

Disciple 6 Schedule Spring 2020

February 2	Week 11
February 9	Week 12
February 16	Large Group Bible Study
February 23	Week 13
March 1	Week 14
March 8	Week 15
March 15	Week 16
March 22	Week 17
March 29	Week 18
April 5	Week 19
April 12	No Disciple 6
April 19	Week 20
April 26	Week 21

May 3

Week 22

May 10

Week 23

May 17

Week 24—Last Week of D6
curriculum

Relationships With Church Leaders

Week 11

Assignment One

Read Titus 1:1-9 and Acts 20:28-31 and the comments relating to the passages in the "It's In the Book" section. Be prepared to discuss your answers to the following questions.

- What imagery does Paul use to describe the ministry of church leaders in Acts 20:28-31?
- What role is a church leader to take in relation to the people of the church?
- What are the names that Paul uses to describe church leaders in Titus 1:4-5 and how does he describe their task?
- In the columns below list out the qualities listed in Titus 1 that a church leader should be and should not be..

Leaders Should Be

Leaders Should Not Be

Assignment Two

Read Titus 1:9 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" Section. Be prepared to discuss your answers to the following questions.

- What two tasks are pastors supposed to do as a result of holding fast to faithful and trustworthy teaching?
- What does the phrase "give instruction in sound doctrine" mean? How does this happen?
- Why is it important for pastors to hold to the truth of the scripture in their teaching and discipling?
- What does it mean to "rebuke those who contradict" sound doctrine? Have you ever seen this take place?
- Understanding what a pastor's role is, what does this make you think/feel about their role in the church? What is their importance?

Assignment Three

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-21 and the comments related to it in the it's in the book section of the lesson. Be prepared to discuss your answers to the following questions.

- How are Christians to treat their leaders according to these verses?
- What specific things does Paul encourage his readers to do to honor their spiritual leaders in verses 14-21? (Hint: look at all the verbs in these verses)
- What should you do when a spiritual leader is not consistent with God's word and may be leading in an ungodly way?
- In the space below write down some specific and practical ways that you can show respect and appreciation to your spiritual leaders.

Scripture to Memorize

"But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord, and give you instruction." 1 Thessalonians 5:12

It's in the Book
30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Imagine you move to a new state and have to look for a new church home. What character qualities or skills do you consider important for the pastor of the church you would consider joining? Why would those particular things in a prospective pastor be important to you?

Qualifications for Spiritual Leaders

Read Titus 1:1–9 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 4–5, 7

Verse 4. Titus. A Greek by ethnic heritage, Titus came to know the Lord under the ministry of Paul. **Verse 5. For this reason . . . Crete.** Paul sent Titus to Crete to appoint church leaders and disciple new believers because false teachings and worldly living had invaded the churches. Crete is one of the larger islands in the Mediterranean, and Cretans were often characterized in ancient writings as immoral, rude, and barbaric people.

Church leaders were called specific names in this letter. **Verse 5. elders.** This word in Greek can refer to physical age (someone older), but it can also refer to spiritual maturity. An elder is to be a spiritually mature man. **Verse 7. overseer.** This word means the manager of a household or family and emphasizes the responsibility of the church leader as God's manager for a specific church family.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: What imagery did Paul use to describe the ministry of church leaders in Acts 20:28?

Discussion Question

What is the significance of the names used to describe church leaders in Titus 1:5 and 7 and the description of the church leaders' task described in **Assignment One**?

On Your Own

In the space below, make two columns, one with the "should not be" qualities of church leaders and one with the "should be" qualities. Write the qualities based verses 5–9. When everyone is finished, the group can compare answers to the Scripture passage and make changes where needed.

A Leader Should Not Be . . .

A Leader Should Be . . .

Studying the Passage, vv. 6–8

Verse 6. above reproach. These two words, also in verse 7, can be translated "blameless." They come from a word meaning that a person can't be accused of wrongdoing because of the life he lives. **husband of one wife.** The emphasis is not that the pastor must be a married man, for Paul was single at this time. The charge was that the pastor should be a one-woman kind of man, taking God's plan for marriage seriously (compare Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5). **dissipation.** Signifies reckless living or debauchery and is the same word to describe the

prodigal son in Luke 15:13. **Verse 7. pugnacious.** This means not a bully or combative, not a person always looking for a fight. **not fond of sordid gain.** "Sordid" is another word for *dishonest*. This phrase means a pastor should not be materialistic or greedy or dishonest with money.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following question: What two tasks are pastors to do as a result of holding fast to faithful and trustworthy teaching?

