

## Session 2: Warm-Up

COME!  
ALIVE!

### THE RHYTHM OF THE START OF THE DAY

#### Objectives for Session Two:

- Become aware of your rhythm at the start of the day
- Intentionally set aside time with God in the morning
- Learn how to boost your breakfast with fiber, phytonutrients, and omega-3

#### Beginning Prayer

Let's start our warm-up with a moment to center our minds on the present and open our hearts to God. Sit in a comfortable place, breathe deeply three times, roll your shoulders forward and then backward. Allow your mind to completely disconnect from your day. Now we're ready to read God's word and pray.



*"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." Psalm 119:105*

**God, I invite Your presence. Open my heart and my mind to Your Word and Your wisdom as I seek to find new rhythms in the start of the day that reflect Your desires for me. Amen.**



#### SEEK GOD FIRST

*Desiring to please God with all my heart*

The start of the day can easily be rushed and hectic. You wake up late, your children need you, you spill something on your clothes, you get an urgent phone call, and you skip breakfast because there's no time. You have a donut and coffee at the office because you are famished. The *rhythm* of your first few hours of the day is not what you hoped it would be.

What happens right at the beginning of a typical day for you? \_\_\_\_\_

**What if . . . you included God in the start of your day?**

Let's imagine a different morning. Picture yourself arising 15 minutes earlier than usual. Get out of bed and stand tall, breathing in deeply as you sweep your arms up to the sky and then back down to your sides a few times. As you breathe in and out, match words with your breath (such as breathe in "God," breathe out "is Love"). You've just created a "breath prayer." Repeat this five times or more. Start to feel the energy of the blood circulating through your body. Now both your mind and body are awake.

Next, get a large glass of water and your Bible and sit in your favorite reading chair. You may use a devotional or read a few verses from your Bible. (One chapter of Psalms a day works great, since most chapters are short.) Give what you read time to sink in. Read it again, more slowly this time. Then just *be*. Listen for what God brings to your mind next. Does a certain phrase or sentence stand out to you? Ask God, "What wisdom do you have for me today in these verses?" Give the Holy Spirit time to bring words to you.

Now, find your calendar (it might be in a planner, notebook, cell phone, or PC). Rest your hands on your calendar. Ask God, "Help me to be present in each moment today, so I can listen for your prompting." Look through your appointments and tasks for today. **Release control of the day over to God.**

- Ask God to help you prioritize your day in a way that honors Him.
- Ask God to bless each person you will come in contact with throughout the day.
- Ask God for guidance as you deal with challenges (a difficult boss, an important meeting, a sore back, a sick loved one).
- Thank God in advance for helping you remember to talk with Him throughout your day, for His complete love and acceptance, for His forgiveness, and for His wisdom.

Make yourself a healthy breakfast; perhaps oatmeal, blueberries, ground flax, and cinnamon, or a vegetable omelet. Brush your teeth, get dressed, grab your sack lunch, and start out to your first destination for the day. On the way, listen to Christian music and sing aloud. (Belt it out! Lift your praises to the Lord!)

Does this sound like a morning rhythm that would energize you and help you be mindful of God's priorities for your day? \_\_\_\_\_ What would you include in your ideal rhythm of the start of the day?

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**Praying over your calendar** is a contemporary spiritual practice that you can do anytime, anywhere. Use the act of opening your calendar as a 🛎️ **trigger** to remind you to stop and pray for the people that you will be with today. This practice can create an entirely new outlook on your day.



### What do we mean by a 🛎️ trigger?

Most of our everyday thinking is fast, emotional, and intuitive. In this mode, our minds make decisions without using much mental energy. A trigger is like a “bell” that jars us out of our “mental autopilot” so we can make decisions consciously. For example, when driving a car, we have the ability and motivation to put gas in the tank, but we don’t constantly look at the gas gauge. That’s why there’s a bright colored low fuel signal to catch our attention when action is needed! This trigger reminds us to fill up the gas tank. Without the trigger of the reminder light, we could easily forget to pull over to get gas. We don’t intentionally run out of gas, but sometimes we forget or we’re distracted. Similarly, when we want to make a change in our lives, we need three things to work in unison: (1) have an achievable item to change, (2) have authentic motivation to make the change, and (3) have a trigger to take action (Do it now!).

