

Introduction to Paul's Middle Letters

Today we are going to look at Paul's expectations for his churches in his middle letters.

The middle letters are: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

As we begin this series, as is often the case, I have to work around in them with a few preliminary studies before I officially begin the booklets.

Same is true this time. I am not sure of a few things and need to get fully into them to pave the way for the hard research and careful presentation for the Mastering the Scriptures series.

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Issue: Paul's expectations for his churches

Questions:

1. What does Paul expect from his churches? towards each other? toward Paul and his ministry?
2. What does it mean to participate with Paul in the progress of the gospel?
3. What does it mean to be equipped for the work of the ministry?
4. What does it mean to become one mature church reflecting the image of Christ?

Ephesians 4:11–16

¹¹So these were the gifts that he gave. Some were to be apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, and others pastors and teachers. ¹²Their job is to give God's people the equipment they need for their work of service, and so to build up the king's body. ¹³The purpose of this is that we should all reach unity in our belief and loyalty, and in knowing God's son. Then we shall reach the stature of the mature Man measured by the standards of the king's fullness. ¹⁴As a result, we won't be babies any longer! We won't be thrown this way and that on a stormy sea, blown about by every gust of teaching, by human tricksters, by their cunning and deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, we must speak the truth in love, and so grow up in everything into him—that is, into the king, who is the head. ¹⁶He supplies the growth that the whole body needs, linked as it is and held together by every joint which supports it, with each member doing its own proper work. Then the body builds itself up in love.

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¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

NRSV

Colossians 1:28–29

²⁸ He is the one we are proclaiming. We are instructing everybody and teaching everybody in every kind of wisdom, so that we can present everybody grown up, complete, in the king.

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Philippians 1:3–6, 27

³ I thank my God every time I think of you! ⁴ I always pray with joy, whenever I pray for you all, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ Of this I'm convinced: the one who began a good work in you will thoroughly complete it by the day of King Jesus.

²⁷ The one thing I would stress is this: your public behavior must match up to the gospel of the king. That way, whether I do come and see you or whether I remain elsewhere, the news that I get about you will indicate that you are standing firm with a single spirit, struggling side by side with one united intent for the faith of the gospel,

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² Devote yourselves to prayer; keep alert in it, with thanksgiving. ³ While you're about it, pray for us, too, that God will open in front of us a door for the word, so that we may speak of the mystery of the king— which is why I'm here in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may speak clearly about it. That's what I am duty-bound to do.... ⁷ Our dear brother Tychicus will tell you all my news. He is a faithful servant, indeed a fellow slave in the Lord. ⁸ This is why I'm sending him to you—to let you know how things are with us, and to encourage your hearts.

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**Remember where we are in the series of
Paul's letters in Mastering the Scriptures.**