Studying the Passage, Titus 1:9

Verse 9. holding fast. The word literally means "cling to" the faithful Word. **exhort.** This means "urge" or even "comfort" and comes from the same root where we get the title *Comforter* in reference to the Holy Spirit. **refute.** This word signifies actively speaking against, opposing, or objecting, and in context, refers to actively opposing those who contradict sound doctrine.

With a basic understanding of the character qualities of church leaders and some of the tasks given to them, let's think about the right way to relate to spiritual leaders.

Rightly Relating to Spiritual Leaders

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12–21 out loud.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to the following question: How are Christians supposed to treat their leaders, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13?

Studying the Passage, vv. 12–13

Verse 12. appreciate. The believers in Thessalonica are exhorted to appreciate or respect those who work with them, have responsibility or charge over them, and give them instruction (a pretty spot-on job description of a pastor!). The word *appreciate* suggests giving honor or recognition or acknowledging.

Verse 13. esteem. This word means "to hold in high regard" and also suggests giving respect.

Live in peace. All believers are called to live in harmony with one another, including our spiritual leaders, without discord.

On Your Own

In the space below, describe some specific and practical ways you can show respect and appreciation to your spiritual leaders. When everyone is finished, the group can share their responses.

Discussion Question

Paul urged the Thessalonians to relate to fellow believers (that includes the spiritual leaders over them) with specific actions in 1 Thessalonians 5:14–21. What specific things does he encourage them to do? (Hint: look for all the verbs in these verses.)

Studying the Passage, 1 Thessalonians 5:21–22

Despite Paul's encouragement to follow spiritual leadership, there are limits when submitting to spiritual leaders. Titus 1 warns about false teachers, people who professed to know God but were disobedient and worthless for any good deed (Titus 1:10–16).

In 1 Thessalonians 5:20–21, Paul provided three guardrails, so to speak, that can guide how we should rightly submit to spiritual authorities within scriptural limits.

First: Verse 21. examine everything. The word for *examine* can also mean “to prove” and brings to mind the imagery of giving carefully focused inspection just as a jury in a courtroom would examine evidence in a trial. So, too, are believers to carefully inspect every idea or doctrine or teaching in light of the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16).

Second: Verse 21. hold fast . . . good. After carefully considering a teaching, believers are commanded to cling to what is good. *Good* means those things of the highest reliability or moral excellence.

Third: Verse 22. abstain. This means to hold oneself away from—picture a friend holding another friend back from a fight. Each believer should be held back from every form of evil.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

Four major passages discuss the qualifications and responsibilities of church leaders (Titus 1:5–9; Acts 20:28–35; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; and 1 Peter 5:1–4). God has given spiritual leaders the task of managing and overseeing the church, guarding and protecting believers, and guiding the church toward spiritual maturity.

Considering some of the specific qualities you looked at with your group, you saw that the Bible wants us to take into account the personal character of leaders we may follow. Moral qualifications for those leaders relate to their family life, their attitude and temperament, and their treatment of people in general (Titus 1:5–8). These qualities are important because the Bible encourages us to observe the life of our leaders and imitate them (1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 13:7).

In addition, what a spiritual leader teaches is very important. Leaders are commanded not only to know God's teachings and how to correctly study the Bible (Titus 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:15), but they are also to teach according to sound doctrine and refute wrong teachings. Since followers are commanded to submit to spiritual leaders by willingly placing themselves under their authority, it is important that these leaders are trustworthy (1 Corinthians 16:16). We need to be careful whom we follow!

However, as we do follow godly spiritual leaders, there are ways we can encourage them.

- Believers should respect and appreciate those who serve them in leadership (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13).
- We should encourage and pray for leaders and seek after their good (1 Thessalonians 5:14–17).
- No human being will ever be perfect this side of heaven, so we should be patient with everyone (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Teenage disciples who relate to their church leaders according to the teaching of Scripture are ready to join Christ in bringing His kingdom on earth for the glory of God.

Parent Question

What are some basic qualifications of spiritual leaders, and how should you relate to spiritual leaders within scriptural boundaries?

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Week 12

Relating to the Congregation

Assignment One

Read 1 John 3:11-19 and Genesis 4:1-8 and the comments related to these passages in the "It's In the Book" Section.

