

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Kansas City, Missouri

A SIX-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Roommates or Relationship:

Living a Life with a Living Word

HEBREWS 4:12 (NIV)

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

PREPARED FOR THE CONGREGATION BY

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WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

DAY ONE · ROOMMATES: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FOR AND WITH

SCRIPTURE READING

REVELATION 2:2–4 (NIV)

“I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false... Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie began where nobody expects a sermon on Hebrews to begin — in a marriage that has quietly turned into a roommate arrangement. Nobody announces it. The bills get paid, the grass gets cut, the car runs, and by every measure a man knows how to keep, he is winning. Then one evening she says, we never do anything anymore, and he cannot make that sentence fit the facts. He has been loving her the only way he was taught — by what he does for her. She receives love another way entirely — by what he does with her. The house runs beautifully. The relationship does not.

Then he turned the illustration where it was always headed. God’s expectations of us look far more like hers than like his. God is not chiefly moved by what we do for Him. He is after what we do with Him. And some of us would be stunned to hear Him say what she said: we are roommates now. I am just a book in the house.

That is an uncomfortable sentence, because most of us have a defense ready. I know Your Word. I quote it. I have taught it, defended it, posted it. And none of that is a lie. The church at Ephesus had the same résumé — deeds, hard work, perseverance, discernment sharp enough to expose false apostles, endurance that never wore out. Jesus disputes none of it. He says, I know your deeds. Then He names the only thing that finally matters: you have forsaken the love you had at first.

“Some of us have become experts, and we would be surprised if God came and said: we are just roommates. I am just a book in the house. You have been doing what you think I want — but you have not been spending any time with Me.”

Notice what He does not accuse them of. Not laziness. Not heresy. Not scandal. He accuses them of efficiency without intimacy — a household where everything works and nobody is known. It is the most respectable spiritual condition available to us, and the most dangerous, because nothing about it looks like backsliding. Roommates do not fight. They coordinate.

So the question this week is not whether you have been doing something for God. Most of us have. The question is whether a single hour exists on your calendar for no reason except that you and He can be together. Before Sunday comes back around, find that hour and put it where you will actually keep it.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *If God described our relationship as it has been this month, would He use the word partner or the word roommate? What specifically from the last thirty days makes me answer the way I do?*

2. *Which comes easier to me — doing something for God, or simply being with Him? What does my preference reveal about what I am actually after in this relationship?*

3. *Like Ephesus, I may have a résumé of good deeds covering a cooled heart. What activity am I pointing to as evidence of closeness when I know it has become a substitute for it?*

4. *What one hour this week will I set aside for God with nothing to produce and nothing to prove — and what am I willing to move off the calendar to protect it?*

DAY TWO · ALIVE AND ACTIVE: UNLIKE EVERY OTHER BOOK IN THE HOUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

HEBREWS 4:12–13 (NIV)

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie hung the entire message on one sentence: since the Word is active, my relationship with the Word cannot be passive. Everything else follows from there. And the first thing that sentence demands is that we abandon the habits we have developed with every other book we own.

Every other book in your house is dead. It stays where you left it. It cannot follow up. It says exactly what it said the last time and nothing more, and you come to it as an investigator — you decide when it opens, what it means, and whether it still applies. Bring those habits to Scripture and you will have built a passive relationship with an active Word.

Because alive means certain things simply are not true of it. It is not lost. You do not have to go excavating back through Egypt to learn what God wants from you today. It cannot be outdated, worn out, or edited into irrelevance by the culture — and he pointed out how much energy we spend defending a Word that has never once required our protection. When people say the Bible was manipulated, tampered with, handled by interested men, we scramble as though it cannot answer for itself. It has outlived every empire that tried to bury it.

“I cannot be outdated. I cannot be worn out. I am more active than you and more effective in My activity, because I am more strategic than you. You cannot take care of Me — I have to take care of you.”

