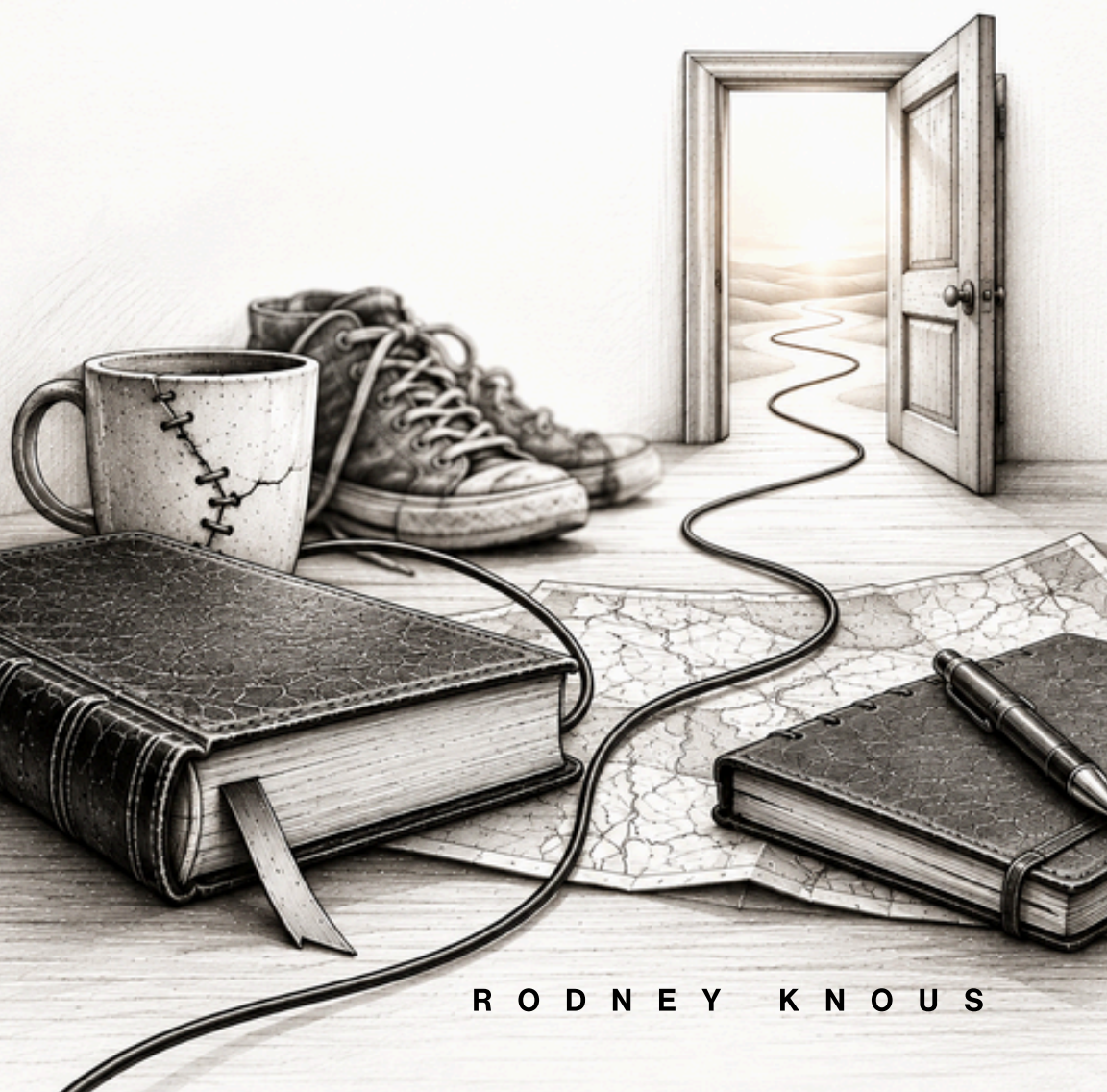


JESUS

in Real Life

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR
A DEEPER, MORE CONNECTED FAITH



R O D N E Y K N O U S

JESUS

in Real Life

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR
A DEEPER, MORE CONNECTED FAITH

R O D N E Y K N O U S

Jesus in Real Life

A Ten-Week Journal for Following Jesus in Everyday Life

Copyright © 2026 by Rodney Knous

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from the author, except for brief quotations in reviews or articles.

