

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- **Single-Mindedness**
"I focus on God and His priorities for my life."
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Welcome to a New Year and a new series! I pray that your resolutions for a new year will include a renewed or continuing commitment to pursuing God through His Word, the Bible. As we begin a new series, I want to invite you to take a few minutes each day to familiarize yourself with the Scripture passage that we'll be looking at the coming Sunday. We'll offer some questions to help you think through, interact with, and apply a portion of that Scripture to your life. Then, when you come to the worship service or your community group, you'll be that much more ready to "Engage"—with God and others!

If you've been using Engage for a while, you may notice it's a bit "slimmed down." Our purpose in that is to make this tool as accessible and useful to as many people as possible. We pray that it will be for you! I'm grateful for Suzan White, our current writer. If we can do anything to make this tool more helpful to you in your walk with God, please let me know. You can email me at richardgotthardt@gccaz.org.

I'm excited for all that God is doing and for all that He will be doing in the coming year! I pray you are, too.

In His Love,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Day 1: New Song

Read Psalm 96

Today we will focus in on verses 1-3. Reread these verses and underline the actions we are commanded to take.

God is constantly at the work of redemption—bringing good out of evil in our individual lives and in the world. In Isaiah 43:19, we get a glimpse of this ongoing redemption:

*"See, I am **doing a new thing!** Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."* (Isaiah 43:19)

Think about your life over the last few months. Write down several examples of God's movement in your life—the "new thing" He is doing.

Close your time by offering up to God a "new song." Praise Him for these examples of His work in your life.

Day 2: Above all gods

Read Psalm 96

Go back and reread verses 4-5. What do these verses say about the LORD?

Any thing or person that distracts us from our worship of God can become an idol in our life. Are there any things or people that you have allowed to take God's place of honor in your life?

Confess to God that these have become idols. Ask Him to help you place Him above all other things in your life.

Day 3: Come and Bring

Slowly read through Psalm 96 again today. Reread verses 6-8.

What adjectives are used in reference to God in these verses?

In verse 8, we are called to do take three actions in our worship of God. What are these actions?

As you look up and focus on God today, how can you fully come into His presence? Are there things that are distracting you from Him?

Are you bringing your whole life as an offering, or are there areas of sin you are holding back? Confess these to God.

Through prayer, ascribe or give to God the glory (fame or honor) His name deserves. Here are several of the names used for God in scripture. Think on them and use them to praise Him:

- Jehovah Rapha = The LORD that Heals
- El Olam = The God of Eternity
- Elohim = Judge and Creator
- Jehovah Jireh = The God who Provides

Day 4: The LORD Reigns

Read Psalm 96 in its entirety. Then reread verses 9-10.

What are we commanded to proclaim among all nations?

If the LORD reigns as King and Judge of all peoples, what implications does this have for mankind?

What implications does this have for your individual life?

How are you acknowledging and declaring with your life that the LORD reigns?

Confess to God the ways you have failed to acknowledge His reign in your life. Praise Him for His reign over the earth.

Day 5: He is Coming

Read Psalm 96 and then re-read verses 11-13.

What aspects of creation are listed in these verses and what actions are they taking?

Why are they worshiping God in these ways?

We enjoy the beauty of God’s creation, and yet, this beauty we enjoy has been minimized by the impact of sin’s grip on this world. The world, as it was intended to be enjoyed, was drastically altered at sin’s inception in the Garden of Eden. Imagine the beauty and splendor of God’s creation in its most perfect form—the way it was meant to be. Our minds will never fully capture this, but we can rest in God’s sure and imminent return in which He will graciously judge the earth and its people. This will begin a new time in which God’s beauty and creation will be restored to its intended perfection.

Praise God thanking Him for His return, judgment of this sinful world, and restoration of creation.