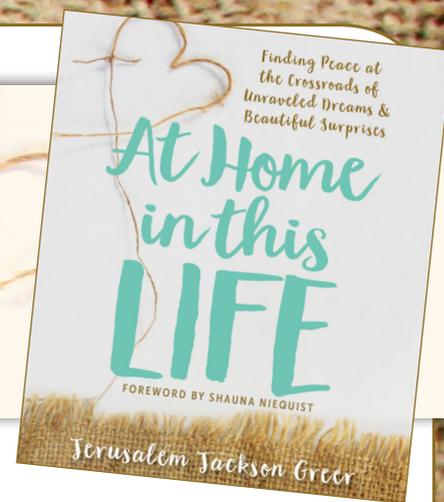




# At Home in this LIFE



## 8-Week Reading and Discussion Plan

### Week One

#### Read

Scriptures: *Genesis 16*

Chapters: *Mess, The Plan, Falling*

#### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** Is there a part of your life that you wish you could easily escape from? Like Sarai and Jerusalem, are you tempted to force the result you want by any means possible instead of doing the harder work of waiting and obeying? What plan are you devising right now?

**PRAYER:** God of hope and mercy, forgive us for the times we try to go our own way instead of following after you. I now release my plans for happiness to you, trusting that you are good and faithful. Amen.

**GROUP DISCUSSION PROMPT:** Share a story from a time when you have pulled a Sarai or a Jerusalem — trying to circumvent God's timing, forcing your will instead. What lesson did you learn?

### Week Two

#### Read

Scriptures: *Jeremiah 29:1–14*

Chapters: *Sitting, Stability, Stewardship, & Painting Walls*

#### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** What does stewardship meant to you? What is something you have allowed to fall into disrepair (finances, house, yard, relationship, body)? What are the hurdles keeping you from being a good caretaker and steward of this item?

**PRAYER:** God, caretaker and creator of all, thank you for your loving kindness and continual care of me. Please grant me the courage and grace I need to be a better steward of all I have. Be with me in the moments I am overwhelmed, and continue to fill me with your grace as I tackle those things I think are beyond my abilities or resources, in order that I may be fully present in the life you have given me. In Christ's name, Amen.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** What passage in Jeremiah 29 resonates with you in this season of your life? How can this group support you as you become a better steward of that area?

## Week Three

### Read

Scriptures: *1 Corinthians 13*

Chapters: *Simplicity, Fasting, and Laundry, Stillness, Being, and Mending, Silence, Prayer, and Stitching*

### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** What are the actions or items in which you find your worth? What things do you “do” to earn love from others? What would it look like for you to fast from those things for a season? What fears or feelings of hope does that idea bring up in you?

**PRAYER:** Loving God, thank you that your love for me does not depend on my words or actions. Thank you for the gifts of silence, fasting, and stillness. May I be aware of the Holy Spirit’s leading as I begin to learn how I can practice these disciplines, becoming more whole in the process. In Christ’s name, Amen.

**DISCUSSION PROMPT:** Which of these chapters resonated the most with you? Which discipline – fasting, stillness, or silence – scares you the most? How can this group help support you as you develop your practice?

## Week Four

### Read

Scriptures: *Genesis 1:31–2:4*

Chapter: *Sabbath*

### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** What would it mean to savor rest in your life? What do you need to let go of (feelings of needing to be productive, fear of stillness, etc.) in order just to rest?

**PRAYER:** God of goodness and rest, thank you for modeling the pattern of creation and rest for me. Please help me to find my identity in your delight instead of in my to-do list. May I learn to savor and celebrate all that is good and whole instead of just what is productive. In Christ’s name, Amen.

**DISCUSSION PROMPT:** Blessing, resting, pausing, savoring, appreciating, discovering beauty and goodness – share one way you are going to begin practicing one or more of these Sabbath practices in the next two weeks. How can the members of this group help each other?



## Week Five

### Read

Scriptures: *Jeremiah 29:1–14, Deuteronomy 28:1–6*

Chapters: *Manual Labor, Restoration, and Thriving, Mutual Support, Starting Seeds and Gardening*

### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** Blessings don't come because God loves those who obey more than those who don't obey. Blessings come as a result of doing the things that are best for us – which are the very things God is always instructing us to do, as in Jeremiah 29:1–14. But often these commands require hard work. They require us to set aside our comfort for the sake of our growth. What hard work is God calling you to do right now? Where do you need to grow, and what comforts will you have to give up in the process?

**PRAYER:** God of wisdom and hope, thank you for loving me as I am, where I am. Help me to trust your wisdom and the leading of the Holy Spirit. May you give me the boldness and faith needed to work hard as I set aside my comfort and become more wholehearted, as I follow your commandments to restore what is neglected, and to thrive where I have been planted. In Christ's name, Amen.

**DISCUSSION PROMPT:** What in your life needs restoration or better tending in order to thrive? What will it cost you in order to be faithful to this process? How can this group help?

## Week Six

### Read

Scripture: *Jonah*

Chapter: *Conversion: Lessons from a Worm Farm*

### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** Both Jonah and Jerusalem needed a change in attitude. Where in your heart do you need to experience a similar conversion? In what attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs do you need to experience the same sort of refining process that the worms give to Jerusalem's scraps?

**PRAYER:** God of transformation, be with me now as I look at the areas of my heart that are in dire need of conversion and change. Help me to remember that I do not have to walk this road alone, that you are never overwhelmed by the work we have to do together. May I be rooted in your unfailing mercy and love as I choose to cooperate with you in my own transformation. In Christ's name, Amen.

**DISCUSSION PROMPT:** What part of this chapter resonated the most with where you are right now? Which part of the refining process do you need most? (To learn to do your own work, to enter into community, to trust the Holy Spirit more?)



## Week Seven

### Read

Scripture: *James 1:19–25*

Chapters: *Cooking, Listening, and Marriage, Humility, Prayer, and a Crazy-Quilt Pot Pie*

### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** Re-read James through the lens of the Twelve Steps of Humility on pages 144 and 145. Notice which step or verse creates tension in your body. Reflect on why this is and what steps you might need to work on for your own growth.

**PRAYER:** God of humility and relationship, thank you for the gift of insight and self-awareness. Please help me to understand the ministry of humility in the context of my relationships with others, and with myself. May I become a more patient, honest, content, empathetic, and grateful person, as I learn to practice being in your presence in the midst of all things. In Christ's name, Amen.

**DISCUSSION PROMPT:** Which step of humility were you surprised to see listed? How has your understanding of obedience and humility changed?

## Week Eight

### Read

Scriptures: *Jeremiah 29:7 and James 2:14–26*

Chapters: *Hospitality, Soup Kitchens and Lenten Dinners and Widows, Orphans, Deep Gladness and Nest Fluffing*

### Respond

**JOURNALING PROMPT:** What dream are you holding onto that you cannot fulfil for yourself, but that you might be able to fulfil for someone else, like Jerusalem and her house? How can you take steps to make this happen?

**PRAYER:** Eternal God of dreams and gifts, thank you that you have given us to each other. Thank you that we have the opportunity to care for one another. Please give me the creativity and open heart needed to see how I can use my great gladness to meet the world's great need. May I always have open eyes and willing hands to see those in need, and to help them in action as well as in words. In Christ's name, Amen.

**DISCUSSION PROMPT:** What is your great gladness? Where can it meet the world's great need? How can the members of this group help each other accomplish these ideas?

