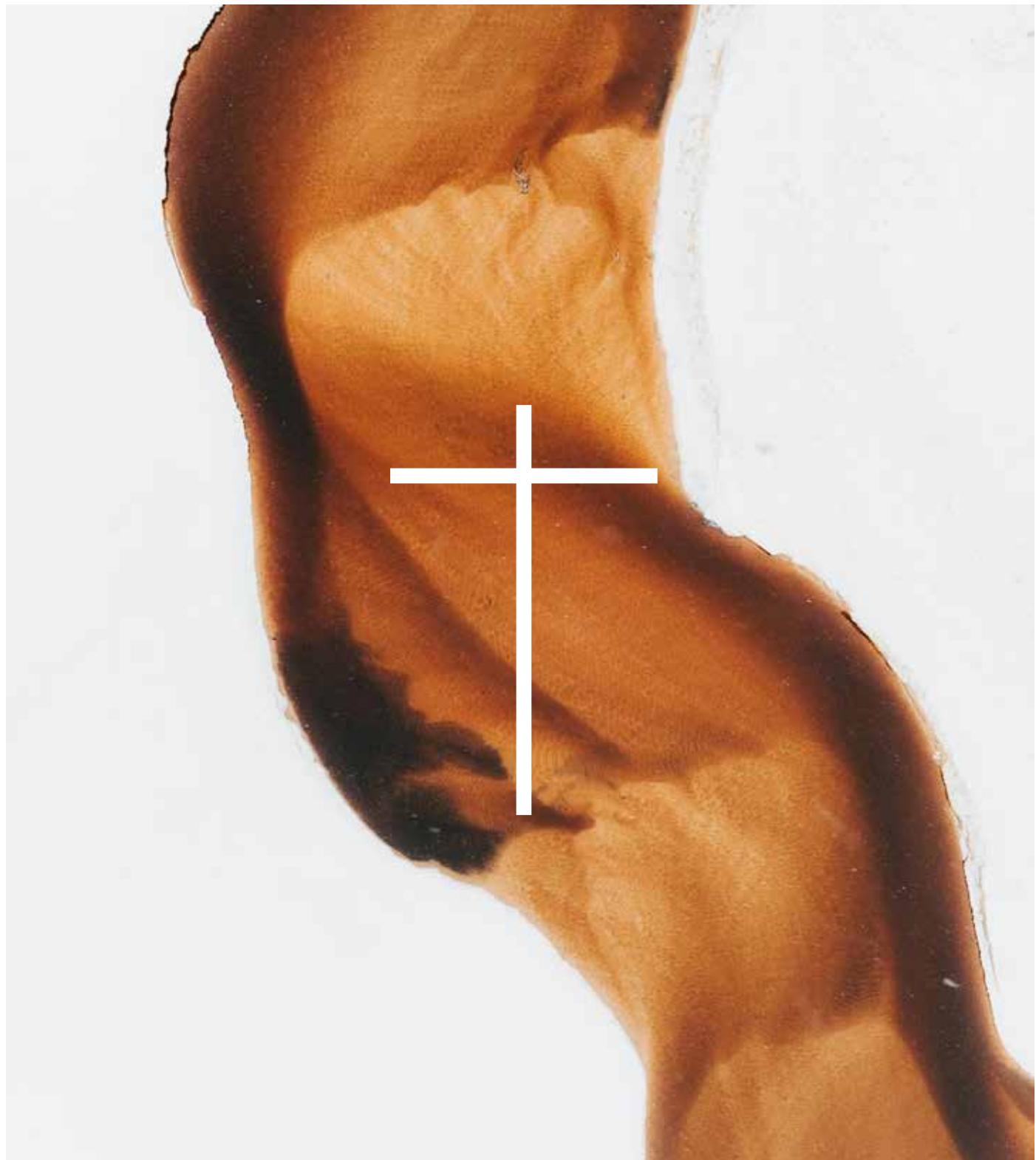
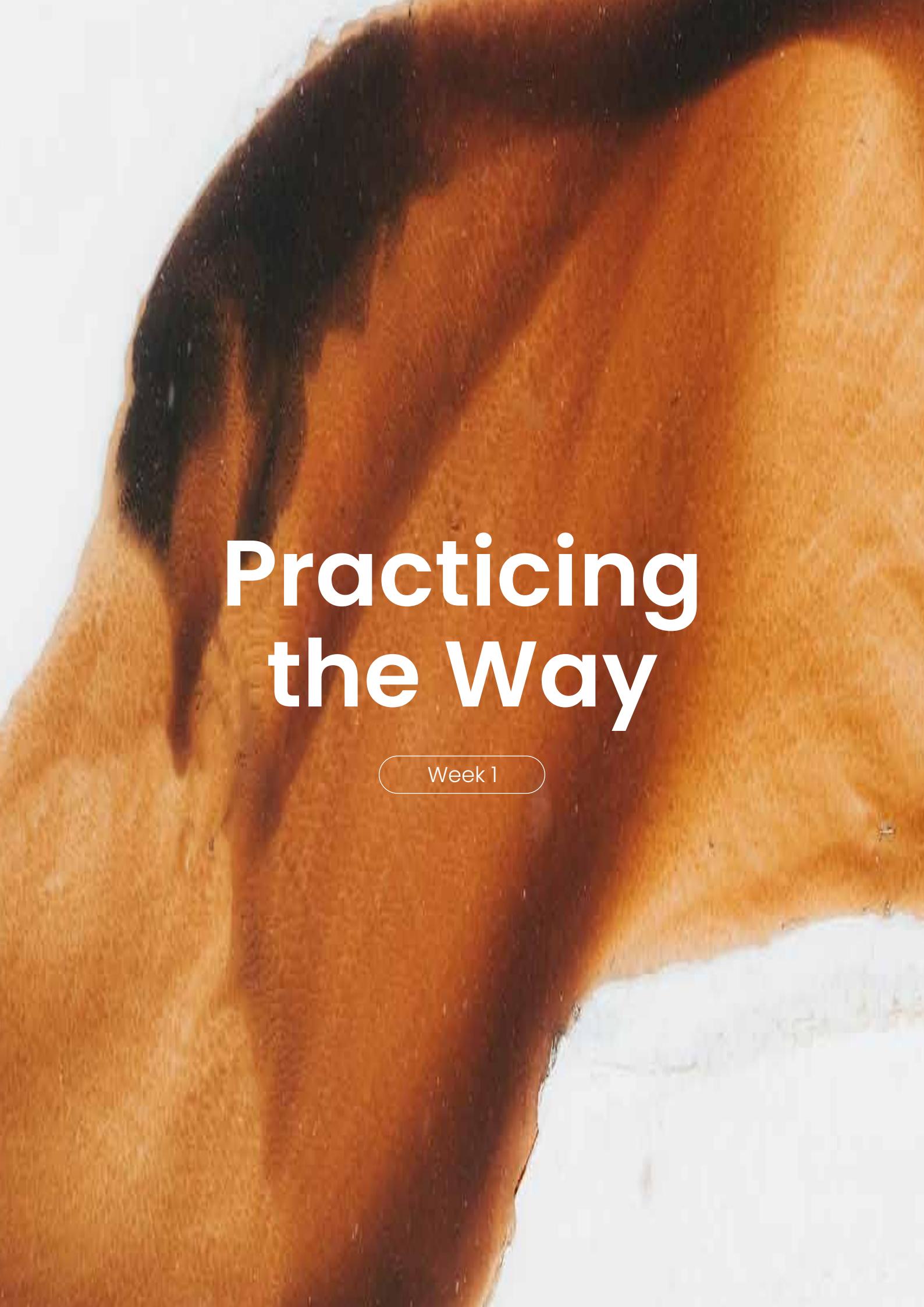




