



Life's

MISSING

INGREDIENTS

Recipes for Finding What Really Matters

Life's Missing Ingredients

A Study Guide and Cookbook for the Soul and the Table

There are recipes we follow in the kitchen — and recipes we follow in life. Sometimes both fall flat for the same reason: something essential is missing.

“Life's Missing Ingredients” is more than just a study guide and cookbook. It is a collection of meals paired with reflections about the ingredients we often overlook — purpose, intimacy, optimism, security, patience, courage, forgiveness, gratitude, rest, and hope.

Each chapter includes a signature recipe, a short reflection, a "Missing Ingredient" life principle, and a simple practice to carry into your week

So, put on your apron, and let's cook — and grow.

The first 4-weeks are designed to go along with each week of the message series. The remaining ingredients and recipes are to expand your knowledge so that you might find what really matters.

But first...

A Table Blessing

May your meals be warm.

May your conversations be honest.

May your table be wide.

And may you never forget the ingredients that truly matter.

WEEK/CHAPTER 1: The Missing Ingredient: PURPOSE

Purpose gives direction to energy.

Key Scripture: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” — Ephesians 2:10

Hearty Harvest Grain Bowl

Ingredients

1 cup quinoa
1 sweet potato, cubed
1 red bell pepper, sliced
1 zucchini, chopped
1 can chickpeas, drained
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp paprika
Salt and pepper to taste

Tahini or vinaigrette for drizzling

Instructions

1. Cook quinoa according to package instructions.
2. Toss vegetables and chickpeas with olive oil and spices.
3. Roast at 425°F for 20–25 minutes.
4. Assemble bowls with quinoa as the base and roasted vegetables on top.
5. Drizzle with dressing and serve warm.

Reflection: Every ingredient has a place. Remove one element and the balance shifts.

Day 1 – Created on Purpose - You were intentionally designed.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 139:13–16

Prayer Focus: Thank God for uniquely creating you. Ask Him to help you see yourself through His eyes.

Reflection Questions: What do these passages reveal about your value? Where have you doubted your God-given design? How would believing you are “fearfully and wonderfully made” change your daily outlook?

Day 2 – Called for a Purpose - God works through every season.

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11–13; Romans 8:28

Prayer Focus: Surrender your past and future to God’s purposes.

Reflection Questions: How have you seen God redeem difficult seasons? What might God be shaping in you right now? Where do you need to trust His long-term plan?

Day 3 – Gifted for Service - Your gifts are meant to bless others.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4–7; 1 Peter 4:10

Prayer Focus: Ask God to reveal and activate your spiritual gifts.

Reflection Questions: What gifts or passions has God given you? How are you currently using them? Where could you step out in faith?

Day 4 – Faithful in the Small Things - Purpose is lived daily, not just discovered dramatically.

Scripture: Luke 16:10; Colossians 3:23–24

Prayer Focus: Invite God into your everyday work.

Reflection Questions: What “small” responsibilities feel unnoticed? How does viewing your work as service to the Lord shift your attitude? What would excellence look like today?

Day 5 – Living Sent - We are sent people.

Scripture: Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8

Prayer Focus: Pray for boldness to live missionally.

Reflection Questions: Who has God placed in your sphere of influence? What fears keep you from sharing your faith? What is one intentional step you can take this week?

WEEK/CHAPTER 2: The Missing Ingredient: INTIMACY

Love deepens when guarded walls come down.

Key Scriptures: “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” — James 4:8 ”
Above all, love each other deeply.” — 1 Peter 4:8

Creamy Garlic Pasta for Two

Ingredients

8 oz fettuccine
2 tbsp butter
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup grated Parmesan
Fresh parsley
Salt and cracked pepper

Instructions

1. Cook pasta until al dente.
2. Melt butter and sauté garlic gently.
3. Stir in cream and simmer 3–5 minutes.
4. Add Parmesan and whisk until smooth.
5. Toss pasta in sauce and garnish.

Reflection: Closeness grows where time and vulnerability are present.