Paul's Early Letters

The Process of Building Strong Churches



Paul's Early Letters

Strong in the Gospel

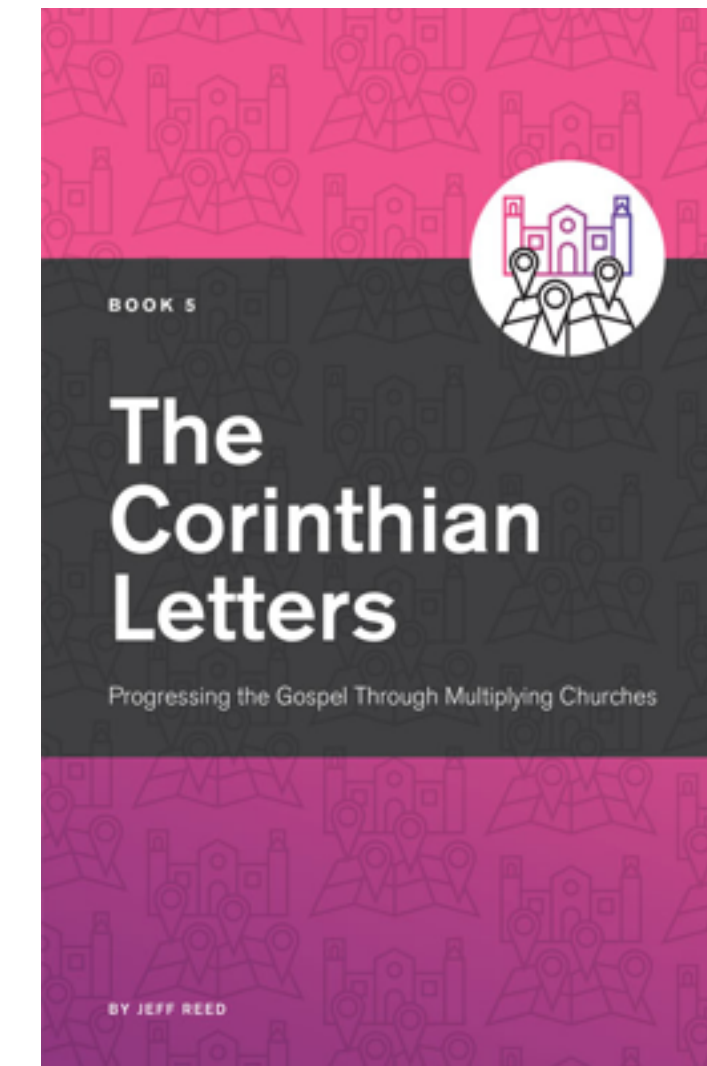