Churches and small groups may reproduce the Small Group Guide (Appendix B) for use within their own groups.

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This journal is intended for spiritual encouragement and growth. It is not a substitute for professional counseling, medical care, or emergency help. If you or someone you know is in danger, please see Appendix C or call 911.

Cover and interior design: Rodney Knous

First Edition, 2026

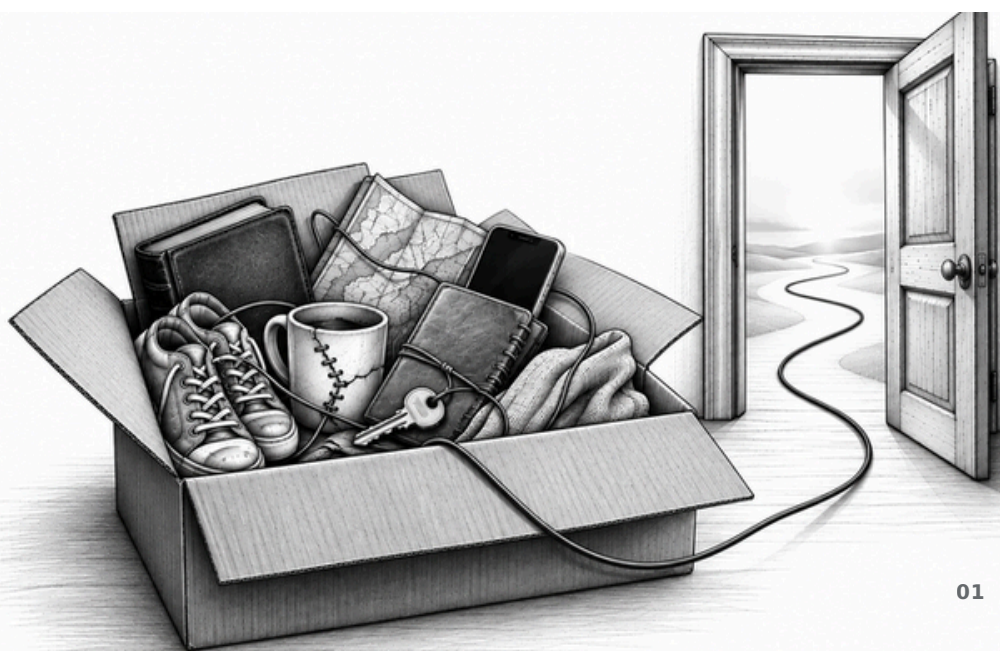
Printed in the United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEGIN HERE	01
Why This Journal Exists	05
What Is Following Jesus?	07
How to Use This Journal .	09
Where Am I Beginning?	11
A Prayer for the Journey	13
TOOLS	15
Help #1 Getting to Know Your Bible	16
Help #2 Learning to Read Scripture	19
Help #3 Finding a Study Rhythm	22
Help #4 Learning to Pray	26
Help #5 Growing in Everyday Life	30
THE TEN WEEKS	
Week 01 Do I Actually Know Jesus?	35
Week 02 How Do I Actually Read This Thing?	47
Week 03 Who Has My Attention?	59
Week 04 How Do I Actually Talk With God?	71
Week 05 Why Am I Still Like This?	83
Week 06 What Do I Do When I Don't Know What to Do?	95
Week 07 How Do I Follow Jesus in My Everyday Life?	107
Week 08 What Do I Do When Following Jesus Costs Me Something?	119
Week 09 What About When Life Gets Hard?	131
Week 10 What If God Really Is With Us?	143
KEEP GOING	155
Where Am I Now?	156
Where Do I Go From Here?	158
As You Keep Walking	159
A Prayer for the Road Ahead	160
APPENDIX	161
A What If I Want to Follow Jesus?	162
B Small Group Guide	164
C If You Are in Danger	167

Begin Here

A place to begin. A way to keep growing.



