



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION

Abandoning With-less Living

Introduction - Part 1 *Immanuel All Year Round: "Life with God"*

The Truth - *"The Life with God" Study Bible*

Theme - *To form an all-inclusive community of love with God & People*

The With-God Life

Catching the Vision - John 10:10

The Power of Love

The Immanuel Principle

Nurturing the Intention

Reading with the Mind...Understanding...the Heart

Understanding the Means - Luke 13:24; II Peter 1:5-7

Spiritual Disciplines - I Timothy 4:7; Romans 12:1-2

What they are & How they work - *The Principle of Indirection*

Grace upon Grace - II Peter 3:18

A Panorama of the Bible

This panoramic view of biblical history helps us understand the progressive nature of how God has mediated His presence with individuals and groups over the ages to form an all-inclusive community of loving persons.

The People of God in Individual Communion

The People of God Become a Family

The People of God in Exodus

The People of God in the Promised Land

The People of God as a Nation

The People of God in Travail

The People of God in Prayer and Worship

The People of God in Daily Life

The People of God in Rebellion

The People of God in Exile

The People of God in Restoration

The People of God with Immanuel

The People of God in Mission

The People of God in Community

The People of God into Eternity

The efforts of God to form an all-inclusive community of loving persons on Earth comes to fulfillment beyond time in the formation of a new Heaven and a new Earth. Worship of self gives way to worship of God. "The healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2-4) To everyone who longs to be part of this loving, nurturing, all-inclusive community: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'. And let everyone who has ears say, 'Come'. And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift." (Rev. 22:17)



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Introduction - Part 2 - A Foundation *Immanuel - "God with Us"*

A "More than" Life...Abandoning With-less Living (without God)

To form an all-inclusive community of love with God & People

The With-God Life V-I-M

Catching the **Vision** - John 10:10
The Supernatural Power of Love
The Immanuel Principle

GOD'S PART BY LEADERS

Nurturing the **Intention** - I Timothy 6:19

YOUR PART

Understanding the **Means** - II Peter 1:5-7

OUR PART BY GRACE = 3+1

- Spiritual Disciplines - I Timothy 4:7; Romans 12:1-2
What they are & How they work: *The Principle of Indirection*
- Grace upon Grace - II Peter 3:18
- The Spiritual Disciplines
 - Δ3 - Disciplines of Disengagement (Retreat) - solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, sacrifice, watching
 - Δ3 - Disciplines of Engagement (Advance) - study, memorization, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, submission, giving

The Immanuel Invitation: "Train to Reign - One Nation Under God"

A Panorama of the Bible - The efforts of God to form an all-inclusive community of loving persons on Earth comes to fulfillment beyond time in the formation of a new Heaven and a new Earth. "The healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2-4, 17)

The People of God...in Individual Communion (Jan. 27) Genesis 1-11, Essay 1 p. 1-5

...Become a Family
...in Exodus
...in the Promised Land
...as a Nation
...in Travail
...in Prayer and Worship
...in Daily Life
...in Rebellion
...in Exile
...in Restoration
...with Immanuel
...in Mission
...in Community
...into Eternity



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
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Essay 1: *The People of God in Individual Communion*

REVIEW - *To form an all-inclusive community of love with God & His People*

Six Tools in the Carpenter's Toolbox

~ *The Immanuel Principle* ~ V-I-M ~ *Spiritual Formation* ~
~ *The Principle of Indirection* ~ *Spiritual Disciplines* ~ *Grace* ~

Vision - John 10:10

Intention - Luke 9:23-25 - *Spiritual Formation*

Means - I Timothy 4:7; Romans 12:1-2

The Principle of Indirection - Matthew 6:33; Romans 12:1-2

Spiritual Disciplines - LWG Bible, p. 509-536

Grace - II Peter 3:18

"The People of God in Individual Communion" Overview

SCRIPTURE	Genesis 1-11
GOD'S ACTION	Creates, instructs, steward of a good creation, banishes, destroys, restores
HUMAN REACTION	Name animals, disobey, rebel, sacrifice, murder, repent, obey
MEDIATION	Face-to-face
LOCATION	Garden, field, Noah's Ark
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Individuals
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Adam & Eve, Enoch, Noah
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Practicing the Presence, Confession, Sacrifice Obedience/Submission
PROFILES	Adam & Eve p. 21; Cain p.24; Noah p. 28

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 1-5)

~ God's Action

God's interaction with humanity is in three ways:
Conversational, Direct and Intermittent

~ Human Reaction

Human self will nurtures massive insensitivity and resistance to God's personal overtures and finally causes a hopeless immersion in evil.

