord in our appearance. All participants will dress modestly and adhere to the context specific requirements as well as any leaders’ instructions.
* No student is to leave project housing alone or in a group without permission at any time.
* No one is to leave the project housing after dark unless the team is involved in an outreach or team activity.
* Students will never travel alone, but rather stay in pairs or groups.
* If the housing grounds are large, students will inform a leader or another student of where they are going prior to going on a walk etc. that will take them out of sight and hearing range.

When our entire team abides by these norms and any others laid out while on project, we are more unified and able to enjoy our time as well as minister well. Choosing to act in a way that is at odds with these norms is actively choosing disunity. Remember that your actions do not only affect you, but can affect the health of the entire team.

**Reflection Questions**:

1. What should it look like to be a team of believers working, living, and ministering together?

2. What can get in the way of team unity and looking light what you described above?

3. How will it look different for you personally to rely on God and his power, approval, and acceptance rather than relying on your own power and the approval and acceptance of others?

4. Are there any norms or parts of this section that are not clear or that you take issue with? Please discuss these with your coach to achieve clarity and understanding.

**Other Resources**

In addition to the studies above, you should check out some of the other materials Cru offers online. We’ve used these studies before and love them:

**Thirsty:** Thirsty is a two-week devotional that expands and develops on all the concepts of the Spirit Filled Life, devoting a day’s lesson and reflection to each principle.

Download Thirsty here.

<https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/legacy/2012/02/Thirsty_Devotional.pdf>

**How Your Personality Connects You With God:** This is an article based on the principle of *Sacred Pathways,* where you can learn about the different ways we all connect with God. This is just one small study but it could help you to plan many other devotionals in ways that will be more meaningful for you!

Read this article here.

<https://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/devotionals/how-your-personality-connects-you-with-god.html>

**Other Cru Devotionals:** Check out this page where Cru posts a variety of online devotionals and resources. Scroll through it and pick something that catches your eye, and then stick with it!

Check out these devotionals here.

<https://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/devotionals.html>