

Devotional Guide

March 30-April 4, 2026



Genuine Connections

Only God can be God in your life.

Speaker: Mike Kleven, Lead Pastor

The message reveals how unspoken expectations in relationships often stem from expecting others to fill voids only God can. We place hidden vows on spouses, friends, and children to make us feel wanted, safe, and valued—yet these expectations lead to disappointment, shame, and hiding, just as sin did in Genesis 3.

God designed us for genuine loving connections. Through Jesus we discover fullness (Colossians 2:9-10), freeing us to stop demanding others be saviors and start serving them with Jesus. The message unpacks four steps to genuine connections. This truth transforms loneliness into life-giving community.

How to Use This Guide:

Set aside 10-15 minutes daily. Read the Bible, reflect on the thought, answer questions, pray, and take the action step. Commit to this for growth—journal insights and share with a friend for accountability.

Day 1: Emptiness of Expectations

Bible Reading: Genesis 2:21-25; 3:6, 9-10

Devotional Thought:

The message opened with a wedding scene where unspoken vows often hide beneath the surface vows. Many of us enter relationships hoping a spouse or friend will heal childhood wounds and fill the emptiness inside. Yet when these expectations go unmet, relationships crash and shame rises—just as Adam and Eve hid from God after their choice to displace Him.

We were created for genuine intimacy, but displacing God sabotaged the very connections we long for. The big idea reminds us: Only God can be God in our lives. Small compromises—like expecting a friend to make us feel significant—invite the same cycle of disappointment. Jesus invites us to release those hidden demands and find fullness in Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does Genesis 2 reveal about God’s design for relationships?
2. Where have you placed unspoken expectations on someone close to you?
3. How does Genesis 3:9-10 connect to feelings of shame or hiding today?
4. What “void” are you tempted to fill with people instead of God?
5. How does the big idea bring hope here?

Prayer Prompt:

Lord, forgive where I’ve expected others to be what only You can be. Reveal any hidden vows I’ve made. Thank You for Jesus who fills me completely. Help me release those expectations today. Amen.

Action Step:

Write down one unspoken expectation you’ve placed on a loved one and surrender it to God in prayer.

Day 2: God’s Beautiful Design for Oneness

Bible Reading: Genesis 2:21-25

Devotional Thought:

Genesis 2 paints a picture of perfect intimacy: man and woman becoming one flesh, naked and feeling no shame—physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. The message highlighted this as God’s original intent for genuine connections with Him and one another. No hiding, no pretending, just complete openness.

Yet we know the story didn’t stay there. The big idea—Only God can be God in our lives—reminds us that when God is at the center, relationships flourish without the pressure of performance. In daily life, think of friendships or family moments where vulnerability felt safe. Jesus restores that possibility by first filling us with Himself.

Reflection Questions:

1. What stands out to you about “one flesh” in Genesis 2:24?
2. When have you experienced a moment of “no shame” in a relationship?
3. How does this design contrast with today’s relational struggles?
4. Where do you long for deeper oneness in your life?
5. How does knowing God’s design fuel hope?

Prayer Prompt: Creator God, thank You for designing us for genuine connection. Restore oneness in my relationships. Fill any emptiness with Your presence. Amen.

Action Step: Spend five minutes thanking God for one person in your life and pray for deeper connection with them.

Day 3: Sin Introduced Shame and Hiding

Bible Reading: Genesis 3:6, 9-10

Devotional Thought:

One choice to displace God changed everything. Adam and Eve felt exposed, afraid, and hid among the trees. The message showed how this same pattern repeats: we expect imperfect people to be our saviors, and when they fail, shame drives us to hide our true selves.

The big idea—Only God can be God in our lives—breaks the cycle. Jesus steps into our shame and offers forgiveness and fullness. In real life this shows up in social media masks or family tension.

Grace invites us to step out of hiding and into the light of His love.

Reflection Questions:

1. What caused Adam and Eve to hide in Genesis 3?
2. Share a time you felt the need to hide your real self.
3. How does shame still affect relationships today?
4. In what area do you need freedom from hiding?
5. How does the big idea bring freedom here?

Prayer Prompt: Jesus, thank You for meeting us in our shame. Forgive where I've hidden. Draw me close and help me walk in honesty. Amen.

Action Step: Confess one area of hiding to God and choose to share honestly with a trusted friend.

Day 4: Only God Can Be God in Our Lives

Bible Reading: Colossians 2:9-10; Ephesians 5:21

Devotional Thought:

The message lands on the liberating truth: Only God can be God in our lives. Colossians 2:9-10 declares that in Christ we have been brought to fullness—everything we've sought from people is already ours in Jesus. Ephesians 5:21 sets the baseline for every relationship: mutual submission out of reverence for Christ.

The sermon illustrated how expecting others to be saviors makes life miserable; releasing them to God brings freedom. In daily life this means surrendering the pressure we place on family or friends.

The big idea transforms our approach from demanding to delighting in God's provision.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does "fullness in Christ" mean to you personally?
2. How have you seen the pressure of expectations harm a relationship?
3. Why is Ephesians 5:21 radical in our culture?
4. What would change if you fully believed only God can be God?
5. How does this truth affect your self-worth?

Prayer Prompt: Father, I declare that only You can be God in my life. Fill me with Your fullness. Free me from demanding others meet my needs. Amen.

Action Step: Memorize Colossians 2:9-10 and repeat it when you feel tempted to expect too much from someone.

Day 5: Let God Be God / Decide to Love

Bible Reading: Colossians 2:9-10

Devotional Thought:

The message unpacks four action steps to genuine connections, starting with letting God be God and making the decision to love. When we reclaim God as our source and embrace our identity—loved, secure, significant in Jesus—we no longer need to take from others. Instead, we give from fullness.

The sermon contrasted takers (always empty) with givers (always rich). The big idea—Only God can be God in our lives—makes this shift possible. In real life it might mean changing “What can I get?” to “How can I serve?” in a friendship or marriage. Jesus modeled this perfectly.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does fullness in Christ free us to give instead of take?
2. Which secret feels hardest for you right now?
3. Describe a time giving brought unexpected joy.
4. How can you apply “decide to love” this week?
5. What emotions arise thinking of living from fullness?

Prayer Prompt: Lord, help me let You be God. Fill me so I can give freely. Shift my heart from taking to loving like Jesus. Amen.

Action Step: Pick one relationship and intentionally serve that person today without expecting return.

Day 6: Learn to Love / Put Love into Action

Bible Reading: Ephesians 5:21

Devotional Thought:

Reviewing the week, the message calls us to the final two action steps: learn how to love by knowing others' stories and put love into action through the Bible's "one another" commands.

Asking questions about hopes, wounds, and how God has wired someone builds real connection. Then we live out patience, kindness, forgiveness, and submission—all from the overflow of Jesus in us.

The big idea—Only God can be God in our lives—makes this sustainable. The sermon challenged us to test it: it is more blessed to give than to receive. Declare daily God's place and provision in Jesus and watch genuine connections form.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does "submit to one another" look like in everyday life?
2. Share a key insight from the week.
3. How has your view of relationships shifted?
4. Where will you apply one of the four action steps?
5. How can you celebrate God's fullness today?

Prayer Prompt: Loving Father, thank You for fullness in Jesus. Help me learn others' stories and put love into action. Use me to build genuine connections. Amen.

Action Step: Tell one person this week about Jesus' fullness and how it changes relationships. Review the guide weekly for ongoing momentum.



FBC Falun
23661 Range Line Road
Falun, Wisconsin 54972

Mike Kleven, Lead Pastor

Phone: 715-689-2124
FBCFalun.org / FBCFalun