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation

God is He is present with us, we are directionless without Him.

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation

The gentleness of God's presence can be resisted.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation - *My "Means" this week...*



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 2: *The People of God Become a Family*

Purpose - *To form an all-inclusive community of love with God & His People*

Tools in the Carpenter's Toolbox

~ *The Immanuel Principle* ~ *V-I-M* ~ *Spiritual Formation* ~
~ *The Principle of Indirection* ~ *Spiritual Disciplines* ~ *Grace* ~

"The People of God Become a Family" Overview

STAGE 2	People of God Become a Family
SCRIPTURE	Genesis 12-50
GOD'S ACTION	God's Covenant makes a great people
HUMAN REACTION	Faith, Wrestling, Perseverance
MEDIATION	Through the family
LOCATION	Tent, Desert, Jail, Egypt
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Extended families & nomadic clans
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Pilgrimage, Sacrifice, Chastity
PROFILES	Abraham (37), Lot (41), Joseph (71)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 7-11)

Genesis 12-50 Acts 7:1-19

~ God's Action

The calling of a family...the first beachhead of God's mediation, a divine process that will culminate in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. (7)

~ Human Reaction

Because of [Abraham's] trust in God's promise that he would have an heir, even heirs as numerous as the stars, Abraham is accounted righteous not by what he accomplishes, but solely because he believes God. (LWG, 9)

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation

God embraces and amplifies the importance of a family's continuous history, a history that transcends any one person's life. (9)

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation

Blood relatives of one ethnicity who often fight and become bitter enemies. Families clans fail to include anyone else in their circle of faith. (11)

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation - *My "Means" this week...*

We all come into the world through a family as a result of human male-female relationships whose central purpose is to create families out of love. (11)



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Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 3: *The People of God in Exodus*

Purpose - *Form an all-inclusive community of loving persons.* (LWG, 91)

VIM - *Catching the Vision ~ Nurturing the Intention ~ Understanding the Means*

"The People of God in Exodus" Overview (LWG, XLVI-XLVII)

STAGE 3	People of God in Exodus
SCRIPTURE	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
GOD'S ACTION	Mercy, grace & deliverance, Mosaic Covenant, the Law
HUMAN REACTION	Obeys & disobeys; Develop rituals
MEDIATION	God's terrifying acts & the Law
LOCATION	The Ark & the Tabernacle in the Wilderness
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Nomadic tribes
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Moses
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Submission, Silence, Simplicity, Worship
PROFILES	Moses (p. 105); Caleb (p. 217)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 87-91)

- ~ God's Action
 - Freedom from worldly political structures - Ex. 12 & 14
 - A Moral Code "Ten Commandments" (Ex. 20) and a Godly Practice & Place
 - * The Seven Feasts of the Religious Year - Lev. 23
 - God's Pillar Presence Day & Night - Ex. 33:9
- ~ Human Reaction
 - Gratitude & Grumbling...Worship & Idolatry - Ex. 32:1; 33:18; Nu. 14:1-4
- ~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation
 - God's local, routine presence in daily life
 - The Priesthood for grace in daily life - Ark, Altar, Table, Lamp, Curtains
 - Judicial System to guide through conflict - Ex. 18
- ~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation
 - The Law is external to the heart
- ~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation - *My "Means" this week...*
 - The Law guides to a Holy God and a needy Neighbor - Lev. 19
 - Leaders guiding into God's Kingdom - Moses Ex. 34:10
 - Structures of morality for community - The Shema - Dt. 6:1-9; Mt 22:34-40



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Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 4: The People of God in the Promised Land

Purpose - A community that keeps alive God's historical, public acts and nurtures and protects their destiny to become a blessing to all nations. (297)

"The People of God in the Promised Land" Overview (LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel 1-12
GOD'S ACTION	Establishes a Theocracy; Bequeaths the Promised Land
HUMAN REACTION	Inhabit the land and accept Judges as mediators
MEDIATION	Through conquest and learning to act with God
LOCATION	Shiloh & Bethel
SOCIAL CONTEXT	An ethnic people with fluid leadership
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Joshua, Deborah, Ruth, Samson, Gideon, Samuel
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Guidance, Radical Obedience, Submission, Secrecy
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Joshua (311), Rahab (317), Deborah (351), Gideon (357) Samson (369), Ruth (385), Samuel (409), Saul (415)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 287-291)

