

This "Going Deeper" material is designed to be the "meat" that follows your 30-minute sessions. Each week includes a deeper Scriptural dive, a connection to our Lutheran heritage via the Small Catechism, and a specific reflection to start the "morning after."

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## The Way of the Master: Going Deeper

### Week 1: The Incarnation: Proximity

- **The Big Idea:** Jesus didn't just send help; He showed up.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Hebrews 2:17-18**. Note that Jesus had to be made like us in "every respect" to become a merciful high priest. He didn't observe our suffering from a distance; He qualified Himself to help by experiencing it.
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Second Article of the Creed*. Luther writes that Jesus is "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary." He is not a distant deity; He is a neighbor.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Christ's work began by being *with* us. Who is one person you've been trying to help through a screen or a check who actually needs 15 minutes of your physical presence?
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### Week 2: The Desert: Integrity

- **The Big Idea:** You cannot give what you haven't stored up.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Psalms 119:9-11**. Storing up the Word isn't about passing a test; it's about "guarding one's way." Integrity isn't the absence of temptation; it's the presence of a pre-stored truth.
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *The First Petition ("Hallowed be Thy name")*. God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** When stress hits today, notice your "default" response. Is it a stored-up Scripture or a stored-up defense mechanism?
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### Week 3: The Mountain: The New Ethic

- **The Big Idea:** Modeling Jesus is a heart-fix, not a habit-track.
- **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Romans 12:14-21**. Paul takes Jesus' "Mountain" ethics and applies them to a community. He emphasizes that we don't just "not murder"; we "bless those who persecute."

- **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Table of Duties*. Luther points us to our specific "stations in life" (boss, employee, parent, citizen) as the exact places where we live out the Sermon on the Mount.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Pick one "Beatitude" (e.g., being a Peacemaker). How does that change your perspective on your first meeting or task today?
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## Week 4: The Secret Place: Dependence

- **The Big Idea:** If you don't come apart to rest, you will just come apart.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Psalm 46:10**. "Be still and know that I am God." The Hebrew for "be still" can be translated as "let go" or "relax." It is an active cessation of our own striving.
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Introduction to the Lord's Prayer*. "Our Father." God wants us to believe He is our true Father and we are His true children, so that we may ask Him "confidently with all assurance."
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Silence is the "Secret Place." Take 5 minutes today to sit in absolute silence—no music, no phone. What is the first thing that bubbles up in your mind?
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## Week 5: The Border Crosser: Inclusion

- **The Big Idea:** Jesus sees a person where we see a category.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Galatians 3:28**. In Christ, the categories that the world uses to divide us (Jew/Greek, Slave/Free) are not erased, but they lose their power to separate us.
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Eighth Commandment*. We are to "defend [our neighbor], speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way." This requires crossing borders to actually hear their story.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Categorizing people is a mental shortcut that bypasses love. Today, try to notice one person you usually "summarize" (e.g., "the difficult clerk") and see them as a "person for whom Christ died."
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## Week 6: The Healer: Compassion

- **The Big Idea:** Compassion starts with a touch, not a check.
- **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Matthew 25:35-40**. Jesus identifies so closely with the "least of these" that He says when we touch them, we are touching Him.

- **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Fifth Commandment*. "We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need."
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Compassion (from the Latin *compati*) means "to suffer with." Is there someone in your orbit today whose pain you can simply acknowledge rather than trying to "solve"?
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## Week 7: The Truth-Teller: Holy Friction

- **The Big Idea:** Being "nice" is a mask; being "kind" is a mirror.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Ephesians 4:15**. "Speaking the truth in love." Truth without love is brutality; love without truth is sentimentality. Jesus modeled the perfect integration of both.
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *Confession and Absolution*. Real truth-telling starts with being honest about our own "whitewashed tombs." We cannot speak truth to others if we are lying to ourselves about our need for grace.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Where are you avoiding "Holy Friction" today? Is there a conversation you are postponing because you'd rather be "nice" than "truthful"?
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## Week 8: The Feeder: Abundance

- **The Big Idea:** Your "not enough" is exactly what Jesus needs.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **2 Corinthians 9:8**. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *The First Article of the Creed*. God "richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life." We serve from a place of abundance because the Source is infinite.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** We often play the "if only" game ("If only I had more time/money/talent..."). Today, offer Jesus exactly what you *do* have, however small, and watch how He uses it.
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## Week 9: The Basin & Towel: Servanthood

- **The Big Idea:** Greatness is found in the direction of the floor.
- **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Philippians 2:3-4**. "Do nothing from selfish ambition... but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." This is the "downward mobility" of the Kingdom.

- **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Fourth Part of Baptism*. The "Old Adam" in us—the one who wants to be served—must be daily drowned through contrition and repentance so a "new man" of service can arise.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Who is the person in your life you feel "above" serving? Find one small way to take the "lower place" for them today.
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## Week 10: The Garden: Submission

- **The Big Idea:** Submission is the ultimate expression of trust.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Psalm 75:8** and **Psalm 116:13**. Understand the "Cup" metaphor. Jesus drank the "Cup of Wrath" so that we could be handed the "Cup of Salvation."
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Third Petition ("Thy will be done")*. God's will is done when He "strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die."
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Submission isn't about losing your will; it's about trusting the Father's heart when His plan is different than yours. What "Nevertheless" are you offering Him today?
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## Week 11: The Cross: Sacrifice

- **The Big Idea:** The way up is the way down.
  - **Digging Into the Word:** Read **1 Peter 2:21-24**. "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."
  - **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Theology of the Cross*. Luther taught that we find God not in glory or power, but in suffering and the cross. Modeling Jesus means looking for Him in the low places.
  - **Morning After Reflection:** Suffering is often a "witness" to others. How you handle a difficult day or a painful loss today may be the most powerful "model" of Jesus someone else sees all week.
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## Week 12: The Commission: Empowerment

- **The Big Idea:** The Master's work is now your trade.
- **Digging Into the Word:** Read **Acts 1:8**. The power to model Jesus doesn't come from your willpower; it comes from the Holy Spirit. You are not "acting" like Jesus; His Spirit is living *through* you.

- **The Lutheran Lens:** *The Third Article of the Creed.* "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ... but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."
- **Morning After Reflection:** You are "commissioned" exactly where you are sitting right now. Your neighborhood, your office, and your family are your mission field. What is one "Jesus-trait" you can intentionally carry into them today?