- How would you describe Cain's feelings towards his brother?
- Have you ever felt that type of emotion towards another person close to you?
- Part of the reason John wrote this letter was to guide his readers to understand that they could have assurance of salvation. Based on this passage, how can we have assurance of our salvation in Christ?
- Examine your attitudes toward people in our student ministry/faith family. Is your love for them sincere and without hypocrisy?
- List out some specific examples of your sincere love for those in your faith family.

Assignment Two

Read 1 John 3:11-19 and read the comments related to this passage in the "It's In the Book" section.

- Why should you not be surprised that the world hates you, even if you are a nice person?
- According to this passage, can a person be truly saved and hate his brothers and sisters in Christ? Why do you think that this is the metric John uses to judge a person's faith?
- Read Matthew 5:21-26.
- How can anger turn to hatred towards our brothers and sisters in Christ? What can we do to stop this emotion before it becomes destructive in our life?
- Is there anyone in our faith family with whom you are angry? Using Matthew 5:21-26 as a guide, what steps would you need to take to make sure that your anger doesn't lead towards sin and to improve this relationship?

Continued on next page

Assignment Three

Read 1 John 1:9

- According to 1 John 3:16-19, what is love?
- Using your own words describe how Jesus showed his love for us?
- How does God's forgiveness of us as described in 1 John 1:9 show his love for us?
- How can our forgiveness toward others show our love for them?
- Self-denial is a big part of forgiveness. Why do you think that is so hard to deny ourselves and forgive others sometimes?
- What happens if we hold on to grudges and don't forgive?
- What are some ways that you can grow in love for members of our faith family?

Scripture to Memorize

"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

1 John 3:18

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

You are a member of a congregation. You either know, or at least recognize, most people in your church. But they drive you crazy sometimes! Sometimes you just don't want to go to church because you struggle with the people in your church. How do you love the people in your congregation biblically?

Read 1 John 3:11–19 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 11–12

Verse 11. this is the message. In 1 John 4:8 John wrote, "God is love." From the beginning of this letter, he repeated Christ's command to love one another because God is love. The command to love was always at the heart of John's teaching, hearkening back to Jesus's command: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34–35).

Verse 12. not as Cain. Cain was a hypocrite. That was his problem. His hypocrisy was demonstrated in his grain offering, which was not an offering he made in sincerity. When God accepted Abel's offering, Cain was consumed with jealousy, and he killed his own brother. Cain feigned love for both God and Abel. He loved himself above all.

Ultimately, Cain did not want to come into the Light because his **deeds were evil**, just as Christ had described in John 3:19–20.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on Cain's feelings for his brother.

Discussion Question

Part of the reason John wrote this letter was to guide his readers into knowing how they could have assurance of salvation. Based on this passage, how can we have assurance of salvation?

On Your Own

Examine your attitudes toward people in your church. Is your love for them sincere, and without hypocrisy? In the space below, write some evidences of your sincere love for others in your church.

Studying the Passage, 1 John 3:13–15

Verse 13. the world hates you. The natural reaction when someone hates you is to return the favor. As a disciple, you are going to invite the world's ire as long as you are not ashamed to live for Christ.

Verse 14. We know that we have passed out of death. The evidence of your salvation will be in your love, even when people hate you. If you do not sincerely and consistently love other believers in particular, you should examine your own spirituality carefully. Are you truly saved if you refuse to love your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Verse 15. hates his brother. Hatred of other Christians—fueled by pride, jealousy, anger, etc.—is evidence of an unregenerate, unsaved person. This verse is one of the most arresting and convicting verses in all of Scripture.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on why you should not be surprised if the world hates you, no matter how delightful you are.

Discussion Questions

To review some of Jesus's teaching, read Matthew 5:21–22 out loud. How can anger lead to hatred. How can we deal with anger with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and stop it before it turns destructive?

On Your Own

With whom in the congregation are you angry? Whom do you need to forgive? Read Jesus's instructions in Matthew 5:23–26. In the space below, write how you could apply these teachings to your relationship with the person with whom you are angry.

Studying the Passage, 1 John 3:16–19

Verse 16. He laid down His life. Do you want to know what love is? Here is a great definition and a powerful one. Jesus Christ laid down His life for us, even while we were still sinners (see Romans 5:8). When we love biblically, we follow Christ's example.