~ God's Action

Administrative leadership shifts from Moses to Joshua
God leads the Israelites across the Jordan and conquer the land
God establishes a Theocracy and mediates through Judges

~ Human Reaction

Joshua & Leaders trust God claim the Promised Land
Israelites trusted Judges like they trusted Moses & Joshua
Centralized the Tabernacle in Shiloh - practiced the Spiritual Disciplines
Israelites act in disobedience, disunity & dysfunction

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation

Enter a land of "rest" (Hebrews 4:11)
Freedom from a central government to seek God as they are led
God is with them through the battles

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation

No Law of Moses in Judges ~ No central authority to guide people
A scattered people away from a central worship center and local judges

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation - **My "Means" this week...**

Charisma outruns character Tribal infighting continues today
Handle power rightly We reap what we sow
God is faithful despite Israel's unfaithfulness



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 5: The People of God as a Nation

Purpose - An all-inclusive community through the formation of the People of God as a nation with the central locus of worship in the Temple at Jerusalem.

"The People of God as a Nation" Overview (LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	I Samuel 13 - II Chronicles
GOD'S ACTION	Allows monarchy; Exalts good kings; Blesses by nations
HUMAN REACTION	Embrace the monarchy
MEDIATION	Thru kings, prophets, priests & sacrifices
LOCATION	Altars, consecrated places, Solomon's Temple
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Political nation on the world stage
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Saul, David, Hezekiah, Elijah, Elisha
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Worship & Prayer
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Saul (415), Elijah (517), Ahab (521), Manasseh (665)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 391-396)

~ God's Action

Divine permission allows a tribal federation to become a nation
God chooses Saul; God blesses David; God appoints Solomon
The "Golden Age of Israel" of Israel's full reign of glory with the Temple

~ Human Reaction

Israelites go from a Judge anointed by God to king appointed by family
Trade tribal independence for national security then idolize the monarchy
The kings are given unlimited power and they constantly abuse it

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation

Enduring institutions centered on the Temple - a visible faith anchor
Daily practice of the spiritual life
Wisdom and leadership in Solomon and other kings
Enhance Israel's worship life - priests, musicians, treasurers, officers, judges

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation

Worship of other gods is still their most consistent failure - Idolatry
Power leads to idolatry, pride, sensuality of kings & priests; character flaws
Human government dictating matters of faith

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation - **My "Means" this week...**

Power & Prosperity do not build character - I Sam. 13:14 vs. II Sam. 11:4
Spiritual laws do not guarantee faithfulness - I Sam. 7:3 vs. I Kings 16:31
God desires obedience not sacrifice - I Samuel 15:22-23 vs. II Kings 18:5



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 6: The People of God in Travail

Purpose - The continued formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive community through the deep mystery of suffering. (*LWG Bible*, 717)

“The People of God in Travail” Overview (*LWG Bible*, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Job, Psalms of Lament, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Tobit
GOD’S ACTION	Allows suffering to strengthen the faith
HUMAN REACTION	Complain yet remain faithful
MEDIATION	Through suffering and disappointments of life
LOCATION	Ash heap and hard circumstances
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Individuals
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Job; Israel as the suffering servant
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Fasting, Solitude, Silence, Submission, Service, Celebration
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Job (765)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (*LWG Bible*, 717-720)

- ~ God’s Action (717) *God...*
 - ...has chosen to place us in a world where suffering exists
 - ...always makes provision for the deepening of our character
- ~ Human Reaction (717-718)
 - Job - Suffering challenges us to trust in God controls the ultimate destinies
 - Psalms - React in anger, revenge, even despair and call out, rail, plead, sigh
 - Ecclesiastes - Why should we pursue righteousness if there is no reward?
 - Lamentations - Suffering is a result of sin: “Jerusalem sinned grievously.”
- ~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (719) *Suffering teaches us...*
 - ...a clearer vision of God and know that He is with us
 - ...a deeper dimension of our life with God is unveiled
 - ...the limitations of our life, our finitude, our inevitable death
- ~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (719) *Suffering...*
 - ...can radically change our belief in the goodness of God
 - ...is only one side of the human experience with God (Job 31:35)
- ~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation-**“Means” of Suffering this week:**
 - Challenges our deepest convictions and strongest beliefs
 - Patience & endurance as central qualities of character being transformed
 - Trust in God as to avoid despair...He is greater than our quick satisfaction
 - God’s reality is beyond the scope of individual wishes and desires
 - Suffering is redeemable. God allows for the transforming effect on character.*