## B E C O M I N G



January Teaching Series



# Practicing the Way

Week 1

# Overview

Jesus invites everyone—the crowd and the disciples—into a costly but life-giving way of life. Following Him means denying the false self, taking up our cross daily, and walking closely behind Him. This invitation isn't about religious performance or self-improvement, but about being formed into people of love for the sake of others and the world.

Whether we realize it or not, we are all being formed by our habits, choices, suffering, and desires. If we don't start with the end in mind—who we want to become—we may arrive somewhere we never intended. Jesus calls us to lose our lives in order to truly find them.

As Abbalove church, we are pursuing a way of life centered on:

**Presence** – Being with God as sons and daughters

**Formation** – Slowly Becoming like Jesus in community

**Mission** – Joining God's work for the sake of others

# Reading

ABBALOVE

## Mark 8:34-38 NIV

*"Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

## A Word on Suffering

Suffering is not a detour from the life of discipleship but a reality Jesus invites us to walk through with Him. In Mark 8, Jesus makes it clear that following Him means taking up our cross daily—not because God causes our pain, but because suffering is part of life in a broken world. Our human instincts try to avoid, explain away, or control suffering, yet Jesus reveals that God's way is different.

God does not stand behind our suffering as its source; He enters into it as our companion. In the midst of pain, loss, and unfulfilled expectations, God is forming us into people of love, confronting the parts of us that are most unlike Christ and healing them through grace. Suffering becomes the place where self-reliance dies, control loosens, and we are slowly raised into the wholeness of life that looks like Jesus.

