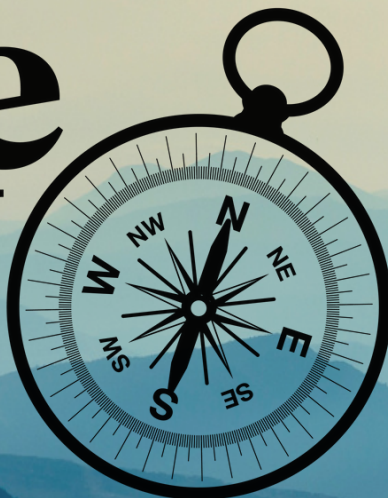


True North



2023-2024

WHAT IS TRUE NORTH?

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV

In the rhythm of our lives, there needs to be seasons where we shift our focus to look at the bigger view. My friend calls this the “balcony view”. In his estimation, life is largely lived on the ballroom floor, moving, dancing, socializing and competing. While this is where the “life” is, at regular intervals, we need to disconnect from the “doing” and remember the big picture.

This booklet is an invitation to look at the big picture of your life. I believe it would be incredibly helpful for to take a few hours during the transitions between years to thoughtfully and patiently work through this book. During your time, remove distractions.

- Turn your cell phone on silent
- Find a sacred space, one where its easy to engage in the big picture questions
- Bring a separate piece of paper to write down your to do lists that come to mind
- Put on some great music that you like to groove to

The writer of Hebrews wisely reminds us of the stakes in our life. You are unique. No one else on this planet carries your perspective and skills.. What will you do with this resource?

In this moment, remind yourself:

- There is a battle going on right now over your life. Capture that which has hindered you. Run with perseverance the race that has been set out for you!
- Jesus is the founder of your life - wrought with purpose, meaning and gifts. And He is your model. It wasn't easy for Jesus, and it won't be easy for you. But rest assured, God is present to you and has everything you need to succeed.
- Growing weary is one of the greatest obstacles in life. This is a time for renewal and refreshment. Ask God to use these exercise to stir your passion, to give you clarity, and infuse wisdom into your decision making as you approach the new year..

This booklet will lead you to first look backwards - remembering 2023 - and then direct you to ask God what he has for you next. God, be with us. And we are cheering for you!

...the Durango Vineyard Church family

PREPARE YOUR HEART

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:41-42

It would be tempting to look at this exercise as new years resolution or goal setting—two things you may have done before. And worse, if you proceeded to complete it with that mindset, you could go on your way and do a whole bunch of things and miss the ONE thing that is needed - an authentic and deep relationship with God.

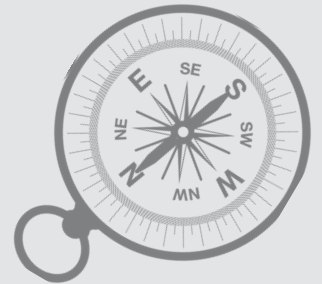
In the story of Martha and Mary, Jesus reveals the one thing that is more important than any other thing we can ever do- spend time with the giver of life - God. He is the bread of life (John 6:35), living water (John 4:14). He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Remaining in Him, like a branch connected to the vine, is where we find life and life abundantly (John 15:4, John 10:10).

Create the conditions for **connection**

“I cannot transform myself, or anyone else for that matter. What I can do is create the conditions in which spiritual transformation can take place by developing and maintaining a rhythm of spiritual practices that keep me open and available to God.”
— Ruth Haley Barton, Sacred Rhythms

**What helps me
connect with God?**

**How often did I do
this in 2023?**



**What distracts me
from God?**

**How often did this
happen in 2023?**

GOD IS AT WORK

In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” John 5:17

Have you noticed how up and down life is? Could God possibly be at work in all of the ups and downs? Fortunately, the answer is yes; He is always at work; we just might not see it.

God is in the business of restoring all things the Earth and His people to His original design. Many times, that work is not pleasant. Sometimes we can only grow through suffering.

This next exercise is all about gaining clarity and perspective on your last year.

...in my life

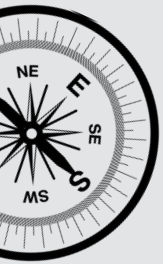
Use the timeline below to identify 10-15 key events in 2022. Feel free to grab your calendar to refresh your memory of these events (**personal, family, professional work, faith, community**). List the events you experienced as positive above the line and events you experienced as painful below the line.



WHAT IS HE UP TOO?