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 7: The People of God in Prayer & Worship

Purpose - The continued formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive community through the development of liturgical praise & prayer. (LWG Bible, 769)

"The People of God in Prayer & Worship" Overview (LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Psalms
GOD'S ACTION	Establishes liturgical worship
HUMAN REACTION	Praise & Prayer
MEDIATION	Through song, prayer, worship
LOCATION	Jerusalem, flowering of Individual experience
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Nation
KEY INDIVIDUALS	David
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Prayer, Worship, Confession, Celebration, Meditation
PROFILES (Index p.581)	David (797)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 769-772)

- ~ God's Action (769-770)
 - God & humans interact the shape inner & outer life of individuals & groups
 - 2 Poles: Unlimited goodness & greatness of God; Desperate human condition
- ~ Human Reaction (770-771)
 - Framework for the interpretation of human existence
 - Soul book that correctly represents God & the life that we can have in Him
- ~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (771)
 - Joy & character transformation as we allow them to sink deep into our heart
 - Public exercise for cultivating a right heart in relation to God
- ~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (771-772)
 - Religion becomes performance: time & place, legalism, ethnicity
 - Worship without heart
 - External worship incapable of devotion when props are taken away
 - Pious ritual without inward and outward transformation

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (772) **"Means" this week:**

The contribution of poetry and ritual to the formation of the heart and life in corporate as well as individual worship is indispensable to all robust formation in Christlikeness. We are to read them and sing them from the heart.

"The Psalms are the Bible in miniature." Martin Luther



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 8: The People of God in Daily Life

Purpose - The continued formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive community from wisdom gleaned from reflection on daily life. (*LWG Bible*, 901)

"The People of God in Daily Life" Overview (*LWG Bible*, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
GOD'S ACTION	God gives precepts for living in community
HUMAN REACTION	Teachable, learning, treasure beautiful words & poetry
MEDIATION	Through wisdom
LOCATION	Temple, City Gates, Home
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Nation triumphant ("Golden Years of Israel")
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Solomon
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Study, Guidance, Celebration, Meditation
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Solomon (491)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (*LWG Bible*, 901-904)

~ God's Action (901-902)

The wisdom tradition of the Bible focuses on building character, promoting virtue, condemning vice, and teaching us ways in which we can do the right, for the right reason at the right time and in the right way. (902)

~ Human Reaction (902-903) *Three Basic Attitudes:*

- 1) Drive to develop moral values
- 2) Confidence in human moral development
- 3) Commitment to participate and persevere in the world's moral order

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (903)

Counterbalance the tremendous power of emotions and feelings
Timeless principles to our time-bound situations
Able to learn from the mistakes of others; Save ourselves heartache

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (903-904)

They can substitute the grace and forgiveness we seek
Tempt us to treat them as rigid, universal laws
Can communicate a sense of self-sufficiency apart from God

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (904) *"Means" this week:*

- 1) The enormous value of ordinary life
- 2) Link the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and daily living
- 3) Guidance and instruction integrating wisdom
- 4) Point us to others and ultimately to God

"The Proverbs have become timeless, portable teachers." (903)



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 9: The People of God in Rebellion

Purpose - The continued formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive community through a nation under siege and a divided kingdom that faces imminent dispersion and captivity. (LWG Bible, 975)

“The People of God in Rebellion” Overview (LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE -	Isaiah, Jer. 1-36, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nah, Hab, Zeph
GOD’S ACTION	Judgment & Redemption, Rule, Promises Immanuel
HUMAN REACTION	Disbelieve & Reject, False Prophets, Faithful Remnant
MEDIATION	Through Prophets & Gentile repression
LOCATION	High places; Temple desecrated & destroyed
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Nation under siege and dispersed
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Isaiah (991), Hosea (1277), Amos (1303)
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Fasting, Repentance, Obedience, Solitude, Silence, Law
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Cyrus & Darius (1045), Jeremiah (1091), Jonah (1321)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 975-979)

~ God’s Action (975-976) - Prophets as an “outsider” force opposed to a rebellious political structure to mediate God’s presence calling for radical repentance. God is warning the people of imminent collapse if they do not repent of their sins. The end of God’s use of theocratic political structures.