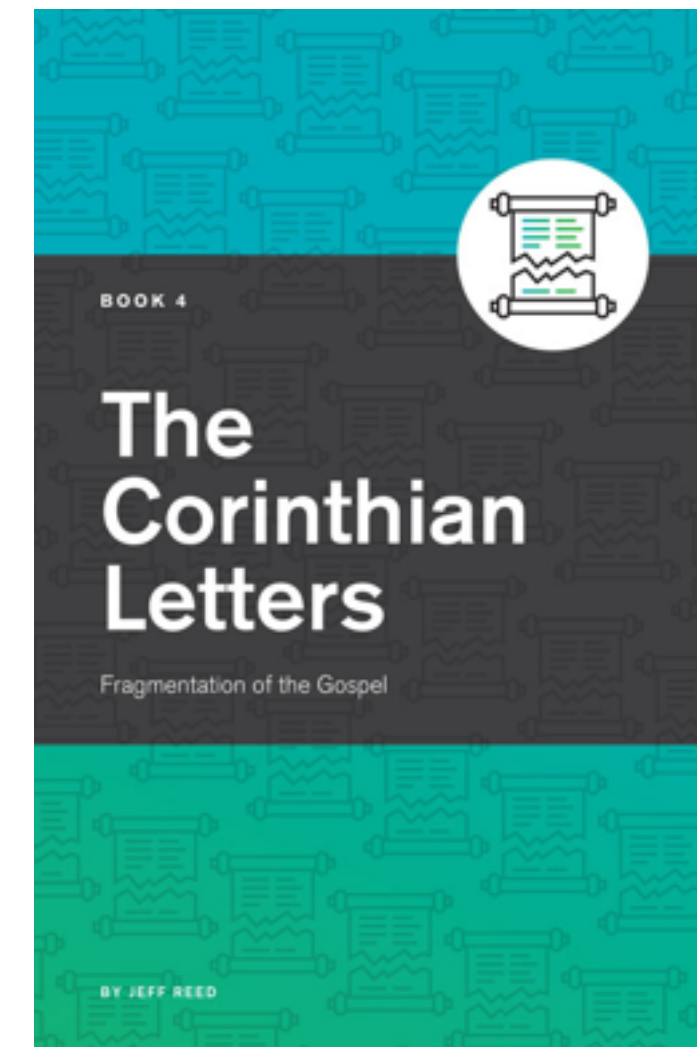
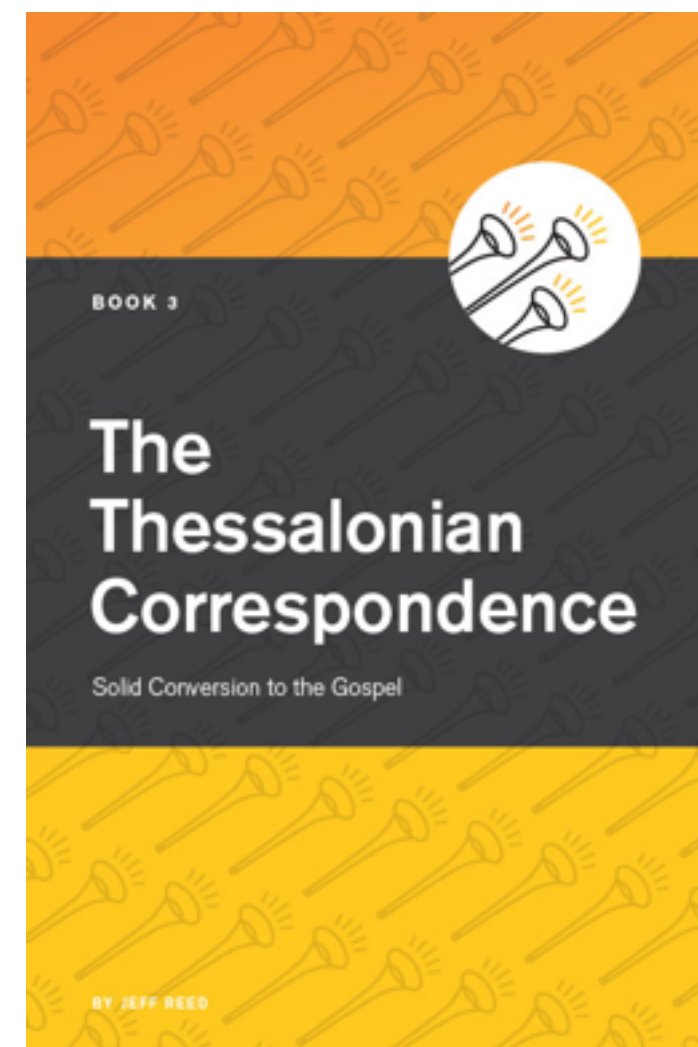
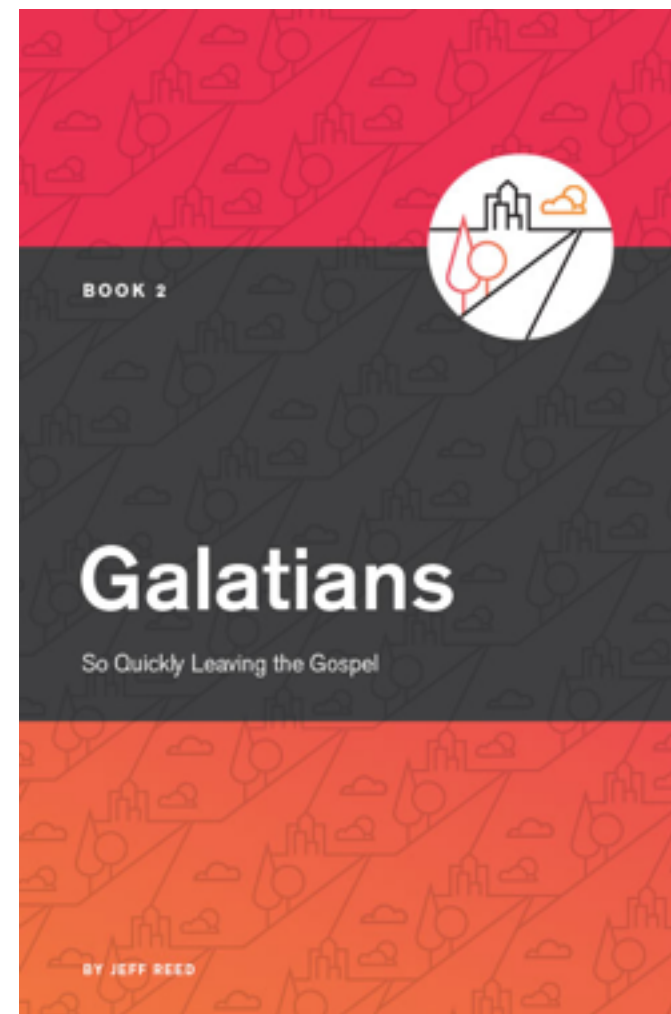
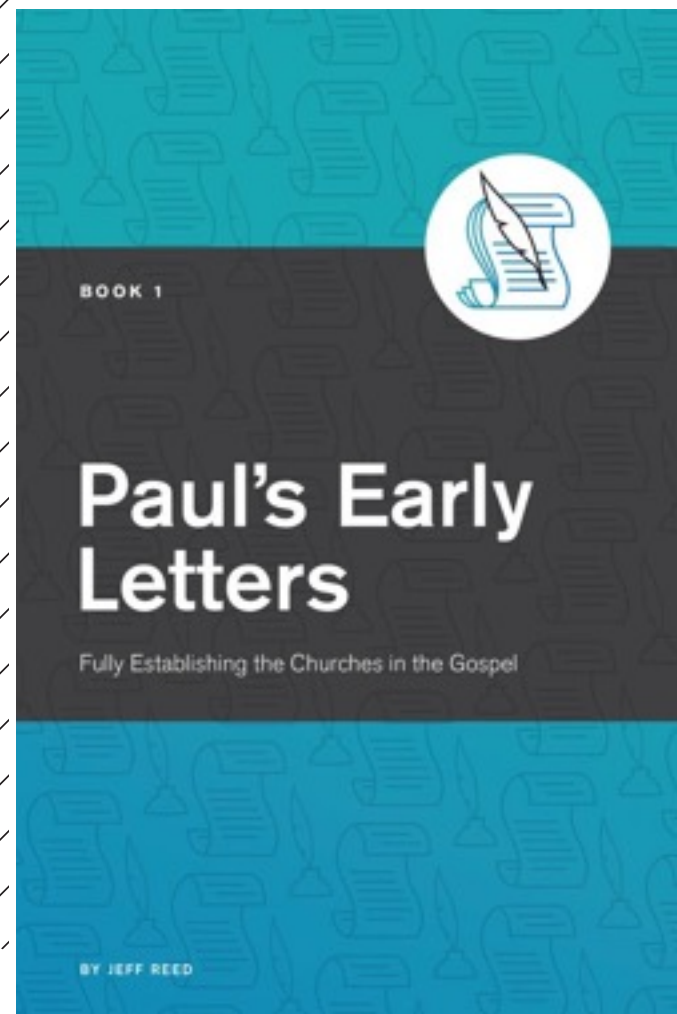
Paul's Middle Letters