Based on the timeline, what do you perceive God is up to in your life (personal, family, professional work, faith, community). How did He use the events to help you: grow, humble you, inspire you, bring meaning to your life, change your perspective, disorient you, deconstruct an unhelpful belief, etc.)

Write your thoughts in the space below.



"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. James 1:5"

Self-Care Evaluation

Self-Care Long List

"Self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer to others."

Parker Palmer

This exercise aims to consider what you need to be healthy and evaluate how you're taking care of yourself.

What are the things that bring you life, energize you and help you thrive? Consider your self-care rhythms - annual, quarterly, monthly, weekly, & daily. After you've brainstormed a list, narrow it down to your top 5 and give them a rating of "Great," "Okay," or "Not so good."

Top 5	Frequency	Rating



BIG THEMES

Take a moment to pause, and read the prayer on the back of this booklet...
Then, as we proceed to look at 2024, we must first gain perspective on our 2023.
And that perspective must be laced in grace.

This final exercise aims to step back from the many details of the previous exercises and identify big themes that rise above the rest. Are there important ideas surfacing in multiple exercises, which is sometimes an indicator that you should give them special focus? (Themes could involve relationships, money, habits, etc.) Looking back over the last three pages, what big themes rise to the surface?

Less is more. After you list some ideas, narrow them down. What are the two or three most significant things that jump out?

Working **with** God

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. John 15:15

It is also a common misinterpretation that we work FOR God as though God is some cosmic boss-man who gave us an assignment that He wants us to figure out and will be sorely disappointed when we don't. Jesus' words to His disciples, spoken when He was preparing them for His departure from Earth, sound very different than this notion. Jesus' words are invitational. God is pleased to have us share in the family business and work alongside Him empowered by Him.

How would you think about 2024 if you knew that God wanted to work alongside you rather than you working to prove something to him? He likes you and wants to share in the joys, burdens, and vision you have for your life! This is the foundation for finding TRUE NORTH in our lives.

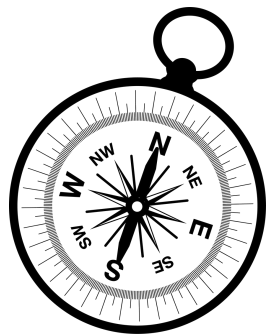
CHOOSING A WORD OF THE YEAR

Jesus came to bring us healing (Matthew 13:15) and life that is truly life (John 10:10). He wants to grow us, change us, and redeem us. Sometimes that happens suddenly, sometimes that happens slowly over time. Finding a word of the year is partnering with God in the process, seeking to align our will with His will for what He wants to do in us. Choosing a word of the year is all about listening for what God has for us.

**In Mark 10:46-52, Jesus asks a blind man, “What do you want me to do for you?”
How would you answer that question?**

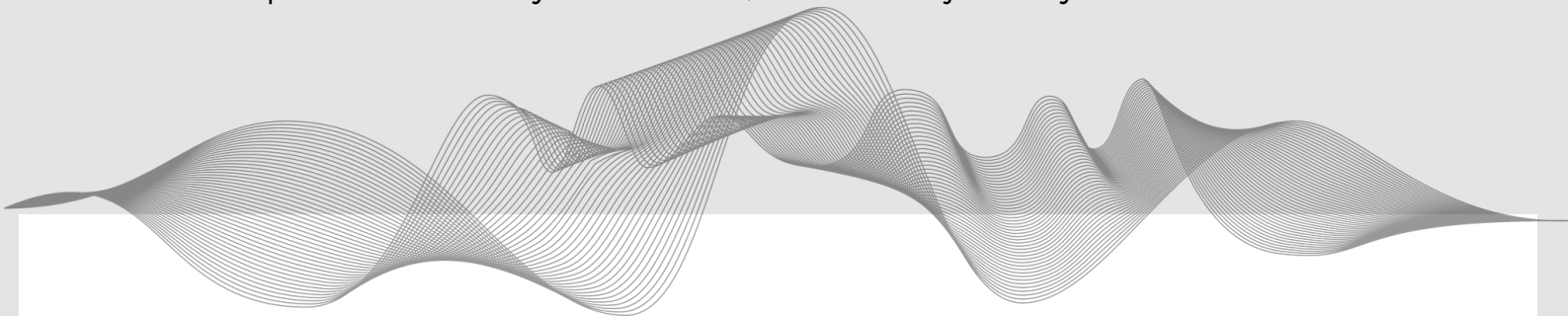
remembering **why**

Great things take time, but waiting is hard to do. It is even harder to wait when things don't seem to be going the way we thought. To wait well, we have to have a strong **why** that keeps us motivated in the hard times and long wait. Use this space below to write the why behind your themes. What is the motivation? What do you hope to see when it becomes a reality?



what is the **one** theme I will hang on to?