~ Human Reaction (976-977) - Great suffering, division & national alienation from idolatry and national disobedience. A hope for a return of a remnant and God’s presence thru a redemptive Messiah. Inevitable judgment on the verge of exile was met with a deaf ear in idol worship by the people and the kings.

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (977-978) - God is at work everywhere through Gentiles and all nations. We must reject religion tied to a culture or nation. The Kingdom of God transcends Israel and all kingdoms. God’s presence thru individuals and God’s Law develops the character to be the faithful remnant.

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (978-979) - True prophets are despised, false prophets are adored. True prophets messages are ignored and co-opted. They remain the continuity of the Life-with-God clear up to the coming of the Messiah.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (979)

1) Righteousness comes from the heart 2) God does not abandon us
3) God is present thru all stages 4) Genuine goodness comes from a well ordered inner life. *Character expresses compassion despite circumstances.*

“Means” this week: Hear the prophetic voice; Practice an obedient faith



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 10: The People of God in Exile

Purpose - The continued formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive community as God sends His people from the Promised Land into exile.
(*LWG Bible*, 1171)

“The People of God in Exile” Overview (*LWG Bible*, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	II Kings 25, Ezekiel, Daniel
GOD’S ACTION	Judges yet remains faithful to covenant promises
HUMAN REACTION	Mourn, survive, long for Jerusalem, faith w/out institutions
MEDIATION	Through punishment and being a blessing to captors
LOCATION	Babylon
SOCIAL CONTEXT	In a foreign land without a homeland
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Ezekiel, Daniel
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Fasting, Simplicity, Prayer, Silence, Service
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Ezekiel (1181), Daniel (1253)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (*LWG Bible*, 1171-1174)

~ God’s Action (1171-1172) - We see God’s faithfulness in judgment. The law is upheld. The Jewish people are stripped of their king, Temple, city and land. God blesses the people in their personal walk with Him. The individual prophet is a central fixture. The language of the “kingdom of the heavens” where God reigns.

~ Human Reaction (1172-1173) - Denial, anguish, lamentation, confusion and bitterness feeds the problem of false prophets. The “law and the prophets” emerge at the heart of the covenant relationship with God. The Jewish people finally get monotheism and the keeping of the law.

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (1173) - The faithfulness between the individual and God. The Israelites are forced to become citizens of the world that they might be a witness to all nations advancing the Abrahamic Covenant.

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (1173-1174) - An increasingly repressive systems of external rules that dictate personal behavior and public ritual that Jesus later thoroughly exposes and condemns. Brutal events and suffering can be redemptive when received in faith but it is not intrinsically good.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (1174)

- 1) We can sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land.
- 2) Become a person inwardly from whom the law flows naturally.
- 3) God is with us in our failures and uses our failures for His good.

Discovery this week: Exhume the Experience of Emmanuel from Exile



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION

Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 11: *The People of God in Restoration*

Purpose - The continued formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive community by returning the people to the land and restoring the liturgical life of Israel. (LWG Bible, 1355)

"The People of God in Restoration" Overview (LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Haggai, Zephaniah, Malachi, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
GOD'S ACTION	Regathers, redeems & restructures Israel's social life
HUMAN REACTION	Return, obey, rebuild, worship, seek Messiah, Septuagint
MEDIATION	Repentance, Service, Synagogue, Study
LOCATION	Rebuilt Temple & the Synagogues
SOCIAL CONTEXT	International scene, foreign leaders' ethics
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Ezra, King Cyrus, Nehemiah, Maccabees, Essenes, John
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Pilgrimage, Confession, Worship, Study, Service
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Ezra (671), Esther (709), Zechariah (1369)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 1355-1359)

~ God's Action (1355-56) - God uses this despair and foreign power to achieve His divine purposes to give Ezra & Nehemiah permission to return and rebuild the Temple and city walls. Esther pleads with the King to protect the Israelites. He gives Israel the freedom to restore their religious heritage in faithfulness. The Synagogue and Restored Temple raise up Rabbis, Pharisees & Sadducees.

~ Human Reaction (1356-57) - They learn to trust in the God who fulfills covenant promises, restores His people and resolves the paradoxes of history. Radical monotheism captures the imagination of the people of Israel. Life is centered a new way on the family, synagogue and community. Anticipate the "Day of the Lord" of God's redemptive purposes. Yet, hard hearts & rigid law exists.

