



Lesson 1: The Valley of Dry Bones - Honest Assessment

- **Theme:** "Where are we now?"
- **Bible Connection:** *Ezekiel sees the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-2)*
- **Key Element:** Gauging our Spiritual Vitality

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, ² and He caused me to pass among them all around. And there were very many in the open valley. And they were very dry." | Ezekiel 37:1-2

The Hand of the Lord

Before we dive into that valley of dry bones, we need to talk about what happens when the hand of the Lord is upon you!

Ezekiel didn't stumble into this vision by accident. He didn't just happen to be in the right place at the right time. No! The Scripture is crystal clear: **"The hand of the Lord was upon me."** That changes everything!

When God's hand is on your life, **impossibilities become possibilities!** When His hand is on you, you don't see problems – **you see potential!** When the hand of the Lord rests upon you, you're not looking at what IS – **you're seeing what CAN BE!**

God placed His hand on Ezekiel and said, *"I'm going to show you something that will blow your mind"* – that same God has His hand on this church, on this moment, and on YOU.

And here's what I need you to understand: He's going to make this PERSONAL. Over the next six weeks, God is going to show you some things!

This isn't going to be some nice, comfortable Bible study where you nod your head and go home unchanged. **No!** When God's hand is upon you, He pulls back the curtain on your spiritual reality...

- He's going to reveal things about your heart you didn't even know were there.
- He's going to expose areas in your ministry you thought were thriving but are actually just surviving.
- He's going to shine a light on potential you never knew you had!

And when God's hand is upon you: You see beyond the surface! You speak life into dead situations! And you become a catalyst for resurrection!

The Valley of Dry Bones

Our journey takes us back to one of the lowest points in Israel's history---They are exiled in Babylon. These folks aren't just geographically displaced -- they're spiritually lost. They're emotionally flatlined, totally disconnected from the vibrant life they once knew with God. It's right in the middle of this spiritual wasteland that God gives Ezekiel a vision.

The prophet is carried by the Spirit of the Lord and dropped into the middle of an ancient battlefield. It is significant that this battle was **fought in a valley!**

We all know what it's like to walk through valleys---those low places where every step feels heavy, and every decision feels like an uphill battle. It's a place where you must look up to see the bottom, and it's in these valleys where answers don't come easily and where the crisis feels never-ending. But this is exactly where God calls Ezekiel---**to speak life into what seems lifeless.**

Now this isn't just any valley ... this is **a valley full of dry bones.** "Dry bones" represent a situation where you can't see a way out. Your scenario [life, church, or ministry] is one of impending collapse, and you're asking, "How in the world is this going to get fixed"?

These bones? They're not just calcium deposits that popped up overnight. No, they're telling a story. They're screaming, "Hey! Look at us! We used to be somebody!"

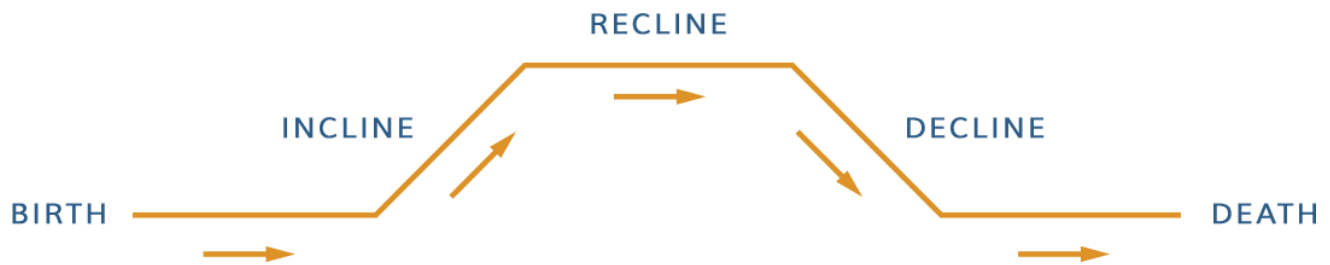
Can you see it? Can you hear it? Wind the clock back, and this valley was poppin'! We're talking warriors. They were alive! They were active! They were vibrant! You had shouts of battle, cries of victory, the clash of swords. It was life at full volume! But now it's silent.