And it is strategic. The believers in Acts had no New Testament; the Word still reached them. God chose a burning bush for Moses. He chose one approach for Abraham and an entirely different one for Jonah. He has never needed our counsel on how to reach a person. Which is why the argument over whether young people should use paper Bibles instead of phones is one He is not having with us. What He gave our generation suited our generation — Greek, Hebrew, a lexicon, a concordance the size of a cinder block. He is entirely capable of delivering the same Word to a nineteen-year-old through a screen.

So the edition in your hand was never the problem. The posture is. This week, open it once expecting to be met rather than consulted, and notice how differently you read when you are not the one running the conversation.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Which habits from the other books on my shelf have I carried into Scripture — deciding when it opens, what it means, and whether it still applies to me?*

2. *Where have I been treating God's Word as something that needs my defense rather than something that holds authority over me? What does that reveal about how alive I truly believe it is?*

3. *If I opened Scripture this week expecting to be met rather than consulted, what would change about when I read, where I read, and how long I stay?*

4. *What is one belief about God I picked up somewhere other than His Word — a platform, a podcast, a family saying — that I will bring to the text this week and let it correct?*

DAY THREE · SHARPER THAN THE SWORD: GOD CANNOT BE CATFISHED

SCRIPTURE READING

JEREMIAH 17:9–10 (NIV)

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.’”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

When Hebrews reaches for an image of how sharp the Word is, it selects the sharpest thing its first readers knew. The double-edged sword was the weapon of the Roman soldier, and to people living under occupation that sword was the supreme law of the land — the final word in any dispute, carried by men who could enforce it where they stood. Scripture says: I am sharper than that. Sharper than the standard you are measured by, and sharper than the standards you measure with.

Then it describes the cut. It divides soul from spirit. Sunday Dr. Archie walked us through why that phrase matters: we are three-part beings. The flesh has its appetites. The spirit is what communicates with God. And the soul sits in the middle, taking its orders from one or the other. When the Word divides soul from spirit, God is reading which voice you obeyed.

Which is why, as he put it, God cannot be catfished. You can present a version of yourself to your friends, your church, your spouse, your employer, and hold that version steady for years. God reads the original. He heard the spirit tell you to spend time with Him. He heard the flesh answer that there was no time. He watched the soul in the middle, weighing new information from God against old information from a culture that talks constantly and never runs out of content.

“When you come to Me you can say whatever you want — I cannot be catfished. I know what the spirit told you. I heard what the flesh said back. And I can see exactly what your soul did with both.”

Then comes the hardest clause in the verse: it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Not your performance. Not your presentation. Not what you told them or what you dressed for. God gathers all of it — what the spirit said, what the soul did with it — and from that He determines what He can trust you with. That is not God being harsh. That is any real relationship. Nobody hands the valuable thing to someone who has been careless with it.

So the uncomfortable gift of this passage is that you are already fully known and still fully wanted. There is nothing left to manage. Find the one place where the distance between your public version and your private one is widest, and this week say it to God in plain words. You will not be telling Him anything. You will be ending the pretense that you were.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Where is the distance widest right now between the version of me that people see and the version God reads? Name it specifically rather than generally.*

2. *When my spirit and my flesh handed my soul conflicting instructions this past week, which one did I follow most often — and what does that pattern say about who is actually in charge?*

3. *If God decides what He can trust me with by the thoughts and attitudes of my heart rather than by my performance, what would have to change in me before more could be entrusted to me?*

4. *What is the one thing I have never said to God in plain words, though He has always known it — and on what day this week will I say it?*

DAY FOUR · STILL IN DISCOVERY: THE ARROGANCE OF “I KNOW MY BIBLE”

SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 55:8–11 (NIV)

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts... so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.’”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie described precisely what a relationship looks like once it has gone passive, and every married person in the room recognized it. You stop discovering and start judging. At the beginning it was all discovery — who are you, what do you think, I did not know that about you, let me adjust. Then one day you decide you have them figured out, and you quit learning them and begin critiquing them. You notice them only when they affect you: the trash is no longer about keeping the house clean, it is about the fact that she mentions it when the game is on. Eventually they become a tool for you instead of a person with you.