If you desire to change a behavior or habit, follow these three steps:

- Choose something that God is motivating you (nudging you) to change.
- Start with a small first action that is easily achievable and repeatable.
- Create a 🛎️ **trigger** to remind you to take action. Place the trigger where you can see it or hear it.

We often want to make a change, but simply forget. A 🛎️ **trigger** will prompt you to remember to take the action at specific points in your day.

## A New Start to Your Day

When you make an intentional choice to include God in the start of your day, you are inviting in the power of the Holy Spirit given to you by Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit resides in you. In John 15:4, Jesus says, *“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”*

The “fruit” that Jesus speaks of is further explained by the apostle Paul as the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22–23 says, *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* As your heart is slowly molded to be more like God’s heart, these Christlike traits grow within you and help you live differently.

As you start your day, read God’s Word and listen for God’s guidance. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us, *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* God will help you prioritize your day so you can accomplish the work He has prepared for you. **The more you lean on God’s guidance, the more God can do through you, using His mighty power and strength.**

## God honors our faithfulness with His wisdom.

When you take the time to intentionally include God in the rhythm of the start of the day, God will honor your faithful obedience. This precious time in the morning builds your relationship with God and allows you to absorb God's wisdom. The more you think like God and your heart is attuned with God, the more you are enabled **to see life situations with a new perspective that comes from God**. If you are struggling to see the positive side of changing the rhythm of your morning, God can help you. Below is a list of reasons to start your day with a godly perspective. Rank the reasons in the order of what is most important to you.

- Lets me say good morning to God and thank Him for all of life
- Helps me prioritize my day with a godly perspective
- Gives me peace
- Reduces my stress and anxiety about the day ahead
- Gives me confidence that God will be with me throughout the day
- Gives me purpose: to please God with each thing I do today
- Helps me focus and think more clearly

### Reflection

Put this spiritual practice into action! Go to bed on time tonight and wake up just a bit earlier than usual. Spend quality time with God tomorrow morning and then talk with God throughout the day. Be on the lookout for ways you see God working in situations during your day. Then write down what you notice. \_\_\_\_\_



## LOVE AND BE LOVED

*Accepting God's love and letting it flow in me and through me*



**Whoa, Partner! Slow down and read this section slowly. It's important!**

As you begin the journey to change the rhythm of your day, **don't be too hard on yourself about where you are starting from or how quickly you make progress**. It's easy to think "I'm not good enough" or "I'm not doing enough." **But that is NOT how God sees you!**

The Bible explains a completely different perspective of how God "sees" you. It's important to know the biblical truth that **you are a child of God, an heir of the King of the Universe!** God loves you as His own child. You are God's unique creation, loved and cherished beyond measure.

*"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1*

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we*

*should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.” Ephesians 1:3-5 (ESV)*

*“And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, ‘Abba, Father.’ Now you are no longer a slave but God’s own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.” Galatians 4:6-7 (NLT)*

### **God loves you and wants a relationship with you.**

Romans 8:39 reminds us, *“neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* God accepts us and loves us with a love so big no human can fully understand it! *“Nor anything else in all creation”* includes every sin and every mistake you’ve ever, ever made. **Yes, even those really big ones.**

Even though we are living in a chaotic world, and we’re not perfect children, we have a Savior in Jesus Christ and a loving God who promises to always be with us. Genesis 28:15 assures us, *“I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.”*

### **Reflection**

To prepare for the next session with your small group, read the verses above slowly three times. Think of them as a personal love letter from God to you. Breathe in God’s love as you read the verses.

After reading each verse, let the words roll over you. Ponder their meaning. Perhaps a phrase, a sentence, or a single word will draw your attention. What did you notice?



## **HONOR GOD WITH MY BODY**

*Nurturing and caring for the gift of my body*

### **The Five Strategies:**

- 1 Eat Delicious Whole Foods** that are high in fiber, phytonutrients, and omega-3 fats
- 2 Drink Water** throughout your day
- 3 Create a Mindful Approach to Eating**
- 4 Move More** in ways that get your heart pumping
- 5 Practice an Intentional Rhythm** of work, play, and rest



## Session 2 Warm-Up ●●●

Today, we will explore the first strategy:

**Eat Delicious Whole Foods** that are naturally high in:

**(1) fiber, (2) phytonutrients, and (3) omega-3 fats.**

Good News! If you eat more **(Yes, that's right EAT MORE!)** natural whole foods, just the way God made them, you can enjoy a big variety of beautiful, tasty food and meet your fiber, phytonutrient, and omega-3 targets. When we use the term "whole foods," we mean foods, toppings, and ingredients that have been processed or refined as little as possible and are free from additives or other artificial substances.