Verse 17. closes his heart. It's one thing to talk about denial of self. The proof is in the doing. When we see a brother or sister in need and we have the means of meeting that need, our natural response as believers in Christ ought to be to immediately and instinctively help that person. Verse 17 provides a negative example, helping us know what love is not—selfishly turning away one who is in need.

Verses 19. We will know by this. Later in this letter, John wrote, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). How do you know you're saved? The nature of your love will be a sure guide.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now discuss the nature of love from 1 John 3:16–19.

Discussion Question

First John 1:9 gives us assurance of forgiveness of sins when we confess them to Christ. How does our forgiving of others demonstrate sincere love? How does unforgiveness demonstrate hatred? Can we expect to be forgiven if we withhold forgiveness?

On Your Own

Nobody loves with perfect sincerity except Jesus Himself. After your study of the passages above, how are you motivated to grow in your love for members of the congregation?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** at the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out: On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

First John 3:11–19 is one of the most powerfully convicting passages in all of Scripture. Here in this passage, we are told in no uncertain terms that if we do not love with sincerity, we do not have evidence we are saved.

But wait—don't we only have to confess that Jesus is God's Son and believe that He died on the cross for us to be saved? Yes, certainly. But from that confession—if it is a faithful and true confession—flows obedience to Christ's chief command to love God with all one's being and to love one's neighbor as oneself.

There is no more certain litmus test for love than in the church. In the church we gather with other believers to worship and serve the triune God. If we do not love those with whom we share the most important common bond imaginable, how can we truly say we believe in Jesus in a way that leads to our salvation? The apostle John, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says we can't.

Nevertheless, if we do love with sincerity, our love is a demonstration that our salvation is real. The good news about John's convicting words is that they give us assurance of our salvation.

But wait, you say. I don't love perfectly. Sometimes I do lash out at my brother or sister in Christ. So do we all. But what is your response to that sin in your actions and attitudes? Is it to confess it and repent from it? Or is your heart hardened, and do you refuse to repent? If the former, then that is further evidence of the work of God's Spirit in you as He makes you more and more into the image of His Son.

Parent Question

Does your love for the congregation give evidence that you are a child of God?

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Week 13

Baptism

Assignment One

Read Romans 6:1-4 and Acts 2:37-38 and the "It's In the Book" section of the notes. Be prepared to discuss the following questions.

- List out as many types of baptism that you have heard of both from the Bible, our church's practice, and the practices of other churches in our area.
- Now, using a Bible search engine such as www.biblehub.com or the YouVersion app, search for the word *baptism* or *baptize*. **Who** was baptized in these passages?
- Romans 6:1-4 gives a great description of what baptism is. How do you see baptism as relating to the way that you live out your salvation? Is there any correlation? Newness of life?
- Write out in your own words what baptism means to you.
- As you consider the Acts 2 passage as well as the rest of the New Testament, when did the people in these passages receive their baptism? Why does that matter?

Assignment Two

Read Acts 8:26-38 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section. Be prepared to discuss the following.

- Using a Bible search engine search the words baptize and baptism. **How** were people baptized in these passages?
- What do you think is meant by the phrase "both went down into the water" in Acts 8:36-38?
- What imagery do you think is depicted by being immersed completely in the water?
- How does baptism by immersion symbolize the meaning of baptism as we have seen it in the New Testament?
- Some have compared baptism to a "public drowning." This means that when a person is immersed in the water they are showing that they have died to their old self and their sinful ways and are walking in new life. Tell a little bit of your faith story and how you have experienced this new life.

Continued on next page

Assignment Three

Read Acts 2:40-42 and the comments related to it in the "It's in the Book" section. Be prepared to answer the following questions.

- In a Bible dictionary or a regular dictionary if that's all you have look up the word baptism. Share your definition.
- What is the relationship (if any) in Acts 2 between being baptized as a believer in Christ and your role in the church?
- Do you think that baptism is an important part of being a partner with a local church? Why or why not?
- How does baptism relate to partnership in our local church? If you don't know, ask your parent, D-Group leader or pastor.
- Write out what you remember about becoming a partner of FBC Beaumont? Was it when you were baptized or a different time?
- If you haven't made that step of baptism, have you thought about it? What's holding you back?

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Imagine sitting around the lunch table in the school cafeteria and one friend mentions that he is going to be baptized. Your other friends then begin to talk about their experiences with baptism. Some were baptized as babies, others as young children, and others as teenagers. Then some say they were sprinkled with water, others say water was poured over them, and others say they were dunked underneath water. Hearing all these different versions of baptism, your friends turn to you and ask, "Are all of these versions correct, or is one form of baptism the right way?" What would you say?