As I listen now, what am I hearing? If you are not sure, write a few words that resonate with you and go and look them up in the dictionary. Get creative, this word is just for you.



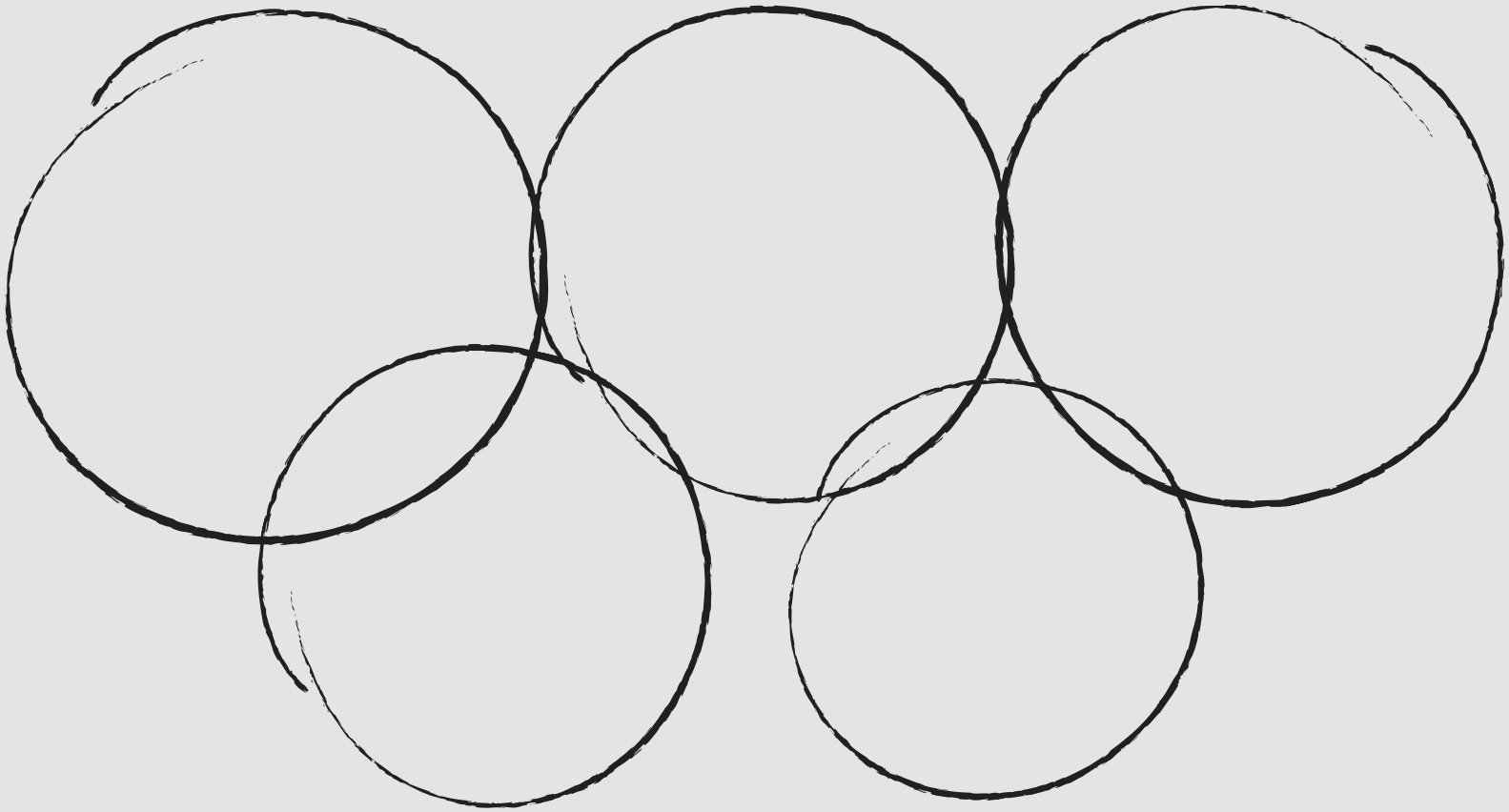
'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. '
Genesis 1:1-3

With a WORD, God created light. Our words demonstrate our intentions. Each day, we have the opportunity to live with intention. The word you will choose should remind you of who you are and what God is speaking to you as a centering point for 2024. Write all of the words below that might be "your word," Then complete the exercises by circling the ONE word.