### Fiber

**Target: Eat at least 25 - 38 grams of fiber daily**

Fiber is found in plants (not in meat or dairy) and is essential for our bodies. **High-fiber whole foods include** fruits, vegetables, legumes (beans, lentils, and peas), seeds, nuts, and whole grains. Fiber promotes heart health and reduces the risk of certain cancers and diabetes.<sup>2, 3, 4, 5, 6</sup> It gives you lasting energy and keeps your blood sugar stable by slowing your body's absorption of sugar, and it promotes gut health by keeping your digestive system regular.

Since fiber is not digested, it has no calories. **Eating whole foods that are high in fiber helps you lose weight!** Each whole food serving tends to be fairly big (a lot of volume), which activates sensors in your stomach to tell your brain you are full. You will be **eating a larger quantity** of food than you did before, with fewer calories, and you will feel satisfied.

To receive the positive benefits of fiber, women (who consume an average of about 2,000 calories daily) need to eat at least 25 grams of fiber, and men (who consume an average of roughly 2,500 calories) need to eat at least 38 grams of fiber daily.

### Reflection

Turn to the **Full of Freshness Shopper's Guide** on the next page.

List 3 high-fiber whole foods you already eat and you could eat more of:

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What are new high-fiber whole foods that you could try? \_\_\_\_\_

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## HIGH-FIBER TIPS

### How can I eat enough fiber each day?

Use the **Full of Freshness Shopper's Guide** to remind you of high-fiber, natural whole foods that you like and begin eating more of them. One easy way to do this is to add high-fiber whole foods to the things you already eat. Try these ideas to get started:

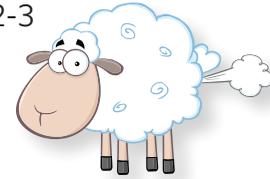
- Add ground flax seed, chia seeds, walnuts, banana, apple, or berries on top of your whole grain hot or cold cereal.
- When making a sandwich, use whole grain bread or a lettuce wrap; then add lots of sliced veggies like cucumber, tomato, spinach, green pepper, pickles, banana pepper, olives, and avocado (think sub sandwich concept).
- Add black beans and brown rice to your homemade burrito and use a whole grain wrap.
- **Keep lots of fruits and vegetables on hand, washed and cut, so they are your go-to snack** at home and at work. Hummus is a satisfying and tasty dip that has healthy fats and fiber and is low in sugar.
- **Read cereal and bread labels** so you are buying the brands with whole grains (not enriched flour), with 4 or more grams of fiber, and low in grams of sugar (sugar has no fiber).
- **Minimize your intake of foods that contain no fiber.** Food from animal sources (meat and dairy), and processed white flour, sugars, and oils **have no fiber**. Processed food products such as donuts, bagels, rolls, candy, pastries, cookies, chips, white bread, and high-sugar cereals have very little fiber or phytonutrient value. **You will eat what you buy . . . leave them at the grocery store and save yourself the temptation.**

## Will I ever get to have **dessert** again?

**We all like to enjoy a treat now and then** . . . so when you choose to eat a treat that has a “negative nutritional value” (high in calories, salt, sugar, fat, omega-6 oils, artificial ingredients, etc.) . . . **be intentional**. Choose a specific time to treat yourself and watch your portion size (this is a great time to eat half of a dessert and share with a friend). Eat the food slowly; fully enjoy it and savor it. Then get right back to your personal rhythm of eating more natural whole foods. As you eat more and more whole foods, your taste buds will change. **You will crave healthier whole food “treats” that have nutritional value** like fresh strawberries and dark chocolate or walnuts with blueberries. Foods with lots of artificial ingredients will start to taste “odd” and have an unpleasant aftertaste. You will know that you’re making purposeful progress when you notice small changes in your sense of taste!

