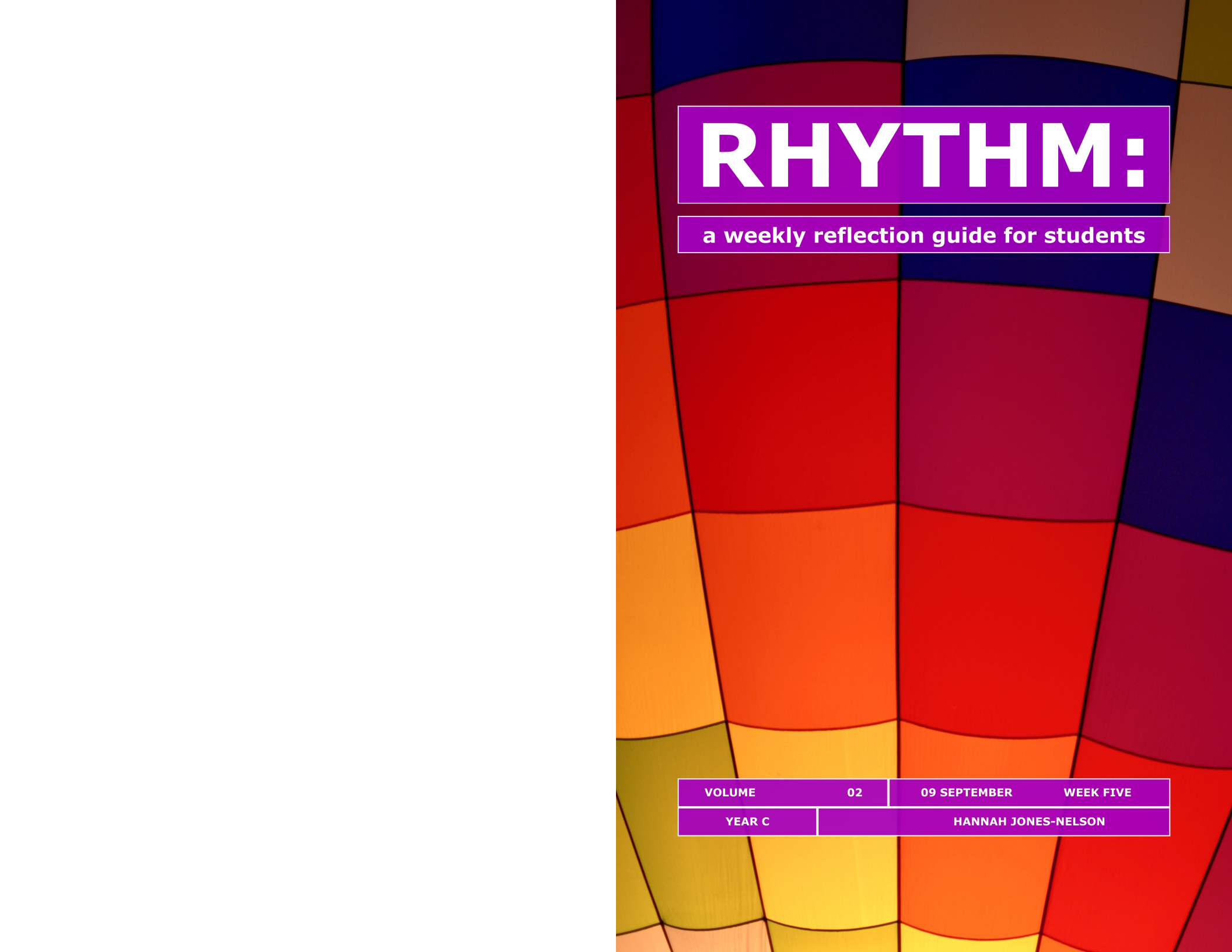




RHYTHM:

a weekly reflection guide for students

VOLUME

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09 SEPTEMBER

WEEK FIVE

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What is Rhythm?

Rhythm is a weekly lectionary reflection guide designed with students in mind! Each week you'll find lectionary readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospels, along with different types of questions and readings to reflect on. Rhythm will help students connect with God and each week's readings in various ways, challenging students to put what they're hearing into practice throughout the week.

Rhythm is broken up into five sections, each with a unique purpose. In *We Read*, students are guided in reflecting on an initial reading of the week's passages. In *We Think...* students are encouraged to engage scripture on a deeper level by asking questions about the text. *We Feel* invites students to engage their emotions, bringing their feelings into conversation with God's word. In *We Believe*, students are invited to connect what they've read in scripture to the larger Wesleyan theological heritage. Finally, *We Practice* guides students in discovering the practices they might use to help develop a rhythm of life shaped by scripture and the community of faith to which they belong.

Rhythm: A Weekly Reflection Guide for Students can be used in a small group setting, as a guide for youth group time, or even with adults! We hope you find Rhythm as something that leads you and your students into a deeper faith.

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We Read...

We read 1 Timothy's warning against loving money (which also includes loving our possessions, security, and status) more than loving God. We're supposed to take this seriously as we evaluate where our hearts are at and where we have placed God. Then, we read in Amos 6 and Luke 16 as both passages show the result of what happens when we choose to put money or status over our love for God. The people in Amos cared more about their comfort than the ruin around them. The rich man in Luke 16 thought he had life figured out because he was rich, while at the same time ignoring the people who were hurting around him. We see how God feels about that choice (not very fondly).