Every one of those moves transfers directly to the Word. I open it when I want information. I decide what is relevant. I extract what serves me and leave the rest. And I stay the evaluator — I judge whether this part is good, whether that part still applies, whether I agree with the whole enterprise. He named the version we hear most often: I do not like organized religion. But gathering was never a human invention. Job opens with the heavenly host assembling. The tabernacle was a gathering. Sinai was a gathering. There has never been a moment when God did not want His people together.

Underneath all of it sits a sentence we say as though it were maturity: I know my Bible. He called it what it is — a level of arrogance beyond measure. Sixty-six books, forty writers, fifteen hundred years. One person could not write it even while God was dictating it. And we imagine we have the capacity to contain it. It is like carrying a paper cup to a fire hydrant and announcing that you have all the water. God’s answer is gentler than our claim: I will give you enough to drink today.

“To say you know your Bible is a level of arrogance beyond measure. It is like taking your paper cup up to the fire hydrant and saying, I have all the water. God says: I will give you enough to drink today.”

Parents make the identical mistake with their children — I know my kids — when the truth is that you know who they used to be. People keep becoming. So does your understanding of God, because He is not finished revealing Himself to you. This week, go to a passage you are certain you have mastered and read it as though you were being introduced.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Which passage or doctrine have I stopped learning because I decided I already know it? What would it cost me to come back to it this week as a beginner?*

2. *When I open Scripture, am I usually trying to prove what I already know or discover what I do not? What did my last three readings actually accomplish in me?*

3. *Where have I quietly kept the role of evaluator — deciding which parts of God's Word are cultural, outdated, or negotiable for my particular situation?*

4. *What is one truth I have avoided because I was already settled on my position — and what is my honest plan for bringing it back to the text this week?*

DAY FIVE · BIBLICAL HEART MANAGEMENT: PURIFY, GUARD, OPEN, RECEIVE

SCRIPTURE READING

PSALM 139:23–24 (NIV)

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Before any practical step, Sunday Dr. Archie stopped on the condition that makes all of them work. James says the double-minded person is unstable in everything and should not expect to receive anything from the Lord — and he insisted that is not God being petty. That is God being careful. What He has to give is too valuable to place in hands that are careless with what they are thinking. The condition of the heart governs what the Word can do in you. So the question is how well we are managing our hearts.

The first move is not ours. Create in me a pure heart, O God. David was a doer — if purity could have been achieved by effort, he would have achieved it and filed the report. He asked instead, because we cannot purify ourselves. We are using dirt to clean off the dirt. Purification is always God’s work.

The second move is entirely ours: above all else, guard your heart. Once God has dealt with something, protecting it becomes our assignment. He told us about a child who fell into a muddy pond, came inside crying and filthy, was washed and dressed in clean clothes — and then walked back out and jumped in on purpose. We give the same testimony. Lord, get me out of this, I will never do it again. Then He cleans us up, and we run straight back to the same water. For you it may not be water. It may be a room, a group chat, a number still in your phone.

“We cannot purify our own heart — we are using dirt to clean off the dirt. Purification is always God’s work. Guarding what He purified is ours.”

The third move is access. Search me, God. Not a call placed when something breaks — most people only have a real relationship with their attorney if they are always in trouble — but standing permission, so that going to Him because you are unsure becomes ordinary rather than an emergency. Most of us use God’s Word to prove what we already know instead of discovering what we do not.

The fourth is the hardest: do not resist what He reveals. We would prefer to be corrected on a need-to-know basis, and we read every warning hunting for who else it applies to. It made sense to you because it was written for you.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Which of the four am I weakest in — letting God purify, guarding what He cleaned, giving Him standing access, or receiving what He exposes? What is the evidence?*

2. *What has God already delivered me from that I keep walking back toward? Name the room, the person, the app, or the habit — not the category.*

3. *What would it look like this week to give God access before something goes wrong rather than after? What decision could I bring to Him now, while it is still a question?*

4. *The last time Scripture or a sermon convicted me, did I receive it or start assigning it to someone else? What has God been saying that I have been resisting, and what will I do about it this week?*

DAY SIX · DO NOT JUST READ IT: KNOWING WHERE TO BE ON THE FIELD

SCRIPTURE READING

JAMES 1:22–25 (NIV)

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it... they will be blessed in what they do.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday closed with an assignment, and it gives the week its practical shape. Read digestible portions. Nobody is impressed that you got through Hebrews in one sitting if the context lost you in chapter two. Do not measure by volume. Stop where the understanding stops.