Welcome to the Journey

I'm glad you're here.

Whether you've followed Jesus for decades, recently placed your faith in Him, or are still trying to figure out what you believe, I want you to know that this journal was created with you in mind. You may have **grown up** in church. You may **know** the stories, **recognize** the songs, and even have a **favorite** Bible verse. But somewhere along the way, you may have wondered what it **actually** looks like to follow Jesus in everyday life.

- How do I read the Bible and understand what it says?
- How do I talk with God when I'm not sure what to say?
- How do I grow in my faith when life is busy, complicated, or simply overwhelming?
- And what happens when I keep struggling with the same things, even though I genuinely want to follow Jesus?

Those are important questions. They're also questions that many of us share, regardless of how long we've been Christians. That's why I created Jesus in Real Life. I don't want you to simply know more **information** about Jesus. I want you to know Him more **deeply**. I want you to discover how His **truth** speaks into your relationships, decisions, struggles, hopes, and ordinary routines. Because following Jesus isn't something we do only on Sundays.

It's a way of life.

This journal is designed to help you take **intentional steps** in that journey. Over the next ten weeks, we'll explore some of the **foundational** practices and questions involved in growing as a follower of Christ. You'll find Scripture readings, practical guidance, reflection questions, and space to write what you're learning. But I want to make something clear from the beginning.

This journal is a **tool**, not a test.

You don't have to complete every page. You don't have to write something profound. You don't even have to know what you're doing when you begin. Some days, you may fill an entire page with observations and prayers. Other days, you may read a passage and write only a sentence. That's okay.

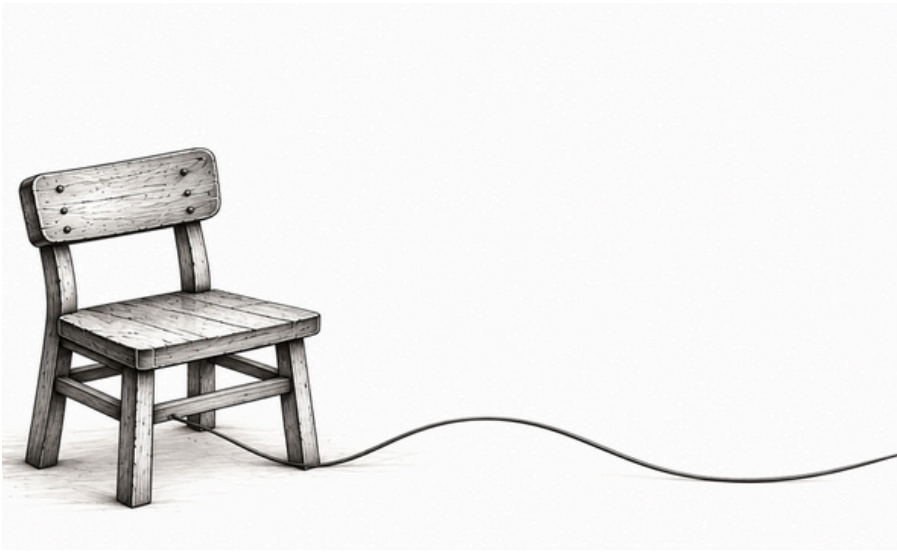
The goal isn't to fill a journal. The goal is to **grow** in your relationship with Jesus.

And that kind of growth doesn't happen because we become exceptionally good at completing religious **activities**. It happens as we **respond** to God's grace, spend **time** in His Word, **depend** on His Spirit, and learn to walk in **obedience** to Him. My prayer is that this journal helps you discover that growing in your faith doesn't require a complicated system. It begins with a willingness to come to Jesus, listen to His Word, and respond to Him. I'm grateful we get to take this journey together.

Rodney

WEEK 01

Do I Actually Know Jesus?



As you participate in worship today, record what stands out from the message. Tomorrow, the readings for the week will be presented. Today, pay attention to what God is highlighting in corporate worship.