The rich man isn't punished because he has wealth. Instead, we see that his wealth led him to be blind to the people around him. He thought that he had God's blessing and approval, but in the end, Lazarus was the one living rightly. When the rich man sees Lazarus again, he's so blind that he can't even realize that Lazarus has made it while the rich man hasn't. He assumes Lazarus is a servant! Where have we been blind to the people around us? When have we assumed that we're better than someone else? How is God calling us to reorient our thinking?

Amos 6:1a

¹ Doom to those resting comfortably in Zion and those trusting in Mount Samaria, the chiefs of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes!

Amos 6:4–7

⁴ who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on their couches, eat lambs from the flock, and bull calves from the stall; ⁵ who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and, like David, compose tunes on musical instruments; ⁶ who drink bowls of wine, put the best of oils on themselves, but who aren't grieved over the ruin of Joseph! ⁷ Therefore, they will now be the first to be taken away, and the feast of those who lounged at the table will pass away.

Psalm 146

¹ Praise the Lord! Let my whole being praise the Lord! ² I will praise the Lord with all my life; I will sing praises to my God as long as I live. ³ Don't trust leaders; don't trust any human beings— there's no saving help with them! ⁴ Their breath leaves them, then they go back to the ground. On that very same day, their plans die too. ⁵ The person whose help is the God of Jacob — the person whose hope rests on the Lord their God— is truly happy! ⁶ God: the maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. God: who is faithful forever, ⁷ who gives justice to people who are oppressed, who gives bread to people who are starving! The Lord: who frees prisoners. ⁸ The Lord: who makes the blind see. The Lord: who straightens up those who are bent low. The Lord: who loves the righteous. ⁹ The Lord: who protects immigrants, who helps orphans and widows, but who makes the way of the wicked twist and turn! ¹⁰ The Lord will rule forever! Zion, your God will rule from one generation to the next! Praise the Lord!

1 Timothy 6:6–19

⁶ Actually, godliness is a great source of profit when it is combined with being happy with what you already have. ⁷ We didn't bring anything into the world and so we can't take anything out of it: ⁸ we'll be happy with food and clothing. ⁹ But people who are trying to get rich fall into temptation. They are trapped by many stupid and harmful passions that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some have wandered away from the faith and have impaled themselves with a lot of pain because they made money their goal. ¹¹ But as for you, man of God, run away from all these things. Instead, pursue righteousness, holy living, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness. ¹² Compete in the good fight of faith. Grab hold of eternal life— you were called to it, and you made a good confession of it in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ I command you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and Christ Jesus, who made the good confession when testifying before Pontius Pilate. ¹⁴ Obey this order without fault or failure until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ The timing of this appearance is revealed by God alone, who is the blessed and only master, the King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁶ He alone has immortality and lives in light that no one can come near. No

We Practice...

This week, take a moment to intentionally notice the people around you.

- Who in your community needs support?
- How are you valuing every person you encounter?
- What is one practical way that you could serve someone else this week?

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human being has ever seen or is able to see him. Honor and eternal power belong to him. Amen. ¹⁷ Tell people who are rich at this time not to become egotistical and not to place their hope on their finances, which are uncertain. Instead, they need to hope in God, who richly provides everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Tell them to do good, to be rich in the good things they do, to be generous, and to share with others. ¹⁹ When they do these things, they will save a treasure for themselves that is a good foundation for the future. That way, they can take hold of what is truly life.

Luke 16:19–31

¹⁹ "There was a certain rich man who clothed himself in purple and fine linen, and who feasted luxuriously every day. ²⁰ At his gate lay a certain poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ²¹ Lazarus longed to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Instead, dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² "The poor man died and was carried by angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ While being tormented in the place of the dead, he looked up and saw Abraham at a distance with Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ He shouted, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I'm suffering in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received good things, whereas Lazarus received terrible things. Now Lazarus is being comforted and you are in great pain. ²⁶ Moreover, a great crevasse has been fixed between us and you. Those who wish to cross over from here to you cannot. Neither can anyone cross from there to us.' ²⁷ "The rich man said, 'Then I beg you, Father, send Lazarus to my father's house. ²⁸ I have five brothers. He needs to warn them so that they don't come to this place of agony.' ²⁹ Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets. They must listen to them.' ³⁰ The rich man said, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will change their hearts and lives.' ³¹ Abraham said, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the Prophets, then neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.' "

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We Believe...

Is the Bible calling for all of us to give away everything we own? Can Christians have money and still love God? It's an important subject to wrestle with, and some of us may come away with different answers and convictions. However, at the heart of these questions should be God. What is God calling us to do? How is God asking us to use our resources? We don't believe that every Christian should have \$0 to their name. But if God asks you to give generously, to go without so that someone can have their needs met, to focus on time with God instead of earning more - if these instructions are given and we aren't willing to obediently follow God, we need to reevaluate where our priorities lie.

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We Think...

- What stands out to you in these verses? Does anything confuse you or not make sense? How do these verses compare to your own experience in life or the church?
- What are you considering? What questions come to mind?
- Why does 1 Timothy say that loving money is the root of evil?
- What happens when we love something more than we love God?
- Psalm 146 praises God for God's justice and healing.
- How does this connect to the other three passages we read today?

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We Feel...

- What emotions are you experiencing today? How are you making space for these feelings?
- Where have you seen God today or this week? What is pointing you to God (maybe it is something in creation, a friend or adult that cares for you)?
- What has God made new in your life? In your heart?
- When in your life have you been tempted (or chosen) to put something above God? How did that make you feel?
- Have you ever felt like Lazarus in Luke 16?
- Have you ever felt like a rich man?
- How does this story reveal the nature of God's Kingdom to us?