### A Caution about Adding Fiber: Do It Slowly.

While eating plenty of fiber is healthy, **increasing your fiber intake too quickly may cause bloating or excess gas** until your system adapts. Increase the amount of fiber you eat gradually (add one new serving of high-fiber whole food per day for 2-3 days before increasing) until you reach your target. Eat slowly, chew food thoroughly, and drink more water (8 glasses a day). This will help your body get used to the healthy change in your diet.



### The Many Benefits of Fiber-Rich Foods

Check off the benefits that are important to you. Fiber-rich foods . . .

- Reduce whole body inflammation, decreasing the risk of many diseases
- Lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, and high blood pressure
- Help prevent cancer
- Reduce the risk of arthritis and joint pain
- Stabilize blood sugar and reduce the risk of diabetes
- Help you lose weight without being hungry
- Increase energy and reduce fatigue
- Improve sleep and help you live a healthier, longer life
- Promote gut health; reduce heart burn, IBS, constipation, and diarrhea

### Reflection

Now circle the one benefit that matters that most to you. Why did you circle that choice?

## Phytonutrients

(Phyto = plant, so *phyto-nutrients* are nutrients found in plants.)

**Target: Eat 7-13 daily servings of “high phyto” whole foods from plants**

This one is simple: Just eat the beautiful, satisfying, natural whole food plants that God made for us to eat, **and you will be getting the disease-preventing benefits of phytonutrients.**<sup>8</sup>

God created fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, and seeds (all plants in nature) to have more than 25,000 known microscopic substances called phytonutrients (“phyto” pronounced “fītō”). These nutrients are essential to vibrant health and protection from disease. **The beneficial effects are a result of antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, and antibacterial components which help to boost the immune system and aid in cell repair.** These “phyto” benefits help keep your body working properly and reduce the risk of many prevalent diseases, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and obesity.

New phytonutrients and their benefits are being discovered all the time. So when you hear of new studies about phytonutrients with names like **carotenoids, flavonoids, and resveratrol**, rest assured that you are already getting God’s abundance of protective phytonutrients from the natural whole foods you eat.

**How do I reach the target of 7-13 daily servings of “high phyto” whole foods?**

Eat fruits, vegetables, and legumes. A typical serving is one medium fruit or vegetable; or ½ cup. Grains, nuts, and seeds are a bit lower in phytos, so track them by their contribution to grams of fiber for the day. Note that the serving size for nuts and seeds is smaller (1 oz. or what fits in the palm of your hand) due to the high fat content.

All plant foods contain some phytonutrients **if they are not overly processed.** The **Full of Freshness Shopper’s Guide** is an excellent list of high phytonutrient whole food choices (with lots of tasty variety) that you can find at your local grocery store. The resource section also has examples of meals and snacks to inspire and enjoy.

Score a **double bonus!**

When you choose whole foods for their **high fiber content** you are very likely making a good choice for **phytonutrients** as well. **So you will meet two goals with one food choice!**

I’ve heard  
**Dark Chocolate** is good for you. . .

**True.** The cocoa in **dark chocolate** contains phytonutrients that have been shown to promote heart health.<sup>9</sup> Occasionally satisfying your chocolate craving with a small amount of dark chocolate can be a healthy part of your eating plan. The higher the cocoa percentage, the more “phytos” you will get. Look for dark chocolate with at least 65% - 85% cocoa. Watch portion sizes (1-2 ounces), since dark chocolate is high in fat and calories.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Phytonutrients lose their disease-protective capabilities when exposed to too much processing by heat, bleaching, drying, oxidation, and separation of the whole food into isolated parts. For example, when whole wheat flour becomes **enriched flour** or when corn becomes **high fructose corn syrup**, they lose their phytonutrient value. Since about 70% of the typical American diet is processed food, that's a key factor in why most Americans are not consuming enough phytonutrients each day.

God said, *"I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food"* (Genesis 1:29).

