



# SATURATE

## STUDY GUIDE

In the Old Testament book of Habakkuk, God gives a big vision:

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”  
- Habakkuk 2:14

That's a picture of saturation. God is accomplishing this vision through his Son, Jesus Christ, working through his body, the church. Ephesians 1:22-23 says, “He put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” Jesus is the head of his body, the Church, through which he intends to fill every place with his presence. This is saturation—Jesus saturation.

God's mission is that his people will be so saturated in Jesus that every person, in every place, would daily experience the good news of Jesus and be transformed by it in the course of their daily lives. Can you imagine every city, neighborhood, school, extracurricular activity, office, retail center, and industrial hub proclaiming the glory of Jesus in words and gracious deeds?

This is God's intention for his world, and he wants you to be a part of it! And, amazingly enough, if you know, trust, love, and follow Jesus, you already are! Yes, you, the unimpressive and average Jesus follower, have been entrusted by God with his mission of saturating the world with his glory through the everyday stuff of life. (If you haven't yet submitted your life to Jesus, we pray you will. Jesus saturation can't happen through you until you have.)

It has always been God's intention to choose normal, everyday people to demonstrate his amazing power and glory. The Bible is filled with story after story of such people. He's not looking for the most impressive person because he already is that person.

### WHO IS THIS STUDY FOR?

Why should you devote so much time and effort to this idea of “Jesus saturation”? Because you're a perfect candidate for God to use to accomplish his purpose! But in our experience, we all need a little help understanding and pursuing God's purpose. This study is intended to give you that help.

Maybe you're just considering who Jesus is and what he claims to do. The Saturate Study will help you wrestle with the concepts that followers of Jesus (disciples) claim to be true. Maybe you're a new follower of Jesus or are new to the idea that discipleship and mission are 24/7 realities, rather than merely occurring a couple hours each Sunday. Over the coming weeks, you'll not only learn about all-of-life discipleship, but gain experience with it.

Maybe you've been a follower of Jesus for a long while, but like many of us, have a hard time translating the truths you believe in your mind to the reality of your everyday life. The questions,

activities, prayers, and exercises in the coming pages will prompt you to do exactly that—to put your thoughts and theology into hands-on practice.

In short, every follower of Jesus needs help translating our belief in the gospel (we'll define "gospel" in Week One, Day One) into action and fruit. And given our tendency to wander away from God, we then need help keeping that gospel at the center of our action. This Study is intended to help with all of this, because it is all necessary to be holistic disciples of Jesus, in the everyday stuff of life.

## GOD'S CALLING TO ISRAEL

This isn't a new idea. God called his people, the Israelites, to remember him and show the world what he was like through the everyday stuff, the big and the small. The special feasts, which were extraordinary, were meant to remind them that everyday meals mattered as well. Parties are God's idea. During the Israelites' parties and feasts, they were to remind one another that all of life was to be done as an expression of their love for God. God called them to see their celebrations and feasts as an expression of their worship. He wanted them to use something mundane and everyday—eating—as a reminder that he is to be the center of all the everyday stuff. God is brilliant, isn't he?

He wants us to see that all of life, every aspect of it, is a good gift from him. He wants our hearts to cry out, "God is so good!" in the middle of everyday life. He wants us to eat, play, create, work, celebrate, rest, and relate to one another for his glory. God always intended that every part of life be a participation in his activity in the world and a celebration of his goodness to us all. He told Israel to do all the stuff of life— working, resting, eating, and celebrating—in remembrance of him. I love this about God!

The Israelites forgot who they were and why they had been called to be God's people. Their feasts became empty, heartless, ritualistic events. They were partying without the life of the party, celebrating without a reason to celebrate. That led to self-absorbed consumption and heartless activities without love. The same can happen to us if we forget to keep God central. Church becomes an empty, heartless, religious event.

## JESUS DID WHAT ISRAEL COULD NOT

Jesus came as God in the flesh to show us the heart of God for people. Before Jesus did any formal ministry, he spent thirty years of his life doing normal, mundane, unremarkable stuff. He lived a regular life for the glory of God. He ate, played, learned, celebrated, worked with his hands, and rested just like the rest of humanity. Think about this! God moved into the neighborhood, and nobody but a few shepherds took notice. And they did so only because a bunch of angels showed up while they were watching their sheep and told them to go see Jesus.

Jesus lived a normal, quiet life for thirty years in an unknown town. He was so normal that when he began his public ministry, the people from his hometown couldn't believe it. "Isn't this Jesus of Nazareth?" they asked. "Isn't he the carpenter's son who lived among us, doing normal stuff like the rest of us?" (see Matt. 13:53-58). The difference is that Jesus did everything for his heavenly Father's glory. He lived all of his life as an expression of his love for God the Father. Jesus did what Israel didn't do. He did what we don't do. He set apart every aspect of life as holy unto God.