Strong in the Mission/Vision of the Church

Paul's Later Letters

Strong Mature Households and Leaders

Paul's Early Letters



**Last week we looked at all the people in
Paul's middle letters**

The People of Paul's Middle Letters

Ephesians: Paul, Tychicus, a loyal servant, and the churches of Ephesus

Philippians: Paul, Timothy I have no one else of his quality, Epaphroditus, your agent to me, Euodia and Syntyche, who have struggled alongside me, and Clement and the other colaborers, and the churches of Philippi

Colossians: Paul, Timothy, the family in Laodicea; Tychicus, Onesimus, one of your own number, Aristarchus, who was in jail with me sends his greetings, Mark, Barnabas's nephew—welcome him, Jesus Justus—these three the only fellow Jews among my colleagues; Epaphras, one of your own folk; the family in Laodicea and in Hierapolis; Luke, the beloved doctor, Demas, the family in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house, Archippus

Philemon: Paul, Timothy, Philemon, colleague and partner; Apphia, our sister, Archippus, comrade in arms, and the people who meet in their house; Onesimus, “Mr. Useful.”; Epaphras, my fellow prisoner; Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my colleagues here.



**Greet the Arab
Spring brothers,
and Ali, who is
leading networks
of churches**



Greet the Albanian team, especially Femi, who leads the churches of Kosovo, and Steve, who has faithfully served the churches of Albania and Kosovo for 18 years, and Holger, his colleague



**Greet Zhen, Heng,
founding leaders of
the house church
movement of
China; and Hugo,
the key market
place leader in
Hong Kong**



**Greet Hugo and Yuenyi;
Mark and Lynda and
the entire Hong Kong
team; along with Dillis,
a benefactor to the
city.**



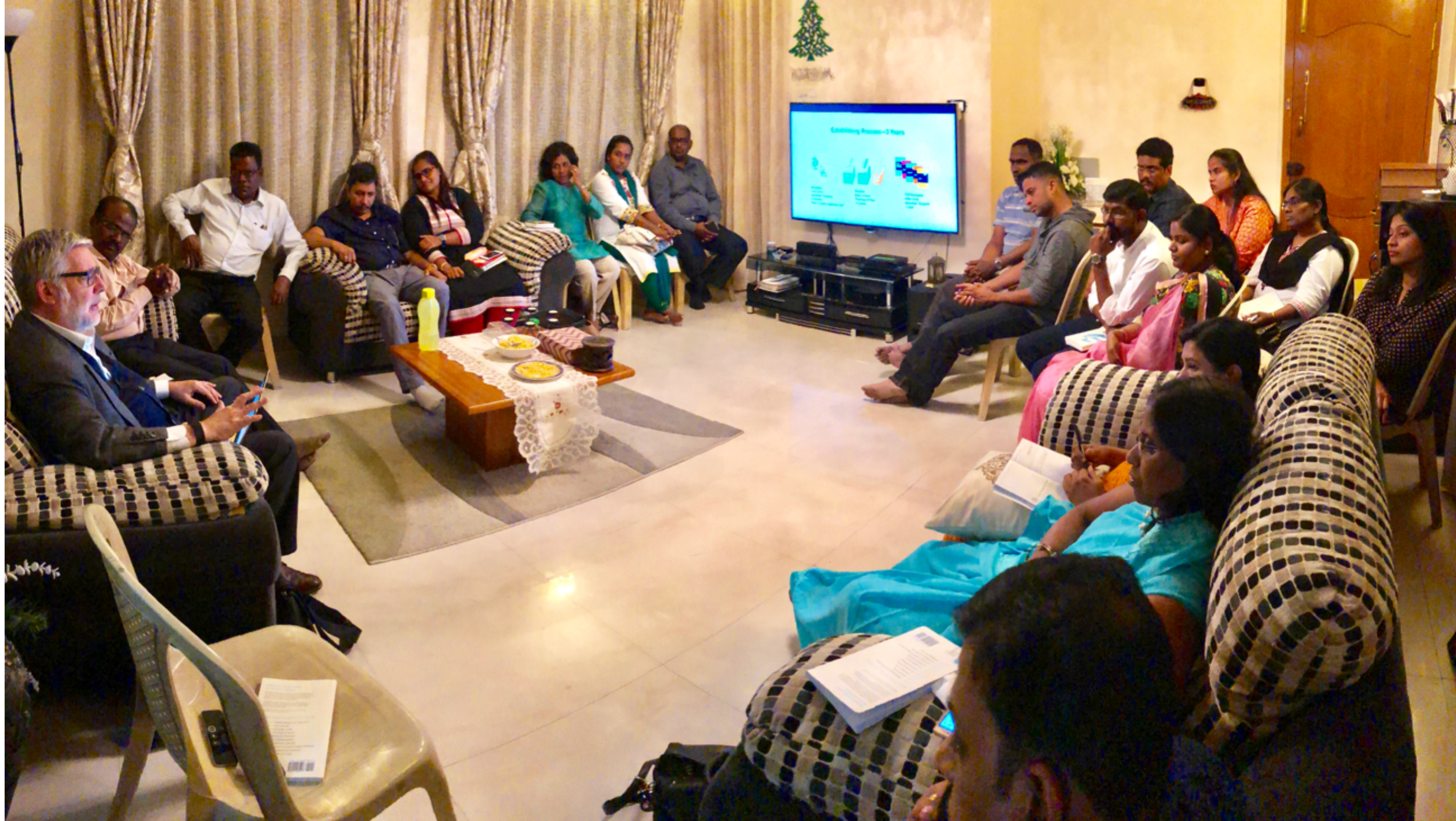
And greet Zekiel, a renowned Chinese theologian who has joined our Hong Kong team.



**Greet the bishops of
the 6 East Africa
Community
countries, especially
Joseph, the
mobilizer.**



Greet Yusufu and Yunusa, whose leadership and network are serving all the churches of Nigeria.