**Reflection**

How many servings of whole food containing "high phytos" (fruit, vegetables or legumes) did you eat at the start of the day yesterday? \_\_\_\_\_

What "high phyto" whole foods could you easily add to the start of your day? \_\_\_\_\_

What 📌 **trigger** will remind you to eat them? \_\_\_\_\_

**Omega-3 "Essential Fatty Acids" (known as fats or oil)**

**Target: Consume 1,200 mg of omega-3 (EPA and DHA) each day**

Omega-3 oils are considered essential fatty acids because they are not made in the body, so you need to get them from food. They are vital nutrients found in fish oil and some plants. The most important types of omega-3 for your health are EPA and DHA, which are found in fatty fish and fish oil. **Omega-3 oils help the body by reducing inflammation and play a critical role in reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, obesity, and many more diseases. Omega-3 is also vital for brain and organ function and skin health.** <sup>10, 11, 12</sup>

**A Dramatic Increase in Omega-6 to Omega-3 Ratio in the Western Diet**

There is another essential fatty acid, known as omega-6. Unlike omega-3, omega-6 is highly prevalent in our modern-day food supply, and eating too much omega-6 is associated with **whole body inflammation**. Evidence suggests that our ancestors maintained a ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 in their diet of about 2 to 1, which is very different than today's Western diet, where we commonly see **omega-6 to omega-3 ratios** of 15 to 1 or more. This major shift is the result of changes to both our food supply and our food choices. We're eating too many foods containing high levels of omega-6 (from corn and soy-derived vegetable



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oils in food products) and not enough foods rich in omega-3 EPA and DHA from fish (such as salmon, albacore tuna, and mackerel) and grass-fed beef.

### What is Chronic Whole Body Inflammation?

Inflammation is part of the body's immune response. When the inflammatory response is in balance, it is a good thing. However, when our body's inflammation is out of balance, it becomes chronic and it spells danger for our health. Chronic inflammation is a constant low level of inflammation in our bodies, which can lead to a slow but steady destruction of the body's cartilage and organs.

**Reducing chronic whole body inflammation is an essential part of improving our health.** This may be a new concept for many of us. Chronic whole body inflammation plays a central role in the development of many of today's major diseases. For example:

- Chronic inflammation localized in the coronary arteries leads to **heart disease**.
- When inflammation invades the small airways of the lungs, it leads to **asthma**.
- **Arthritis** occurs when tissue responsible for the production of fluid that lubricates joints becomes inflamed.

The underlying process is the same; just the location and symptoms change. **It's all the result of a body having an inflammatory response that is out of balance.**

**A high omega-6 to omega-3 ratio contributes to whole body inflammation. So do these other factors:**

- **Not eating enough whole food phytonutrients**
- **Not eating enough whole food fiber**
- **Not drinking enough water (chronic dehydration)**
- **Excessive body fat, especially in the belly area**
- **Not getting enough physical activity that raises your heart rate**
- **Being overly stressed and not getting quality sleep**

The **Honor God with My Body** strategies are based on proven nutrition and exercise approaches that have been shown in studies to greatly reduce whole body inflammation and improve your health. The published study of our pilot program demonstrated that these strategies are very effective.<sup>1</sup> When you reduce inflammation, your body can begin to heal itself, get back into balance, and reduce your risk for disease.

### How to Improve Your Omega-6 to Omega-3 Ratio

**Consume at least 1,200 mg of omega 3 (EPA + DHA) each day.**

EPA and DHA are two types of omega-3s found in fish and fish oil. Some plants contain a different type of omega-3 known as ALA, which is a healthy, nutritious oil, but doesn't have the same anti-inflammatory "punch" and other health benefits of EPA and DHA.

To increase your intake of EPA and DHA, eat omega-3 rich fish (such as salmon, albacore tuna, and mackerel) three times a week. The amount of omega-3 varies significantly by type of fish. Find a handy guide to omega-3 levels of seafood in the **Full of Freshness Shopper's Guide**.



### Beware of **TRANS FATS**:

Sometimes high omega-6 oils are partially hydrogenated to help give foods a long shelf life or a desired flavor or texture (such as creamy frostings or buttered microwave popcorns). **Hydrogenated and partially-hydrogenated oils contain trans fats**, which have been linked to an increased risk of coronary heart disease. Be sure to check your labels. **The FDA currently allows foods to have up to .5 grams of trans fats per serving and still list trans fats as 0 in the Nutrition Facts Label!** So you'll need to be a detective and look for partially-hydrogenated oil in the ingredient list. (You can use the **How to Read Food Product Labels tool** to make healthy choices.)