Day 1 – Known and Loved - God desires relationship, not ritual.

Scripture: Psalm 63:1–8

Prayer Focus: Ask for a deeper hunger for God.

Reflection Questions: What competes for your spiritual attention? When do you feel closest to God? How can you create space for intimacy?

Day 2 – Abiding in Christ - Fruit flows from connection.

Scripture: John 15:1–8

Prayer Focus: Pray for a dependent heart.

Reflection Questions: Where are you striving instead of abiding? What does “remaining” in Christ look like practically? What fruit do you long to see?

Day 3 – Honest Prayer - Intimacy requires honesty.

Scripture: Psalm 51; Hebrews 4:14–16

Prayer Focus: Confession and cleansing.

Reflection Questions: What do you hesitate to bring before God? How does grace change your approach to Him? What freedom comes from transparency?

Day 4 – Listening to God - God still speaks.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1–10; John 10:27

Prayer Focus: “Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.”

Reflection Questions: How do you recognize God’s voice? What distractions hinder listening? What might He be saying to you now?

Day 5 – Loving Others Deeply - Intimacy with God produces love for people.

Scripture: 1 John 4:7–12

Prayer Focus: Ask God to enlarge your heart for others.

Reflection Questions: Who is difficult for you to love? How does receiving God’s love empower you? What practical step can you take toward reconciliation?

WEEK/CHAPTER 3: Missing Ingredient: OPTIMISM

Hope balances bitterness with expectation.

Key Verse: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him.” — Romans 15:13

Bright Citrus Salad

Ingredients

4 cups mixed greens

2 oranges, segmented

1 grapefruit, segmented

¼ cup sliced almonds

¼ red onion, thinly sliced

3 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp honey

1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

Instructions

1. Whisk olive oil, honey, and vinegar.

2. Toss greens with citrus and onion.

3. Top with almonds.

4. Drizzle with dressing.

Reflection: Citrus cuts through heaviness with brightness.

Day 1 – Anchored in Hope - Hope is secure in Christ.

Scripture: Hebrews 6:18–20

Prayer Focus: Ask God to steady your heart.

Reflection Questions: What fears about the future weigh on you? How does Jesus as your “anchor” change perspective? Where do you need renewed hope?

Day 2 – God’s Faithfulness in the Past - Remembering builds confidence.

Scripture: Lamentations 3:21–23; Psalm 77:11–14

Prayer Focus: Thank God for past faithfulness.

Reflection Questions: What testimony can you recount? How does remembering reshape anxiety? What promises feel most alive today?

Day 3 – Strength for Tomorrow - Today’s grace is sufficient.

Scripture: Matthew 6:25–34

Prayer Focus: Surrender tomorrow’s worries.

Reflection Questions: What future concerns dominate your thoughts? What does it look like to seek first His kingdom? How can you practice trust today?

Day 4 – Resurrection Confidence - The future is ultimately victorious.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:51–58

Prayer Focus: Thank Jesus for eternal hope.

Reflection Questions: How does resurrection reshape suffering? What eternal perspective is needed? How does this passage inspire perseverance?

Day 5 – A Promised Restoration - God makes all things new.

Scripture: Revelation 21:1–5

Prayer Focus: Pray with anticipation for Christ’s return.

Reflection Questions: What part of the broken world burdens you most? How does God’s promise of renewal encourage you? How can you live as a citizen of that coming kingdom now?

WEEK/CHAPTER 4: Missing Ingredient: SECURITY

We flourish when we know we are safe and held.

Key Scriptures: "God is our refuge and strength." — Psalm 46:1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?"* — Psalm 27:1

Classic Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients

2 cups cooked chicken, diced
1 cup carrots, chopped
1 cup peas
1 small onion, diced
3 tbsp butter
3 tbsp flour
2 cups chicken broth
½ cup milk

1 prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
Salt and pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Sauté onion and carrots in butter.
3. Stir in flour; cook 1 minute.
4. Gradually whisk in broth and milk.
5. Add chicken and peas.
6. Bake 30–35 minutes.