**Greet Chadwick
our faithful
colleague from
Chennai, and the
leaders who
meet in his
house**

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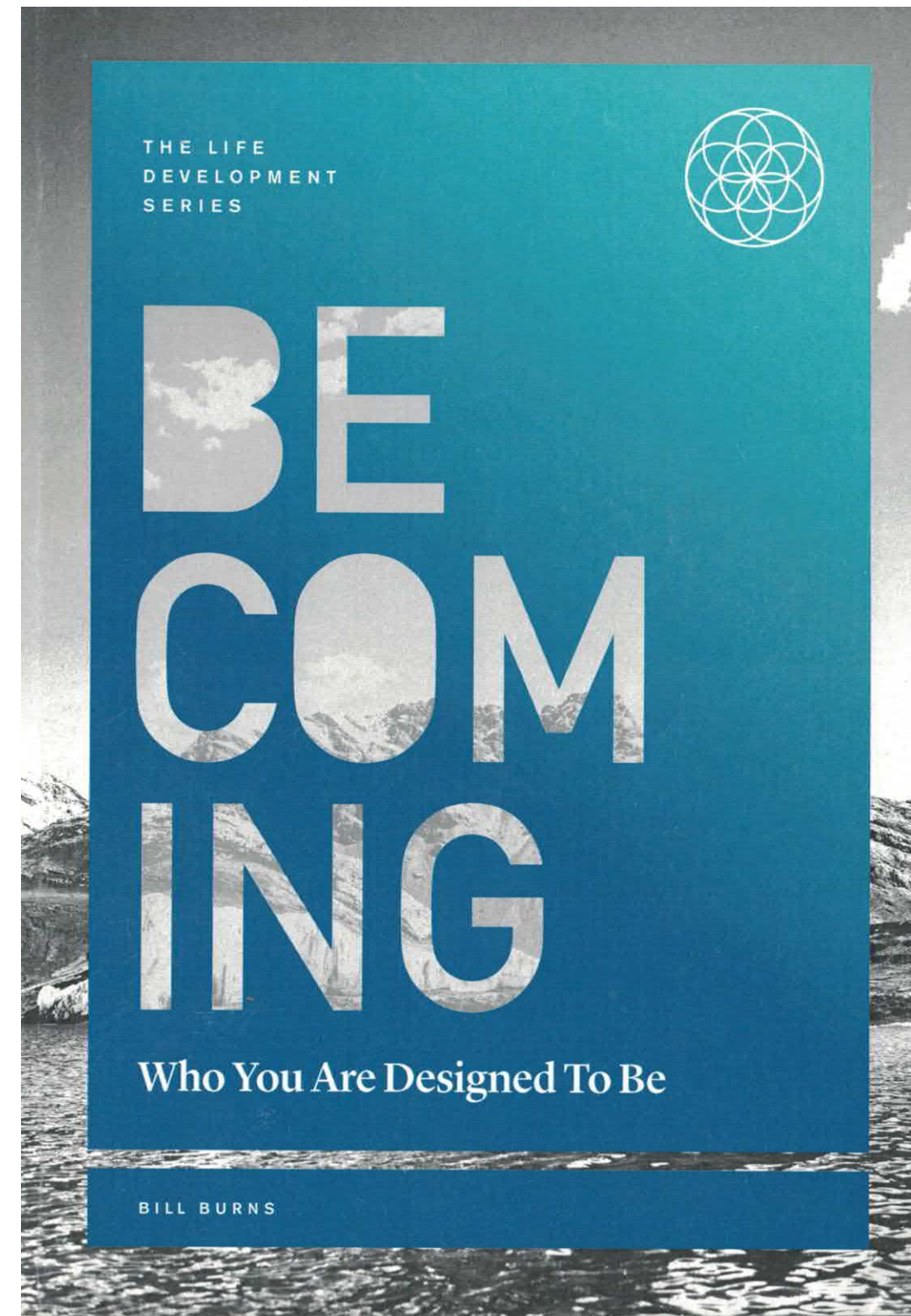