Jesus was set apart for God in the world, and everything he did was to glorify God. He was holy, and every aspect of his life was holy, because he did it unto God. When he ate, he blessed God for good provision. When he worked, he knew he was doing it unto God and showing off the creativity of our Creator. He submitted to authority humbly and gladly as an act of submission to God, who ordains rulers in every place. He served, shared with, and loved others because he knew God is a serving God who gives good gifts and is love himself. Jesus lived every part of his life in submission to God. Every action was an act of love to God and others, and every one of his thoughts was directed by God. Jesus lived a fully God-dependent life. Holy Jesus lived a holy life wholly unto God.

Finally, after thirty years of quiet, submissive, humble worship, Jesus began to publicly proclaim the good news of God's kingdom—that there was a new order to things, and he was going to bring all of life under God's authority. He wanted a holy people who would live all of life wholly unto God. God was making a way for all of life to be restored to the way he always intended it to be. Everything could be made good and all of life could be worship. Life could be as it was always meant to be!

But Jesus didn't just proclaim the good news. He lived a good-news life, showing what God's rule and reign looks like when God breaks into the normal stuff of everyday life.

## **A NEW VIEW OF CHURCH: GOD'S DISCIPLES IN THE EVERYDAY STUFF OF LIFE**

Jesus did this so that we also could do this. He came to rescue a people back to God so all of life would be seen as sacred, all of life would be set apart unto God, and everyday stuff would be seen as worship.

Look at the picture to the right. Some people think church is a building you go to. Others think it's the programs and events that happen there [the circles inside the building, representing activities], while others think it's mainly the leaders who run those events [the stick figures inside the building]. They think the job of those leaders is to get people to invite their friends to the building [the stick figures and arrows pointing toward the building]. They also encourage people to give their time [the clock], their money [the dollar sign], and their skills and gifts [the gift-wrapped present] to support what happens primarily in the building.

But though we might gather together in a building, the church of Jesus is the people of God saved through the person and work of Jesus Christ for his purposes in the world. God's intent was never to have us define church merely as an event on Sunday. We don't go to church. We are the Church sent out into the world [that's why there are arrows going out of the building].

Jesus wants us to live all of life fully for his glory in the world—every part and every person. Jesus didn't live, serve, suffer, and die so we could just attend a Christian event. He lived and died so we could become his people who are sent into every part of the world on his behalf. He wants all people everywhere to see and know about him, and he wants everyone to know that everything is to be done for his glory. We now see our time, our money, and our unique abilities as means to serve both the people who are the church and those in our cities who don't know the great news of God's love for them in Jesus Christ. All of life counts and everyone matters.

Many followers of Jesus wrongly believe that God's work is mainly done in a church building by a few paid professionals, and that the members of the church are primarily needed to volunteer to run the programs and provide the financial support. Normal stuff doesn't count, because God doesn't work in the normal stuff, they believe. They can't imagine themselves on his mission in the world, because they have wrongly believed God's mission isn't in the world. Church seems so disconnected from the rest of their lives. Clearly, God can't use them, and therefore he must not want them. But this is simply not true. God loves to use normal people in the everyday stuff of life. He wants everyone involved in

## **THE VISION FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE ... INCLUDING YOU!**

In Ephesians 1:23, the apostle Paul calls the church Jesus's body (his soma), through which he fills all in all. Paul's vision, given to him by the Holy Spirit, was of the church being the body of Christ, through which Jesus fills every place with his presence through his people.

All God's people, everywhere, filling everyday life with his presence.

That's the vision of Saturate. And that's what we hope to help you step into, alongside many people, throughout history

and across the world, as you work through this Study.

If you're ready to be better equipped for the life of discipleship God has called you to, then pause and pray for his help for the coming weeks, then look through the questions, and we'll jump right in!

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Having read this introduction, here are some questions to consider personally.

1. As you read this introduction, what's your initial impression? What's new or exciting to you? What makes you nervous or hesitant? What are you confused by, and what do you have questions about?
2. Several views of "the church" were described in the previous pages and are summarized to the below. Think about which one you are most familiar with. Then in the space below describe where you learned about what "the church" is and what your understanding is based on (for example social/family norms, biblical teaching, experience, etc.). Has your definition changed over time? Is there anything here you find challenging or new?
  - Church is primarily a building I go to.
  - Church is primarily the programs and events that happen in and around that building or are sponsored by the Church.
  - Church is primarily the leaders who run the events, who get people to invite friends to the events, and who encourage people to give their time, money, skills, and gifts to support the programs and events.
  - Church is primarily the people of God saved through the person and work of Jesus Christ for his purposes in the world.
3. How do you define discipleship? Has your understanding of living as a disciple changed over time? (Note: We'll discuss discipleship in Week 3.)
4. Have you ever considered that the normal stuff of everyday life—our meals, jobs, homes, free time, relationships—are all areas of discipleship? That everything we do can be done "to the glory of God"? Why or why not?
5. Do you think there are things that you've done, conversations you've had that are likely "discipleship," "ministry," or "living as God's church," even though they were never labeled as such or validated as such because they didn't fit an event or program? What are some examples of these?
6. Do you have any confusion about how the coming weeks will work? How are you feeling about the journey you're starting?