What is Baptism?

Read Romans 6:1-4 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 1, 4

Verse 1. Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? In this section of Romans, Paul had been talking about salvation and then raised this question. The answer he provides is related to the concept of baptism, something all Christians have in common. We are to relate our baptism to Christ's death and resurrection.

Verse 4. buried with Him through baptism. Here Paul provided a partial answer to the question, What is baptism? It is a symbol of Jesus's burial and a symbol of His resurrection **so we too might walk in newness of life.**

Discussion Question

How does your baptism relate to the way you live out your salvation?

On Your Own

Read again Romans 6:1-4. In the space below, write what baptism means to you.

Who Should Be Baptized?

Read Acts 2:37-38 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 37-38

In Romans 6 we see what baptism is. In Acts 2 and other passages, we see who should be baptized. In Acts 2 several important events in the life of the church occur: Pentecost, or the coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-13), the first preaching of the church by Peter (2:14-35), and the birth of the church (2:37-47). In this last section people hear the gospel.

Verse 37. pierced to the heart. The Holy Spirit moved through Peter's sermon to break the hearts of the people. **what shall we do?** The lost then asked the same question the lost sometimes ask today. **Verse 38. Repent, and each of you be baptized.** The answer to the question of the lost is still the same. Peter's answer also makes clear who is to be baptized.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on who was baptized in the New Testament.

Discussion Question

As you consider who was baptized in the New Testament, when did these people receive their baptism? Was it before or after they believed?

How Should We Baptize?

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on how persons were baptized in the New Testament.

Read Acts 8:26–38 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 26–38

This passage is the story of how God used Philip to lead an Ethiopian eunuch to trust in Christ and become a believer. The Ethiopian had been reading Scripture, needed help in understanding it, was presented a proper explanation, and was ready to commit himself to Christ.

Verse 36. Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized? Apparently, the Ethiopian understood the gospel so well that he was ready to be baptized. **Verse 37. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** After Philip was sure the Ethiopian was confessing Christ as the Son of God, he consented to the baptism.

Verse 38. and they both went down into the water. We have already seen that water baptism is a symbol of the believer's faith and is performed after the believer comes to faith in Christ. This passage presents the manner in which baptism should take place.

We see a picture of immersion in the way Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch "both went down into the water." In order for Philip to baptize by immersion, both men would need to already be in water, which is what this passage depicts.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on what the word *baptize* means.

Discussion Questions

How does baptism by immersion symbolize the meaning of baptism we have seen in the New Testament?

How Is Baptism Related to the Church?

Read Acts 2:40–42 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 41

Verse 41. So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. This passage is a continuation of the study above (Acts 2:37–38). Verse 41 shows us the beginning of the church and how baptism was a part of

it. The two parts of this verse need to be taken together. First, those who were baptized were those who had responded to the gospel.

But we also see that these who were baptized then became a part of the church. In their hearts these believers trusted in Jesus. They marked this belief externally by being baptized. This external marker, baptism, was the outward profession of faith that allowed them to become a part of the church.

Discussion Question

How does baptism relate to membership in your local church?

On Your Own

In the space below, write what you can remember about becoming a member of the church—at the time of your baptism. Were you aware that you had become a member?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
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3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

According to Acts 2, baptism has been the practice of Christ followers since the beginning of the church. Baptism is an outward act that symbolizes a believer's inward confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

According to Romans 6, the act of baptism also symbolizes the way a believer is to live out the Christian life—as Christ did. The resurrected Christ walked in newness of life. In a similar way we are able to live a new life in freedom because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism marks the beginning of this walk in Christ and is a reminder throughout life of the freedom we have in Christ.

Because this is true, water baptism is only for believers. Since baptism is a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ, only those who can profess that faith should be baptized. We can see this throughout the New Testament and especially in Acts 2. People were called to repent and be baptized, and then they were added to the church.

The way we should baptize people is by immersion, that is, by dipping them under water completely. This symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection we have with Christ (see Romans 6). This also is the practice in New Testament passages such as Acts 8 and even in Jesus's own baptism (see Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; and John 1:29–34).

Baptism also is the outward confession of faith to the church. Baptism marks the beginning of a believer's life in the church for the glory of Christ.

Parent Question

What is meaning of baptism, and why is it important?