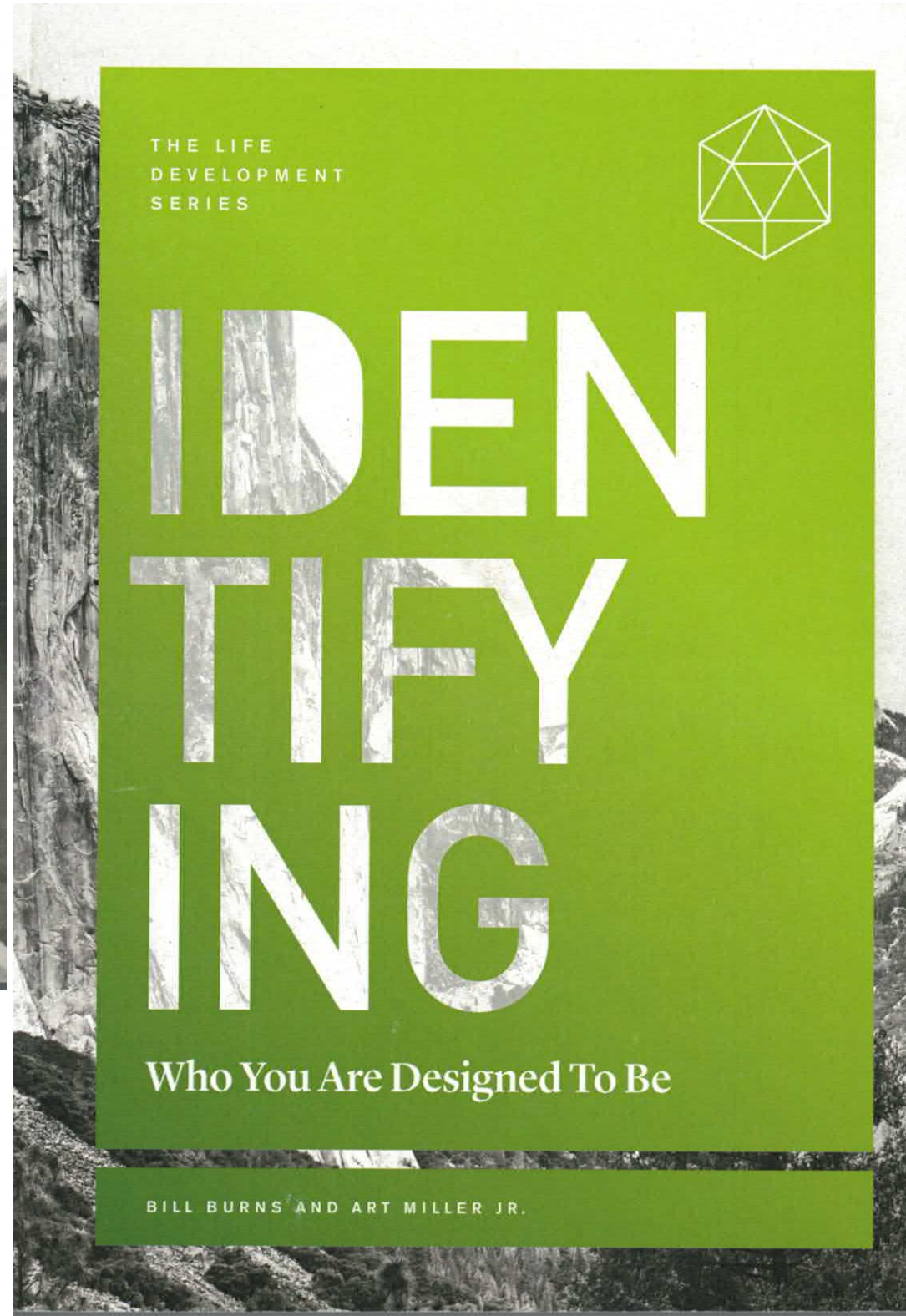
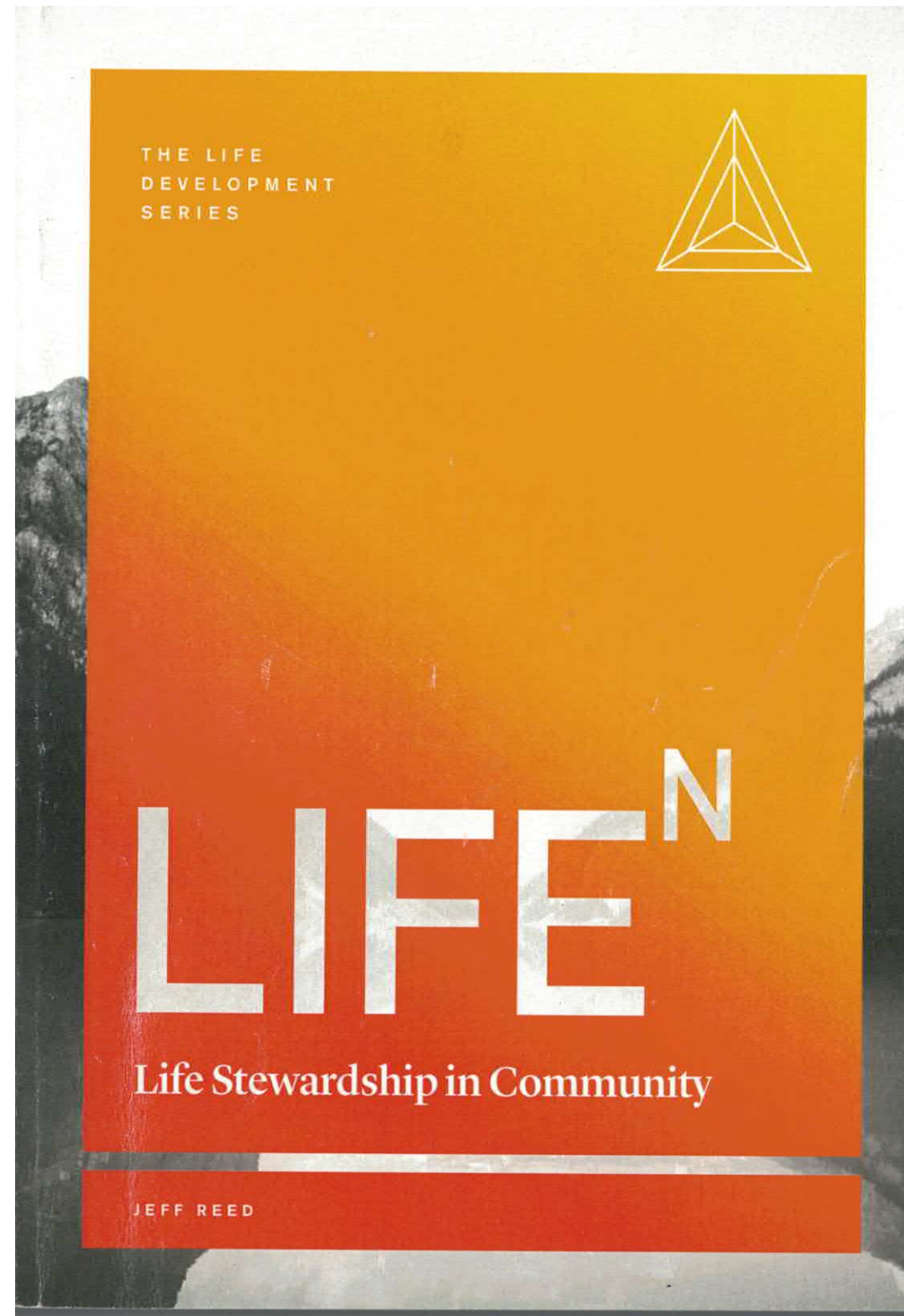
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Paul's Expectations of His Churches Reflected in the Middle Letters