Follow a strategic plan rather than a random one. He was honest about his hesitation with devotional material that has nothing to do with the journey you are actually on — a fresh idea every morning while God is still waiting on the last one to be finished. It is the same restlessness that keeps us scrolling: the diet on Monday, the skin routine on Tuesday, the walking plan on Wednesday, none of them bad and none of them completed. God is not opposed to the many things He intends to do in you. He wants one of them finished.

Study with other believers. Your reading is shaped by your experience, and nobody else in the room has lived your experiences — so what you miss, someone else catches, and what sifts out of the conversation is nearer the truth than what any one of you carried in. Jesus started a small group on purpose. If you doubt the model, the Godhead is a small group.

“Do not just be a reader of the Word — be a doer of the Word. Read it and do it. Do not do it without reading it. But if you read it, do it.”

Get into a relationship with someone who can tell you the truth to your face. He told on himself: he has carried great ideas to the pastoral staff expecting excitement and gotten questions and cross-references instead, and walked away deflated — and saved. They kept him from running the whole length of a rabbit hole only to find no rabbit at the bottom.

And build application into the reading. What you only hear lasts about three days; what you do becomes experience. He described watching a professional team huddle up and then line up in the wrong places — men who knew there was a plan and still were not where the plan put them. That is a Christian who reads and never does. The Word tells you where to be on the field. Do not spend this week standing somewhere else.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Is my reading strategic or random? What plan am I actually on, and could anyone else tell me what I am studying right now?*

2. *What has God been trying to finish in me that I keep interrupting with something new? What would it take to stay on that one thing through the end of this year?*

3. *Who in my life has permission to tell me my idea is wrong — and when did I last let them? If no one holds that permission, who will I ask this month?*

4. *Of everything I read this week, what is the one thing I will do rather than merely underline? Name it, name the day, and name the person who will ask me whether it happened.*

CLOSING PRAYER

For the week of September 20, 2026

Lord, we come admitting the thing we have been careful not to say out loud: we have been keeping house with You. The bills are paid. The activities are covered. The record of our service is long. And somewhere along the way the relationship quietly became an arrangement. You never asked for roommates. Forgive us for handing You everything we do for You while withholding the one thing You asked for — what we could be doing with You.

Thank You that Your Word is alive. It is not lost, not outdated, not worn out, and it has never once needed our protection. You knew how to reach Moses at a bush and Jonah in the water and Abraham on a road, and You know how to reach us where we actually live — in this week, on these screens, in these houses. Teach us to stop approaching You the way we approach everything else on the shelf.

Father, Your Word is sharper than anything that measures us and sharper than anything we measure with. It divides soul from spirit, and You read what no one else can see. We confess the distance between the version of us that others know and the version You have always known. We stop managing it. We are grateful beyond words that we are fully known and still fully wanted.

Forgive the arrogance of saying we know Your Book. We have brought a paper cup to a fire hydrant and announced that we had all the water. Give us enough to drink today, and give us back the humility of discovery — the willingness to open a familiar passage as though we were being introduced, and to let You be the one who judges us rather than the one we evaluate.

Create in us pure hearts, O God, because we cannot do it ourselves; we have only been using dirt to clean off the dirt. Then help us guard what You purify. Keep us out of the water You pulled us from. Give Yourself standing permission to search us — not only when something breaks, but while the decision is still a question. And when You expose what we would rather have kept, give us the grace not to resist it, and not to hand it to somebody else.

Make us doers, Lord. Not readers who forget the face in the mirror, but people who leave the huddle and line up exactly where Your Word says to stand. Put us in small groups where what we miss gets caught. Put people in our lives who love us enough to tell us the truth. And let this week be the one where something finally gets finished in us. We are not here to be roommates. We are here to be Yours. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.