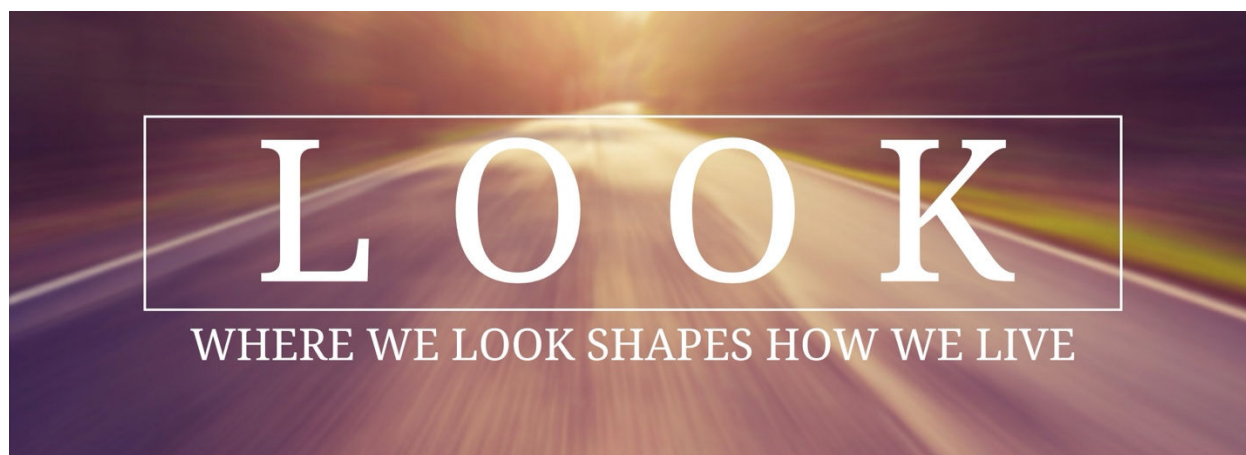




Growth Group Questions
August 16, 2026
“Look Up”

SCRIPTURE AND QUOTES

Nehemiah 1

¹The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ²Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. ³They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept.

For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵Then I said: “LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁶let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you. ⁷We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸“Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’

¹⁰“They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.” I was cupbearer to the king.

Mark 1:35-39

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

³⁸ Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Psalms 46:8-10

⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields^[a] with fire.

¹⁰ He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”

Frederick Buechner – *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*

"Be importunate (about prayer), Jesus says – not, one assumes, because you have to beat a path to God's door before he'll open it, but because until you beat the path maybe there's no way of getting to "your" door."

QUESTIONS

1. What does Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1:5-11 tell us about Nehemiah's understanding of God's character?
2. What lessons can we learn from Nehemiah's approach to prayer?
3. In his prayer, Nehemiah prays God's promises back to Him. How would praying God's promises back to Him change the way you approach God in prayer?
4. In Mark 1:35, we are told that Jesus went to a solitary place to pray early in the morning. What other Bible verses speak to us about Jesus' prayer life and what lessons can we learn from His example?
5. Pastor Paul spoke about the importance of finding solitude and silence so that we can be with God. Why do you think solitude and silence are important for an effective prayer life?
6. What kind of things tend to get in the way of your finding solitude and silence to be with God?

7. What strategies have you found to be successful in consistently “finding a place and making a space” to be with God?
8. What does it mean to be persistent in prayer?
9. Why do you think God wants us to be persistent in prayer?

PASTOR PAUL’S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. Is there something in your life you are trying to “fix” before you have brought it to God?
2. How can you realistically “find a place” and “make a space” this week to simply be with God?