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (1357-58) - God is not limited to a particular time or place. Life with God is not dependent upon governments. Begins the "kingdom of the heavens" message - a nonmaterial kingdom without borders.

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (1358) - The violent backlash from ritual purity like abandonment of non-Jewish wives. The Israelites battle against local residents & rulers and they become pawns in the hands of occupying nations.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (1358-59) 1) Look to God not governments 2) Values of home, faith gatherings & community 3) Encourage our leaders 4) Worship at the center of life together 5) Lift high the messianic themes

Theme: To Return to the Lord to Recognize His Restoration



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION

Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 12: The People of God with Immanuel

Purpose - The continued formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive loving community through a dramatic new event in salvation history: the coming of Immanuel ("God with us"). (LWG Bible, 3)

"The People of God with Immanuel" Overview (LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Matthew, Mark, Luke & John
GOD'S ACTION	God sends His Son and acts with His Son
HUMAN REACTION	Hear and follow; Resist and reject
MEDIATION	Thru the Incarnate Word & living presence of the Kingdom
LOCATION	Temple & synagogue, boats & hillsides, disciples gathered
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Small groups, disciples, apostles, hostile critics
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Jesus the Messiah Incarnate
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Celebration, study, submission, prayer, service, obedience
PROFILES (Index p.581)	John the Baptist (65), Elizabeth (99), Anna (107), Nicodemus (161)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 3-7)

~ God's Action (3-5) - God is now acting direct and personal in the incarnate Jesus. The Kingdom in Him began to draw others through Him. The primary mode of God-with-Us is Jesus Himself. Apprenticeship to Jesus in Kingdom living is the basic form of God's presence with His people. (John 1:14, Luke 16:16)

~ Human Reaction (5-6) - It was the popularity of Jesus that led Him into the conflict that ended in His death. See John 12:32

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (6) - Disciples are to teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Mt. 28:20) Obedience means to bring our inner person into a transformed condition. Spiritual formation - Christlikeness" from the inside out - focuses on becoming a "good tree." (Lk 6:43)

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (6-7) - First, expectations of a radical political reform flatly incompatible with God's Kingdom. Second, "the Spirit was not yet given" (John 7:39) until the death and departure of Jesus and the Spirit coming.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (7) - 1) The physical world is beautiful, powerful and holy under God. 2) God in Jesus was totally unexpected and incomprehensible to human ways of thinking. 3) Real inner Christlikeness makes every act a time of learning how to live our life as Jesus would live it.

Focus: Wholeness & Holiness as Apprentices of Jesus living in His Kingdom



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 13: The People of God in Mission

Purpose - The formation of the People of God into an all-inclusive loving community is now present in the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom. (ref. *LWG Bible*, 191)

“The People of God in Mission” Overview (*LWG Bible*, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Acts
GOD’S ACTION	Sends the Holy Spirit and creates the Church
HUMAN REACTION	Believe & proclaim; Disbelieve & persecute
MEDIATION	Thru the Holy Spirit, persecution and martyrdom
LOCATION	Temple, Synagogue, Schools, Riversides, Public Square
SOCIAL CONTEXT	Jew, Gentile, House Churches, Abandonment of social strata
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Peter & Paul
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Speaking & hearing the Word, sacrifice, guidance, generosity, service, fasting, prayer
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Ananias & Saphira (209), Barnabas (225), Stephen (213), Phillip (217)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (*LWG Bible*, 191-195)

~ God’s Action (191-192) - God forms an all-inclusive community with God at the center. Each person receives from the Spirit knowledge & power of Jesus. God Himself is living in them. At Pentecost & in Acts, God breaks down the ethnic walls.

~ Human Reaction (192-193) - Preaching declares the person and work of Jesus to non believers; conversation expands the message to believers. The disciples form new communities of faith thru prayer, worship, baptism & the Lord’s Supper.

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (193-194) - By the Holy Spirit, the all-inclusive community transcends every race, creed & culture. The Jerusalem Council releases the faith from its bonds of Judaism and the church begins. (Acts 15) The good news of the Kingdom is preached in new self-replicating societies of God.