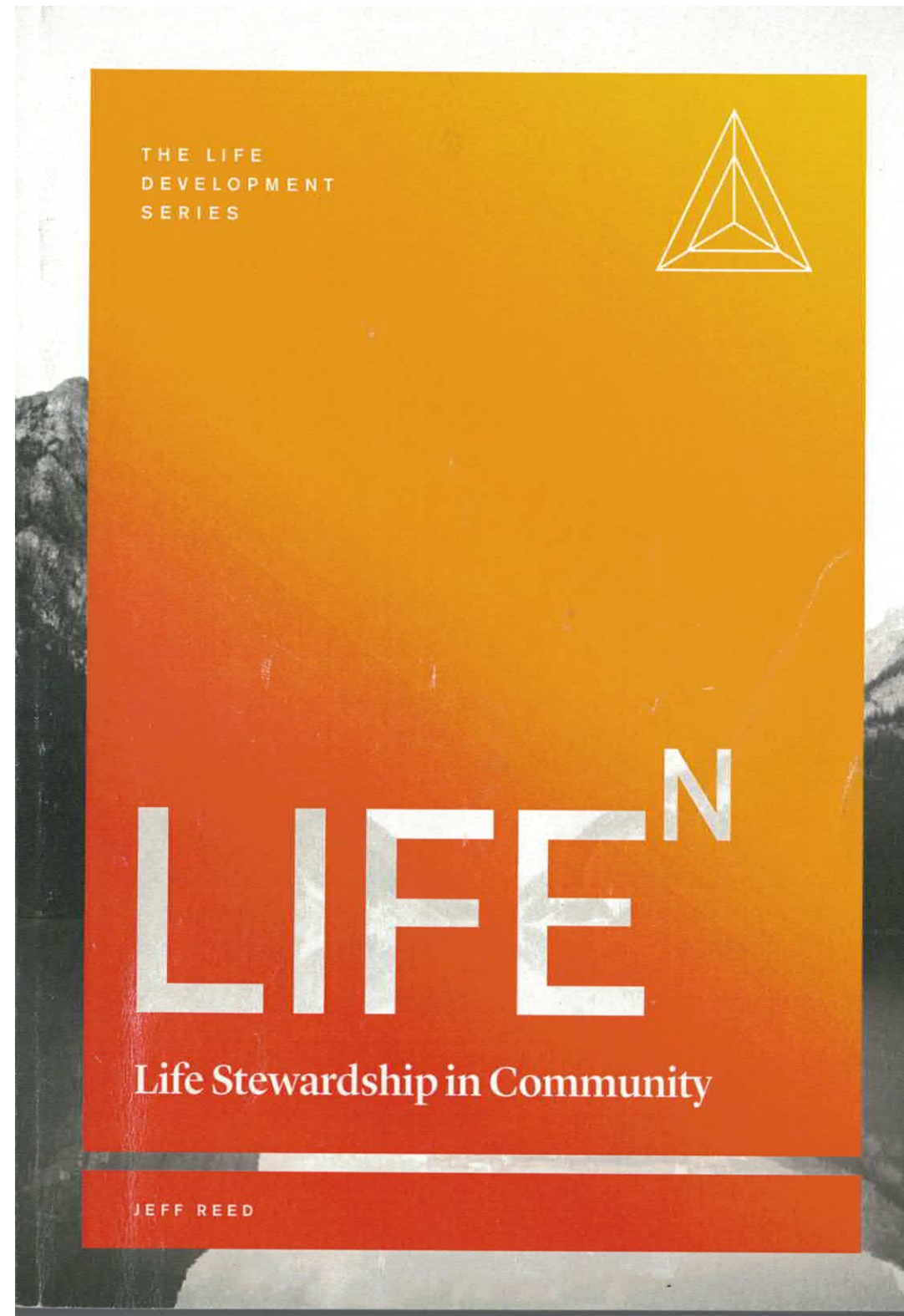
Paul had 3 main expectations of his churches reflected in his middle letters:

1. They mature in Christ, as churches in Ephesus, Philippi, and the Colossae tri-city area, and that they carry out the work of the ministry in their area.
2. They participate with him with one mind, striving together for the progress of the gospel as individual churches, as a growing network of churches, and as key leaders serving the network.
3. That together—as churches and a growing network, right down to each individual—they become one mature church reflecting the image of Christ.