Reflection: A crust on top and bottom holds everything together.

Day 1 – Secure in Salvation - No one can snatch you from His hand.

Scripture: John 10:27–30; Romans 8:1

Prayer Focus: Thank God for assurance in Christ.

Reflection Questions: What doubts trouble your assurance? How does Jesus describe His protection? How does freedom from condemnation affect you?

Day 2 – God as Refuge - Present help in trouble.

Scripture: Psalm 46:1–3

Prayer Focus: Bring current fears to God.

Reflection Questions: What "earthquakes" are you experiencing? How have you seen God as refuge? What practical trust step can you take?

Day 3 – Identity in Christ - Your identity is secure.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20

Prayer Focus: Reject false labels; embrace truth.

Reflection Questions: What identities compete with "in Christ"? How does being a new creation shift insecurity? What truth do you need to declare today?

Day 4 – Peace that Guards - God's peace stands guard.

Scripture: Philippians 4:6–7

Prayer Focus: Practice gratitude and surrender.

Reflection Questions: What anxieties need naming? How can thanksgiving reframe stress? What would it look like to truly release control?

Day 5 – Built on the Rock - Security comes from obedience.

Scripture: Matthew 7:24–27

Prayer Focus: Ask for a steadfast life.

Reflection Questions: Where is your foundation shaky? What teachings of Jesus need application? What step strengthens your spiritual foundation?

SUPPLEMENTAL CHAPTERS/INGREDIENTS

Chapter 5: Missing Ingredient: PATIENCE

Growth takes low heat and long obedience.

Scripture: "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him." — Psalm 37:7

Slow-Simmered Beef Stew

Ingredients

2 lbs beef chuck, cubed

4 carrots, chopped

3 potatoes, diced

1 onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

4 cups beef broth

2 tbsp tomato paste

1 tsp thyme

Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Brown beef in a heavy pot.
2. Remove and sauté onion and garlic.
3. Stir in tomato paste and herbs.
4. Return beef and add broth and vegetables.
5. Simmer covered for 2–3 hours.

Reflection: Stew cannot be rushed. Heat too high and the meat toughens. Too short a simmer and the flavors never develop.

A Quick 5–Day Guide

Day 1: Read Psalm 37:7. Practice stillness for 5 minutes.

Prayer Focus: Lord, slow my anxious heart.

Day 2: Reflect on James 1:4.

Prayer Focus: Grow endurance in me.

Day 3: Identify a delay in your life.

Prayer Focus: Help me trust Your timing.

Day 4: Fast from hurry for three hours.

Prayer Focus: Form Christlike patience in me.

Day 5: Journal how God has been faithful in waiting seasons.

Prayer Focus: Thank You for unseen growth.

Discussion Questions

1. Where are you currently being asked to wait in life?
2. What makes patience most difficult for you?
3. How have you seen God work through a season of delay?
4. What practical changes could help you slow down spiritually?
5. How can this group support you in a waiting season?

Chapter 6: Missing Ingredient: COURAGE

Without boldness, life tastes bland.

Scripture: "Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God will be with you." — Joshua 1:9

Spicy Shrimp Tacos

Ingredients

- 1 lb shrimp, peeled
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 8 corn tortillas
- 1 cup shredded cabbage

1 avocado, sliced

Lime wedges

Instructions

1. Toss shrimp with spices.
2. Sauté 2–3 minutes per side.
3. Warm tortillas.
4. Assemble with cabbage and avocado.

Reflection: Spice changes everything. It introduces risk — and reward.

A Quick 5–Day Guide

Day 1: Read Joshua 1:9.

Prayer Focus: Replace fear with faith.

Day 2: Meditate on 2 Timothy 1:7.

Prayer Focus: Fill me with power, love, and self-control.

Day 3: Take one small brave step.

Prayer Focus: Give me bold obedience.

Day 4: Recall a past victory.

Prayer Focus: Remind me You were there.

Day 5: Encourage someone else.

Prayer Focus: Make me a source of courage.