- My observations, questions, and prayers
- What I want to remember
- How I want to respond

The Invitation

I've spent much of my life around church, and one thing I've learned is that being **familiar** with Jesus isn't necessarily the same as **knowing** Him. We can know the stories, recognize the songs, and understand how a church service works. But familiarity can sometimes keep us from asking a more personal question: **Do I actually know Jesus?**

In John 17, Jesus prays to the Father shortly before His arrest and crucifixion. He describes eternal life in terms of knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom the Father has sent. Eternal life is possible because of what Jesus has done for us, and the life He gives brings us into a relationship with God that begins now and continues forever. I don't want us to begin with a challenge to become busier at church or a list of habits to master. I want us to begin with Jesus Himself.

- Who is He?
- Why did He come?
- What has He done for us?
- And what does it mean to trust and follow Him?

Maybe you're still exploring those questions. Maybe you've followed Jesus for years but realize you've been going through the motions lately. Wherever you are, there's room to take another step.

A question to carry with you:

When I think about Jesus, do I primarily think about information I know, activities I do, or a Savior I trust and follow?

WEEK 01

Your Five Readings

1. John 17:1-5 — Knowing God through Jesus
2. Mark 1:14-20 — Jesus calls people to follow Him
3. Ephesians 2:1-10 — Salvation is God's gift of grace
4. Luke 19:1-10 — Jesus seeks and saves the lost
5. Philippians 3:7-14 — Pressing on to know Christ

This week's practical help

When you're learning about Christianity, it's easy to become overwhelmed by questions about church, theology, habits, and expectations. Those questions matter, but the center of Christian faith is Jesus Christ. As you read, pay attention to what Jesus says and does, what the passages reveal about His identity and mission, and His invitation to follow Him.

Read John 17:1-5

As you reflect: What does Jesus say eternal life involves? How does that deepen or challenge the way you've thought about knowing God?

My observations, questions, and prayers

Read Mark 1:14-20

Jesus announces the good news of God's kingdom and calls people to repent and believe. He then invites four fishermen to follow Him. These men don't yet understand everything about Jesus, but His invitation changes the direction of their lives.

As you reflect: What is the difference between being interested in Jesus and responding to His call to follow Him?

My observations, questions, and prayers

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

It's easy to imagine that a relationship with God begins when we become good enough. Paul tells a different story: our rescue is rooted in God's grace, not in our ability to earn His acceptance. Read through verse 10 and notice that good works have a place in Christian life—but they are not the basis of salvation.

As you reflect: What does this passage teach you about what God has done for us and how we respond to His grace?

My observations, questions, and prayers

Read Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus is a tax collector whose life has made him unpopular. Jesus sees him, calls him by name, and enters his home. The encounter leads to a visible change in Zacchaeus's life. Pay attention to who takes the initiative and how Zacchaeus responds.

As you reflect: What does this encounter reveal about Jesus' heart toward people who need Him? What does Zacchaeus's response show about a life being changed?

My observations, questions, and prayers

Pressing on to Know Christ

Read Philippians 3:7-14

Paul had an impressive religious résumé, yet he counts all of it as loss compared with knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. Even so, he doesn't claim to have arrived. He presses on to know Christ more, because Christ has already made him His own. Knowing Jesus isn't a decision we make once and leave behind; it's a relationship we keep growing in.

As you reflect: What might it look like for you to keep pressing on to know Jesus—not to earn His love, but because He has already made you His own?

My observations, questions, and prayers

Keep the conversation going. Return to a reading, record a question, write a prayer, or reflect on what you are learning.

My observations, questions, and prayers

Weekly Reflection

Before you move on, take a few moments to look back over your readings and journal entries.

- What am I learning about Jesus?
- What am I learning about my need for Him?
- Is there a question I want to explore or a conversation I need to have?
- What is one faithful next step I can take?

A prayer for the week

Jesus, thank You for coming to seek and save people who need You. Keep me from settling for familiarity with You when You're inviting me to trust and follow You. Help me understand the grace You've shown me through Your life, death, and resurrection. Where I have questions, give me a willingness to keep seeking truth. Teach me to depend on Your grace. Amen.