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Week 14 The Lord's Supper

Assignment One

- Choose two of the following accounts of the Lord's Supper and read them (Matthew 26:17-35, Mark 14:12-31, Luke 22: 1-28, and John 13:1-38).
- List all the common elements that you see in these events.
- Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- What does it mean to take the Lord's Supper in remembrance?
- How would you describe the Lord's supper to a friend?

Assignment Two

- Read Leviticus 10:1-2 and Acts 5:1-11 and be ready to answer the following question: Why is God concerned with the way we worship Him in things like the Lord's supper?
- Does the motivation for our worship matter? Why or why not?
- Read 1 Corinthians 11:26-30 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- If a church observes the Lord's supper too often, it could become a ritual that no one thinks about. If not enough, disciples may fail to remember Christ's sacrifice. In your opinion, how often should a local church observe the Lord's supper?
- What are some of the themes of the Gospel that you pick up on when taking the Lord's Supper? Example (Jesus' blood for forgiveness of sin).
- What are some ways we can prepare ourselves for taking the Lord's supper?
- What areas of life should we examine?

Assignment Three

- Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-16.
- How is the church unified in taking the Lord's Supper?
- Read 1 Corinthians 11:31-34 and the comments about it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- What are some wrong ways to approach the Lord's Supper?
- How can you avoid those?
- In your own words, describe why the Lord's Supper is so important to you.

Scripture to Memorize

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." 1 Corinthians 11:26

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Suppose a friend spends Saturday night with you. Even though this is a first, your friend plans to go to church with you. You try to help your friend know what to expect and how to understand what will be going on. You remember that your church will observe the Lord's Supper Sunday morning. When you mention that, your friend asks, "What's the Lord's Supper, and what does it mean?"

How would you answer?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–34 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 24–25

The book of 1 Corinthians addressed several problems within the church at Corinth. One of those problems was how they were practicing the Lord's Supper. First Corinthians 11:17–22 made clear that the church was practicing the Lord's Supper improperly.

Verses 24–25. do this in remembrance of Me. To address this issue, Paul reminded the church what the Lord's Supper was supposed to be and what it was supposed to mean. First, he retold the story of the first Lord's Supper. Paul quoted Jesus as Jesus presented both of the elements, the bread and the cup, to the disciples. In both instances He said, "In remembrance of me."

Therefore as one is participating in the Lord's Supper today—eating the bread and drinking the cup—one is doing so "in remembrance" of Jesus Christ.

Discussion Question

According to the passage, what does taking the Lord's Supper "in remembrance" mean?

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on the common elements regarding the Last Supper presented in the four Gospels.

Studying the Passage, 1 Corinthians 11:26

Verse 26. you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Paul provided clarity concerning the goal of the Lord's Supper. Verse 26 clearly shows that the Lord's Supper provides a time of remembrance that leads to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We share the good news because we look back to what Christ has done for us.

Verse 26. until He comes. Jesus also announced how long we are to share the gospel. We do this until Jesus comes back for His bride, the church. Therefore the Lord's Supper also looks forward to the future when Jesus makes all things new. When disciples take the Lord's Supper today, they are looking back in remembrance and looking forward in hope.

Discussion Question

If the Lord's Supper is observed too often, it might become a ritual no one thinks about. If it is observed too infrequently, disciples may fail to remember the sacrifice of Christ. In your opinion, how frequently should a church observe the Lord's Supper?

On Your Own

Jesus intended that the Lord's Supper would proclaim the gospel. In the space below, write some of the ideas or concepts of the gospel that come to your mind when you take the Lord's Supper.

Studying the Passage, 1 Corinthians 11:28-30

Verses 28-30. But a man must examine himself. Paul moved his discussion from what the Lord's Supper is to how church members should partake in the Lord's Supper. He said believers should not eat of the bread and drink of the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner.

Verse 30. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. Paul stated that there is a proper way to take the Lord's Supper. We must not come to the Lord's Supper lightly. Rather we are to come a certain way. That way is provided in verse 28: "But a man must examine himself." This examination of the self should occur prior to partaking of the Supper.

Discussion Question

What are some ways we can prepare ourselves before taking the Lord's Supper? What areas of our lives should we examine?

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share an answer to the question: Why is God concerned with the way we worship Him in things like the Lord's Supper?