Many find it difficult to eat fish several times a week. You can also get EPA and DHA omega-3 by taking a quality supplement each day. Look for a concentrated omega-3 that contains 1,200 mg or more EPA + DHA in a two softgel serving or in flavored fish oil. (Before taking any supplement, consult your doctor, especially if you are taking medications.)

#### **Consume fewer processed foods containing omega-6 oils.**

High omega-6 foods include fried and other processed foods made with large amounts of vegetable oil, especially **soybean, corn, and cottonseed oil**, as well as salad oils and margarines. In fact, soybean oil is the #1 source of omega-6s in the American diet.

#### **Transform your eating habits: Replace highly processed foods with whole foods.**

##### **This seemingly small instruction might be the most important and the most life changing.**

Our food system and culture of immediate gratification is designed to provide convenient access to taste bud tantalizing, processed food products. And, in order to make these processed foods tasty and available 24/7, they are often loaded with refined flour, sweeteners, unhealthy fats, salt, and chemical ingredients that lack nutritional value.

Honoring God with your body involves slowing down to make mindful choices, which will often be countercultural. **It means deciding to care about the quality of what you put into your body.** God created only one you, in body and spirit, to do His work on this earth. When you care for your body by eating whole foods from nature, you are pleasing God!

*"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own." 1 Corinthians 6:19*

## Session 2 Warm-Up ●●●



**To honor God with what you eat, you'll need to invest a small amount of your time to organize, prepare, and act. We call that OPA!** We'll talk more about OPA in our group session and as we go through the program.

If you are excited to start making changes, tap into the tools and examples in the resource section. Grab a friend and use the tools together.

1. **Helpful Habits for the New Rhythm of Your Life**
2. **Weekly Activity Planner**
3. **Daily and Weekly Journal Templates and Instructions**
4. **Pantry Shopper's Guide—(Full of Freshness Shopper's Guide is on page 29)**
5. **How to Read Food Product Labels**
6. **7 Days of Meal and Snack Ideas—Recipes to inspire and enjoy!**
7. **Energizing Meals at Home and Away**



### **Reflection**

Turn to the *Full of Freshness Shopper's Guide*.

What omega-3 foods on these lists do you already enjoy? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some foods that you don't eat regularly, but are curious to try? \_\_\_\_\_

**What to bring:** during the small group session our focus will be the rhythm of the start of the day. Bring your Participant Guide, calendar, and one example to share of a portable whole food that you enjoy for breakfast.



Small Group Program

What trigger will remind you to:



Seek God First



Love and Be Loved



Honor God with My Body

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

John 15:4



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Cut out this bookmark and put it in a place where you will see it many times a day.

### NOTES

Dotted lines for writing notes.



Small Group Program

## Session 2 Trigger Card

*Where will you put me?  
Ahh... Yes!  
That's a good spot!*

### NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, spanning the width of the page below the 'NOTES' header.

## Session 2: Small Group

# COME! ALIVE!

### THE RHYTHM OF THE START OF THE DAY

#### Objectives for Session Two:

- Become aware of your rhythm at the start of the day
- Intentionally set aside time with God in the morning
- Learn how to boost your breakfast with fiber, phytonutrients, and omega-3



#### Centering and Prayer

**God, we invite Your presence. Open our hearts and minds to Your wisdom and will as we seek to honor You with our lives, spiritually and physically. We thank You in advance for Your Word and Your promise from Matthew 18:20 that *“where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”* Amen.**

#### The Power of **Touch**:

Why is shaking someone’s hand so important? When you touch someone, cortisol levels in your body go down, and serotonin and oxytocin levels go up after six seconds. Lower cortisol reduces stress, and serotonin and oxytocin are hormones that tell your brain to improve your mood and promote bonding. Also, shaking a person’s hand shows that you are open to being in relationship.

#### New Perspectives

##### Review of Moving Forward goals from session 1

What is one change that you made to the rhythm of your day since our last session? \_\_\_\_\_

## Session 2 Small Group ●●●

What was one challenge you faced when making that change?

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Did you use a  trigger to remind you to take that new action? \_\_\_\_\_ What was it? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Beginning of the Day Role-Play

This requires two people willing to dramatically read the following dialogue.