Discussion Questions

1. What fears most often hold you back?
2. How does knowing God is with you change your willingness to act?
3. Share a time when courage led to growth.
4. What is one brave step you sense God inviting you to take?
5. How can we pray specifically for boldness in your life?

Chapter 7: The Missing Ingredient: FORGIVENESS

Letting go allows new life to rise.

Scripture: "Be kind and compassionate... forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." — Ephesians 4:32

Homemade Bread

Ingredients

- 3 cups flour
- 1 packet yeast
- 1 ¼ cups warm water
- 1 tsp salt

Instructions

1. Mix ingredients and knead 8–10 minutes.
2. Let rise 1 hour.
3. Shape and rise again.
4. Bake at 375°F for 25–30 minutes.

Reflection: Bread requires releasing control — allowing the yeast to work unseen.

A Quick 5–Day Guide

Day 1: Read Ephesians 4:32.

Prayer Focus: Soften my heart.

Day 2: Reflect on Matthew 6:14–15.

Prayer Focus: Help me release offense.

Day 3: Write a prayer of surrender.

Prayer Focus: Heal hidden wounds.

Day 4: Extend kindness intentionally.

Prayer Focus: Let grace overflow.

Day 5: Celebrate freedom in Christ.

Prayer Focus: Thank You for forgiving me.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is forgiveness often so difficult?

2. How does remembering God's forgiveness shape how we forgive others?
3. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
4. What practical step toward release might God be prompting you to take?
5. How can this group walk with you toward freedom?

Chapter 8: The Missing Ingredient: GRATITUDE

Thankfulness enhances everything.

Scripture: "Give thanks in all circumstances." — 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Lemon Herb Roasted Chicken

Salt and pepper

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken
- 2 lemons
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp rosemary
- 2 tsp thyme

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Rub chicken with oil and herbs.
3. Stuff cavity with lemon halves.
4. Roast 1–1.5 hours.

Reflection: Simple ingredients become extraordinary with the right seasoning.

A Quick 5–Day Guide

Day 1: Read Psalm 100.

Prayer Focus: Cultivate joyful praise.

Day 2: Thank God for small things.

Prayer Focus: Open my eyes to blessings.

Day 3: Express thanks to someone.

Prayer Focus: Make me generous with affirmation.

Day 4: Reframe a hardship.

Prayer Focus: Show me hidden grace.

Day 5: End the week with worship.

Prayer Focus: Anchor my heart in gratitude.

Discussion Questions

1. How does gratitude shift your perspective during hardship?
2. What practices help you cultivate thankfulness consistently?
3. Share a recent blessing you might have overlooked.
4. How can gratitude influence the tone of a family or church?
5. What would it look like for this group to grow in shared thanksgiving?

Chapter 9: The Missing Ingredient: REST

Not everything requires striving.

Scripture: "Come to me... and I will give you rest." — Matthew 11:28

No-Bake Cheesecake

Ingredients

2 cups graham cracker crumbs
½ cup melted butter
16 oz cream cheese
½ cup sugar
1 tsp vanilla
1 cup whipped cream

Instructions

1. Mix crumbs and butter; press into pan.
2. Beat cream cheese, sugar, vanilla.
3. Fold in whipped cream.
4. Chill 4 hours.

Reflection: Some things come together without heat.

A Quick 5–Day Guide

Day 1: Read Matthew 11:28–30.

Prayer Focus: Teach me Your rhythm.

Day 2: Practice 10 minutes of quiet.

Prayer Focus: Calm my spirit.

Day 3: Sabbath from productivity for one hour.

Prayer Focus: Free me from pressure.

Day 4: Reflect on Psalm 23.

Prayer Focus: Restore my soul.

Day 5: Go to bed early.

Prayer Focus: Help me trust You overnight.

Discussion Questions

1. What keeps you from truly resting?
2. How do you personally experience spiritual fatigue?
3. What does Jesus' invitation to rest mean for your schedule?
4. What boundaries might you need to establish?
5. How can we encourage one another toward healthier rhythms?