# Discussion

When you think about yourself later in life (70–80 years old), what kind of person do you hope to be?

What does Jesus mean by “losing” your life in order to find it?

Is there an area of your life that feels resistant to Jesus’ leadership?

What might “taking up your cross” look like in your everyday life?

# Practice

Spend a few quiet moments each day asking:

“Jesus, who am I becoming—and what are You inviting me to surrender today?”

Choose one simple way to practice being with God this week (silence, prayer, Scripture, slowing down).

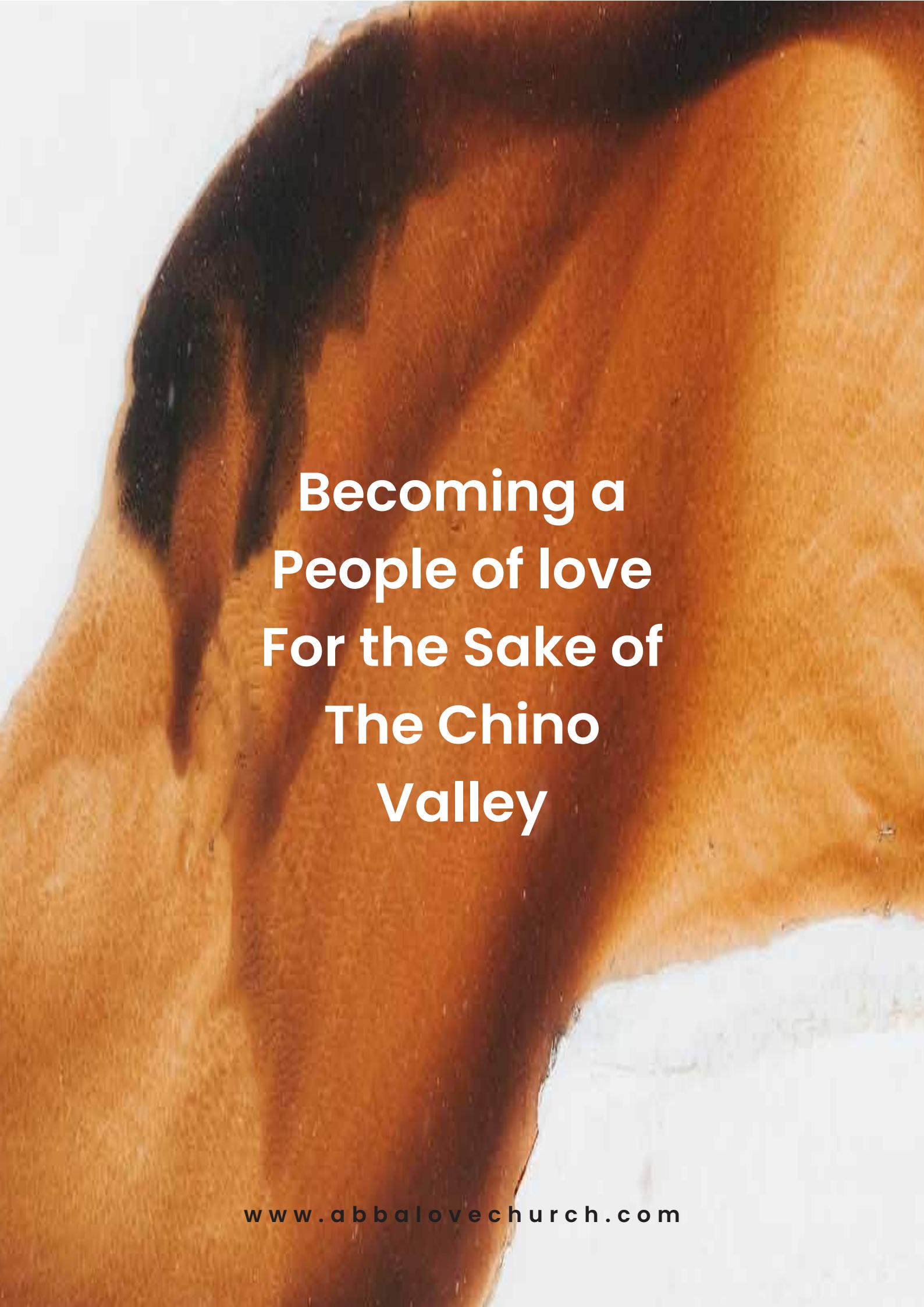
# Further Resources

**Videos: Becoming Teaching Series** – Abbalove Church

**Book: Practicing the Way** – John Mark Comer

**Book: Invitation to a Journey** – Robert Mulholland

**Book: Renovation of the Heart** – Dallas Willard



**Becoming a  
People of love  
For the Sake of  
The Chino  
Valley**