**Person 1:** *Hey (name of 2<sup>nd</sup> person here). You seem out of sorts. Is everything okay?*

**Person 2:** *Hi (name of 1<sup>st</sup> person here). Actually, I'm really having a bad day. It all started with my morning. I was up late last night watching TV; then I just could not get to sleep.*

*So, of course I overslept this morning. I had to get to work on time, so took a quick shower, threw my clothes on, and raced out of the house. I was starving, so I drove thru McWendyKing and got breakfast. I just made it to work in time for my first meeting.*

*All I want to do now is go back to bed. I really feel sluggish and cannot seem to focus on anything! This day has been such a waste.*

*Enough about me, how are you doing? You look great! What are you doing differently?*

**Person 1:** *Thanks for asking, I am doing much better than I was a few months ago!*

*I've been going to bed a bit earlier. I finally figured out sleep is more valuable than late night TV. So that means I can get up a little earlier each day and enjoy a bit of the morning with time for myself. I drink a glass of water and then do a few stretches to get my day going. I also started taking time for a short devotional and to talk with God about the day ahead, and that has been great! It helps get my day off to a good start, with my mind focused on the right priorities.*

*I think you know that I've been working on making healthier eating choices. Well, having a quick, nutritious breakfast at home has made a big difference for me. I throw together oatmeal, cinnamon, blueberries, and bananas—I make some pretty tasty combos. Not only am I saving money, but I'm not hungry all morning, and I have more energy throughout the day.*

*With all that energy, I don't need to be dependent on caffeine to keep me going! I've cut back on coffee and switched to herbal tea and decaffeinated green tea. They're quite tasty—with flavors like peppermint, mango, lemon, and cranberry; and no coffee breath afterward! The best thing is that with less dependence on caffeine, my energy is more balanced and I sleep better. So it's plain water or herbal tea for me!*

*I am sorry for going on and on and that you are having a bad day. Try getting to bed early tonight and take care of yourself with a healthy breakfast.*

**Person 2:** *Thanks, I'll try. Maybe someday when you have a few minutes, could we talk more about what you're doing differently? You really seem to be on the right track.*

**Person 1:** *I would love that. It's a date.*

## Rhythm of the Morning **Worksheet**

On a typical day, what do you do during the first few hours of waking? List your major activities in chronological order.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, overlaid with a collage of images: a man in a blue jacket pointing, a man in a yellow shirt praying, a woman in white stretching, a bowl of cereal with fruit, and a spiral notebook with 'To Do:' written on it and a pencil.

Now turn to the next page and complete the two sections there.

Circle the activities you would *like* to include in your ideal weekday morning routine.



What holds you back from having an ideal morning?

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How can those obstacles be overcome?

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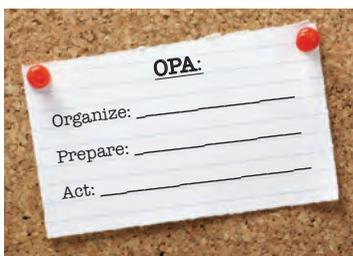
## The Build a Beautiful Breakfast Challenge

**Can you create a breakfast that tastes great AND is high in fiber?**

For this activity, you'll need to reference the **Full of Freshness Shopper's Guide for high-fiber, high-phytonutrient, and high omega-3 foods**. For each basic breakfast item below, find fiber-full foods on the list that you wish to add. Write down the food and amount of fiber. Change the portion sizes if needed. When you are done, add up the fiber gram (g) totals. Get creative! Also keep track of whether your breakfast has any processed items. If they are all straight from nature, you get a star! Note: Nuts, seeds, and spreads are higher in calories, so eat these in smaller amounts. Meat and dairy products have no fiber. As you add more fiber-full choices, you can reduce foods and drinks that do not contain fiber.

### Build a Fiber-Full Breakfast that You Would Enjoy

<b>Example</b>	Oatmeal (Thick/Steel Cut)	1/2 cup (1 serving)	4	
	Fiber-full Additions:	Raspberries (1/2 serving)	4	
		Blueberries (1/2 serving)	2	
		Almonds (1/2 serving)	2	
		Total	12	
<b>Breakfast #1</b>	Whole Wheat Bran Flakes	3/4 cup	6	
	Fiber-full Additions:			
		Total		
<b>Breakfast #2</b>	Omelet	2 eggs	0	
	Fiber-full Additions:			
		Total		
<b>Breakfast #3</b>	Plant-Based Smoothie Powder	1 TBSP	1	
	Fiber-full Additions:			
		Total		



### OPA!

OPA means, Organize, Prepare, and Act.