Here's the connection ... this valley isn't just Ezekiel's real estate. **It might be our church.** It might be our ministry. It might be our current spiritual condition. We find ourselves standing among the remnants of what used to be. These "bones" serve as a testimony, a reminder of our church's former glory.

Some people remember the good old days. We used to be the hotspot. We had the staff, the crowd, the resources, the fire. But now? It's just echoes and memories. This might be our current reality, but we are not here today to waste time in the valley. We're not setting up camp in the land of used-to-be. It's just our starting point today, not our destination.

Resurgence Question: Where Are We Now?

God didn't just show Ezekiel a problem - He unveiled a process. In Ezekiel's vision, resurrection wasn't instantaneous - it unfolded in stages. Dry bones transformed, step by step, into a mighty army. In the same way, our church's revitalization journey won't happen overnight. It will progress through phases, and the crucial first step toward our new destination is an **honest evaluation** of our **present situation**. Where are we NOW?



Resurgence starts with a gut-level, honest assessment of our current reality. We will discuss the other stages as we progress through the valley story, but in this session, we must look at our church and call it what it is. **When you step back and really look around, I want your honest response, is our church experiencing incline, recline, or decline?**

Don't answer that question yet. To produce a qualified response, you need to know what each of these stages look like...

1. INCLINE: The Upward Climb! 🔥

- This is when your church is LIT! Your impact? It's not just growing, it's EXPLODING!
- Every day, every week, you're pushing boundaries, reaching higher, serving BIGGER!
- This is the sweet spot! You're healthy, you're serving, and you're MULTIPLYING!

2. RECLINE: The Comfort Zone Trap! 😴

- This is where things get dangerous. You're coasting, thinking you've "made it."
- Same old, same old. You're doing what you've always done, but where's the fire?
- It might feel comfortable, but let me tell you - routine is the enemy of revival!

3. DECLINE: The Wake-Up Call! ⏰

- Church, this is where it gets real. Your light's dimming, your impact's shrinking.
- You're doing less, reaching less, and passion is likely gone.
- It's a slippery slope, and before you know it, you're hardly making a dent in your community.

Church Vitality Assessment Process

You've probably got a gut feeling about where our church stands when it comes to vitality. But sometimes our hearts need a reality check from our heads. To help us pinpoint it more accurately, we're going to work through a team vitality assessment in just a few minutes.

Think of it as a spiritual stethoscope for our church's heartbeat. It's not about judgment—it's about BREAKTHROUGH! Because when we're clear on where we are, we can get crystal clear on where God wants us to take us!

Here's What I Need You to Remember ... your current stage isn't your prison sentence – it's your LAUNCHING PAD! God didn't bring you to this moment to leave you stuck. He brought you here to CATAPULT you forward!

Some of the greatest comeback stories in Scripture started in the deepest valleys. David wrote his most powerful psalms when he was running for his life. Moses encountered the burning bush when he was a washed-up shepherd. Paul wrote his most encouraging letters from a Roman prison cell!

And Ezekiel? He saw the most incredible resurrection miracle when everything looked absolutely hopeless!

The Power of Starting Where You Are

Here's what gets me fired up: God doesn't need you to be perfect to use you powerfully! He doesn't need your church to be at 100% to do 100% miracles through you! He just needs you to be HONEST about where you are and HUNGRY for where He's taking you!

Every mighty oak tree started as a tiny acorn. Every championship team started with day one of training camp. Every revival started with someone brave enough to say, "God, we need You to do something NEW in us!"

That someone is YOU. That somewhere is HERE. That sometime is NOW!

Ed Stetzer said, "Church revitalization is messy." You know what I say? BRING ON THE MESS! Because mess means we're moving! Mess means we're not settling for status quo! Mess means God is stirring things up because He's getting ready to show up in ways we've never seen before!

We're Just Getting Started!

Church, this assessment we're about to take? It's not the end of the story – it's the BEGINNING of our comeback! Over the next five weeks, we're going to watch God breathe life into every dry place in our church. We're going to see Him connect what's been disconnected. We're going to witness Him raise up what's been lying down. We're going to experience a resurrection that will leave us saying, **"Only God could have done this!"**

So buckle up, church! Our valley days are numbered, and our victory days are just beginning!

Transition to Workbook Session

Now, let's break into our table groups and open our workbooks to page 3. Remember, this assessment is between you and God—be completely honest about what you observe right now. Your honesty today becomes the foundation for your breakthrough tomorrow!