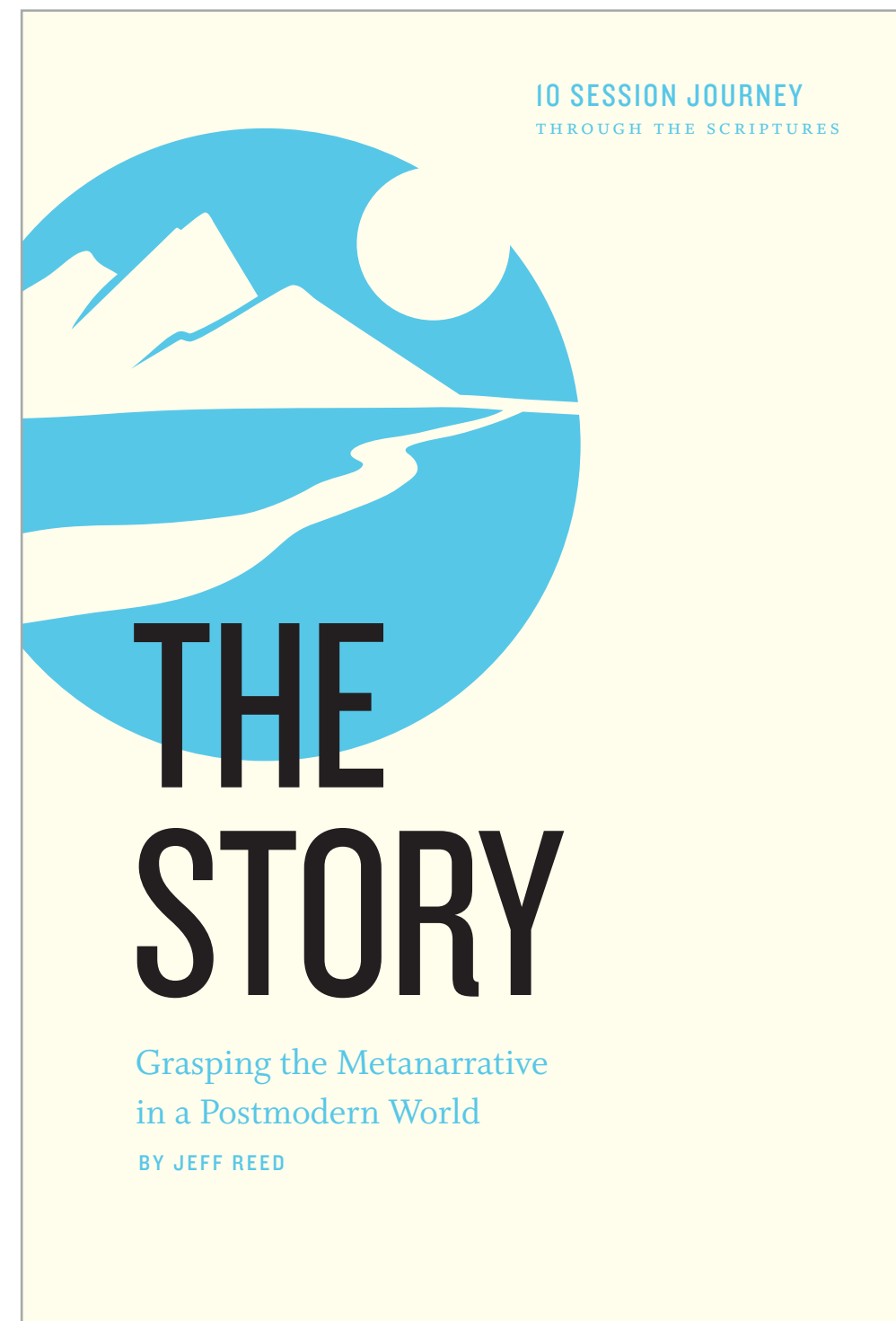


**Just finished
Lifeⁿ in the
Life
Development
Series this
week.**

**It will be big
at the 2018
International
Conference.**

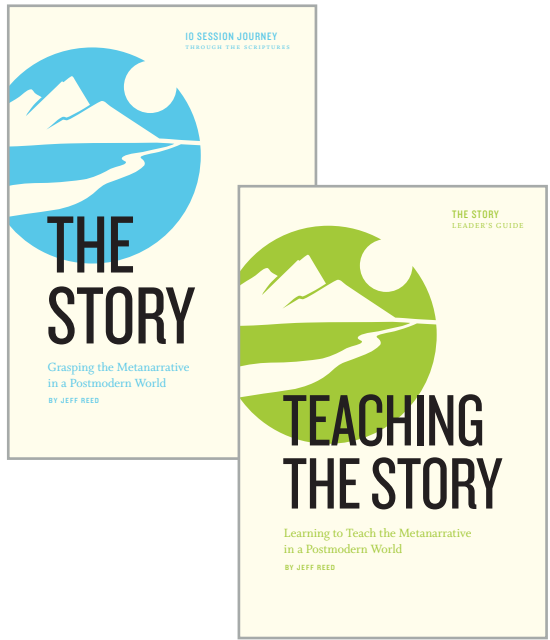


My Story



The Story

Establishing Process—3 Years



Kerygma
Early Acts
Apostles' Teaching
6 months
Paul: 3 years “night and day”



Didache
Body of Acts
Theology of Paul
1½ years



Full Kerygma
After Acts
Apostles' Gospels
1 year