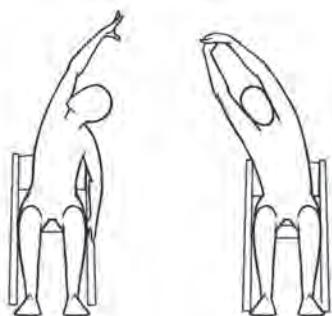
Discuss in your group how you can apply OPA to the rhythm of your morning.

## Movement

Stretching is a great way to start the day. On each stretch, remember to:

- Breathe deeply and slowly.
- Extend to the point of feeling a good stretch, but not to the point of feeling pain.
- Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds, or more if it feels good.
- Go slow and be gentle. Over time, you'll feel greater benefits each day.

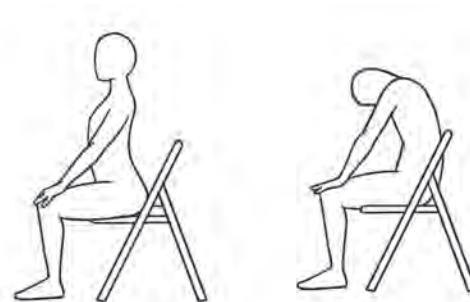
### Side Stretch in a chair



Start seated, with your shoulders rolled back and your lower stomach pulled in toward your spine. Reach one arm overhead and to the opposite side. You can keep the other hand resting on your leg. Picture yourself reaching for a bright red apple on the uppermost branch of a tree. As you stretch, make sure to engage your whole side, all the way down to your hip. Be mindful not to lean forward, just tilt to the side. After you have stretched on one side, do the stretch on the other side. Repeat 5 times. If time allows, try the same stretch with both arms extended.

### Cat and Cow Stretch, in or out of your chair

Sit on a chair with your spine extended and both feet planted flat on the floor. Or start on the floor on your hands and knees. Inhale, arch your back, and drop your shoulders. This is the "cow" position. Exhale and round your spine, letting your shoulders and head come forward. This is the "cat" position. Continue moving between cow (on the inhalations) and cat (on the exhalations) slowly for five breaths.



Try to do these stretches every time you sit down. Make sitting down the  trigger to stretches throughout the day.

## Savor the Flavor

Try a whole food breakfast sample and have a drink of water.

## Spiritual Practice

Today our spiritual practice is **praying over your calendar**. You can do this contemporary spiritual practice anytime, anywhere.

Use the act of opening your calendar as a  **trigger** to remind you to stop and pray for the people that you will be with today. This practice can create an entirely new outlook on your day.

Some thoughts as you pray over your calendar. Ask God:

- to bless each person you will be with today
- to help you see others through the eyes of Christ
- for guidance and peace as you deal with the day's challenges
- for a heart of joy and gratitude to celebrate daily blessings, big and small
- to help prioritize your day with a rhythm that honors God



Reading a Scripture verse as a part of praying over your calendar is a great combination. Today, let's read God's guidance from Philippians 2:3-4, *"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too"* (NLT).

Allow time for God to prompt you and suggest ways that He wants you to spend your time.

After you finish praying over your calendar, let's pray together: Thank You, God, in advance for Your guidance and presence throughout the day. Thank You for creating the world, for creating each of us. Thank You for Your forgiveness of our sins, for Your complete and unconditional love and acceptance of each of us.

How do you think praying over your calendar will help you in your day?

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What stood out the most for you during this activity?

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# Moving Forward



## New Rhythms for the Start of Your Day:

What actions can you commit to for your new start of the day?

Write down actions that are small, specific, and attainable.



### SEEK GOD FIRST

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### LOVE AND BE LOVED

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### HONOR GOD WITH MY BODY

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Note what  **trigger** will remind you to take action.



## Getting ready for Session 3: The Rhythm of Midday

- Take time to read the Session 3 Warm-Up in your Participant Guide
- Bring your Participant Guide and a pen or pencil to the next session
- Bring something natural you can add to water to charge it up for the Savor the Flavor table

**Join the group for a brisk walk right after the session.**