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (194-195) - The problems of legalism as a mandatory system or “antinomianism” as an abuse of freedom. Also, the Spirit does not automatically produce unity as disputes are seen in the book of Acts.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (195) - 1) The universal nature of God’s love. 2) The Spirit of courage & boldness. (4:29, 8:31) 3) Rejoice in suffering because God is with us and He gives us strength & endurance in suffering. (5:40)

Focus: The Kingdom of God on Earth in prayer, unity, love & witness



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 14: The People of God in Community

Purpose - The formation of the people of God into an all-inclusive community of loving persons...the early communities of faith based on discipleship to Jesus Christ are established and nurture living communion with God and abiding fellowship with one another. (LWG Bible, 255)

"The People of God in Community" Overview (LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII)

SCRIPTURE	Romans through Jude (21 letters)
GOD'S ACTION	God builds, nurtures and mobilizes the Church
HUMAN REACTION	Become and make disciples of Jesus Christ across the Earth
MEDIATION	Word, preach, teach, prophecy, care, the Spirit, sacraments
LOCATION	Gathered community
SOCIAL CONTEXT	The Body of Christ in a decadent Roman culture
KEY INDIVIDUALS	Peter, Paul and John
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Prayer, Study, Accountability, Submission, Fellowship
PROFILES (Index p.581)	Paul (327) Tim. (383) James (425) Peter (441) John (459)

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (LWG Bible, 255-260)

~ God's Action (255-256) - The body of Christ literally become a new organism by the Spirit gathering in the name of Jesus as birthplaces of belief and centers of instruction of Life-with-God. Jesus' self-replicating society formed, conformed and transformed into His image to respond to all of life's demands as Christ would.

~ Human Reaction (256-257) - The "assembly" of followers participate in Christ's life, death & resurrection to bring each person into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. The letters address problems, practical matters & teach theology.

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (257-258) - In community we learn our responsibilities to God and to one another. We spread the gospel of the Kingdom and provide mutual support. An all-inclusive community is fully disclosed.

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (258-259) - Doctrinal disputes and divisions injure the work of spiritual formation. Sin without loving, firm discipline and missing pastoral care and religious fads...anything that stifles the life-giving power of Christ's love is against God.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (259-260) - 1) Experience the love of Christ and learn how to love one another 2) Every church is a real, imperfect reflection of God 3) Learn spiritual formation 4) Witness God given gifts 5) Experience the risen Christ thru meaningful death as we sacrifice in obedience

Focus: Societies of Jesus by His Spirit unleashing the Kingdom of God globally



THE IMMANUEL INVITATION
Abandoning With-less Living

Essay 15: *The People of God into Eternity*

Purpose - God completes the process of forming an all-inclusive community of loving persons as the church remains faithful in tribulation and transitions into eternity. (*LWG Bible, 477*)

“*The People of God into Eternity*” Overview (*LWG Bible, XLVI-XLVII*)

SCRIPTURE	Revelation
GOD’S ACTION	Reveals infinite progress towards infinite good
HUMAN REACTION	Worship & Praise; Creativity that magnifies God
MEDIATION	Throughout the cosmos
LOCATION	New Jerusalem and throughout the cosmos
SOCIAL CONTEXT	The Trinity and its community
KEY INDIVIDUALS	God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit, apostles, prophets
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	Now living beyond disciplines

Areas of Discovery for Our Formation (*LWG Bible, 477-481*)

~ God’s Action (477-479) - Jesus is the “ruler of the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5). God is with His people in three ways: The final church phase; God’s presence in the battle of good & evil; God’s judgment over evil and His fullness over all.

~ Human Reaction (479-480) - Multitudes of people were drawn to the incarnate Christ and became His apprentices in Kingdom living. The period described in Revelation 4-20 will most certainly eliminate lukewarm Christians. In the new heaven and new earth, the people of God will be entirely given up to Him.

~ Blessings & Benefits for Our Formation (480) - Apprenticeship to Jesus Christ, under the direction of the revealed Word of God and the administration of the Holy Spirit, is the single most powerful and beneficial transformational process known to humankind.

~ Limits & Liabilities for Our Formation (481-482) - In the book of Revelation, there is no limit to God-with-us. In the transition stage, we still have to deal with other kingdoms and individuals. Character is costly, and only choice and experience through time can produce it.

~ Insights & Instructions for Our Formation (482) - Apprenticeship to Jesus in the fellowship of His people is the only assured path of life under God. On that path we move from faith to faith, from grace to more grace, and are able to walk increasingly in holiness and power.

* “*We shall reign over the earth with Christ forever.*” Rev. 2:26, 3:21; 11:15; 22:5