My **WORD** IS:

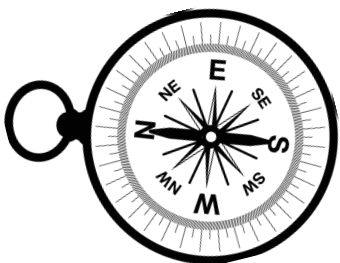
GET INTENTIONAL

Now that you have a WORD to direct you let's look at how that WORD will help you be intentional. Write down up to 5 areas in your life that this word will affect. Then, jot some notes of how you will make these invitations a reality (read a book, seek a mentor, ask someone for help?) and group below.



and practical, say no

It is hard to say yes to new things without making space for them. I am sure you are busy enough because you are an American. So what are you going to say "NO" to so you can say "YES" to God's invitations? Write the things you are going to drop in the space below.



MAKE SOME GOALS

Based on the work on the last page, make a few goals and plan to make them happen! Include the practicals of what, why, how and when. (copy this sheet for all your goals)

What - The Big Picture Goal:

Why does this matter?

What does success look like?

How will I do it?

Step 1:

When?

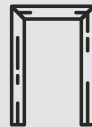
Step 2:

When?

Step 3:

When?

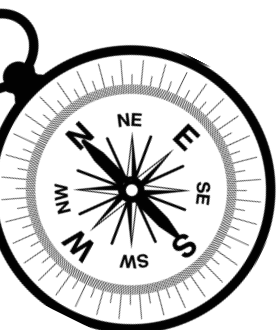
Make it Visual



Where can you put your what you have decided to remind you of your direction? In your car? On your phone wallpaper? Bathroom mirror? Bedroom ceiling? Get creative, have fun. Is there a scripture that goes with your WORD or goals?

to hear well done

And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more. His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' **Matthew 25:23**



THE GENEROUS FATHER

"The prospering of God's people on earth depends upon his people thinking well."
-Dallas Willard

Our minds matter. Our thoughts drive our feelings and are the way we are conscious of things. What comes to mind when you hear the word abundance? What comes to mind when you hear the word scarcity? If your first thought was about money, you are not alone. But what about our mindsets? God desires us to live life from a place of abundance, but more often than we'd like to admit, we tend to operate from a scarcity mindset.

Scarcity is defined as the quality of being scarce or in short supply. This mindset is one of not enough, and it bleeds into the whole of our lives. There's not enough love, recognition, success, grace, mercy, or compassion, forgiveness, not enough (fill in the blank). This type of thinking is a trap.

God wants nothing more than for each of us to prosper. He's placed us on a planet that is nothing short of abundant. But, do you trust that God will take care of you? Do you trust that God will give you everything you need? When we come from a place of fear and distrust, we take our focus away from God and focus on earthly things we believe will secure our future. That's how humans work. When we don't believe God can and will meet our needs, we set out to meet them on our own.

Our minds and hearts were made to know this abundant and generous God. Scripture says, "You are to love the Eternal, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." If our hearts and minds are too busy and focused on collecting things that corrode and rot, then our hearts are not free to be fully with Him.

The key to living out of abundance is in our perspective. We have to see the abundance, choose to live in it, and, most importantly, give it away! We have to shift our perspective/thinking and trust in God's abundance and believe there is enough. Merriam Webster's definition defines abundance as "overflowing fullness." Living from a space of overflowing fullness will open our minds to new possibilities, new ways of thinking, and new ways of being.

who wants you to ask

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14:13-14

Asking God for what you need to make this plan happen is equivalent to believing God is for you and wants to give generously to you! That belief pleases Him. So Ask! Write your prayer here.

A COMMUNAL BENEDICTION

God:

As we look at our year, give us the grace to accept ourselves as humans.

As we look upon our flaws, grant us the grace and acceptance to receive your forgiveness.

As we look upon moments of beauty, give us the readiness to thank you in gratitude.

As we discover our unmet longings, grant us the vulnerability to bring those groaning to you.

As we look into our futures, give us the vision to dream with hope.

As we recognize our limitations, help us trust your provision and sovereignty.

As we dream of a better world, help us partner with you with expectancy.

Your Kingdom Come, your will be done in Durango as in Heaven.

DURANGO VINEYARD CHURCH

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