Studying the Passage, 1 Corinthians 11: 33

Verse 33. when you come together. Paul wrote about the Lord's Supper because the church was not practicing the Supper correctly. The Supper is to be taken as a church. The phrase "when you come together" uses the language of gathering. This gathering is the coming together of the church. The Lord's Supper is to be a communal time. The church participates together in proclaiming the Lord's death rightly until He comes through sharing the bread and the cup.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share an answer to this question: How is the church unified in taking the Lord's Supper?

On Your Own

In the space below, write what you now know to be true about the Lord's Supper and why it is important in your faith.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

The Lord's Supper has been practiced since Jesus first instituted it on the night of His betrayal. The apostle Paul teaches us what the Lord's Supper is in chapter 11 of his first letter to the Corinthians. There he was addressing an incorrect practice of the Supper, where some people were receiving the Supper and some people were not.

Paul explained what the Lord's Supper is. Using the words of Jesus, "in remembrance of me," he showed believers that the Supper is a memorial of Jesus's sacrifice on our behalf.

The Lord's Supper is the proclamation of the Lord's death until He comes. When we take the Lord's Supper, we are telling the good news of how Jesus gave Himself up for us. We remember so we can tell and proclaim.

We also take the Lord's Supper with the hope and expectation of Jesus coming again. So we are both thinking back and looking forward as we take the Supper.

When we take the Supper, we are to do so in reverence. This is not something to be done thoughtlessly. Rather, we are to come to the Supper with humility and after having a time of prayer and confession.

Finally, we are to take the Lord's Supper with other believers in the church. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of the church. They build unity in the body of Christ, and they keep disciples focused on the mighty King of all kings.

Parent Question

When we take the Lord's Supper at church, what does it mean?

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Week 15 The Lord's Day

Assignment One

- Read Acts 20:7 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book Section".
- Read the four Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection in the "It's in the Book Section."
- Using the evidence laid out in these passages, why would you say that Christians began to gather and worship on the first day of the week instead of the last day as the Jews had done?
- What is the significance of the church gathering for worship on Sundays versus other days of the week?
- How could this make you change your approach to gathering with the church on Sundays?

Assignment Two

- Read Exodus 20:8-11 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book Section."
- How would you describe the similarities and differences in the "Sabbath Day" and the Lord's Day?"
- In what ways should Christians still practice the Sabbath in our lives?
- Do you think that Christians should not do anything besides worship on Sundays? Why or why not?

Assignment Three

- Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 and Hebrews 10:25. Also , read the comments related to these passages in the "It's In the Book" section.
- Do you think that Christians are bound by the legal requirements of the law in the Old Testament as they pertain to the Lord's Day? Why or why not?
- What are some ways that you can make the Lord's Day a priority in your life?
- What activities should a Christian engage or not engage in on a Sunday?

Scripture to Memorize

"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight." Acts 20:7

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Suppose you ask a friend to go to the movies with you on Sunday afternoon after church. Your friend wants to go but says no. He says he wants to spend the afternoon resting and enjoying some personal worship of God. Would you be offended in any way?

Now picture the same scenario. But in this case your friend responds that he cannot go to the movies because Christians are not supposed to do anything on Sunday except worship God. Would you agree or disagree?

Read Acts 20:7 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 7.

Verse 7. On the first day of the week. Luke records that Paul met with the Christians in Ephesus on a particular day. How do we know what day of the week that was? The answer is found as the Gospels describe the day when the women first came to the tomb where Jesus had been buried.

Matthew 28:1: "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

Mark 16:1-2: "When the Sabbath was over . . . Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb."

Luke 24:1: "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb."

John 20:1: "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb."

All four Gospels say that Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week. Notice that this day was after the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day is Saturday. The first day of the week is Sunday, the Lord's Day.

Believers worship on the Lord's Day, Sunday, because it commemorates the resurrection of Jesus. Since the earliest history of the church, Christ followers have met together for worship on Sunday. In Revelation 1:10, John tells us that he received the vision of the Revelation of Jesus Christ when he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day—that is, on Sunday. That is why we call Sunday, the first day of the week, the Lord's Day.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share an answer to the question: What is the single most important reason Christians worship together publicly on Sunday?

Discussion Question

What is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus for Christians to choose Sunday as the day they worship together publicly?

Read Exodus 20:8-11 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 8, 11

Verse 8. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. What is the significance of the Sabbath day in the Old Testament? One of the Ten Commandments prescribed that the Jews in the Old Testament were to work six days of the week, but then they were to rest one day, the Sabbath day. The word *Sabbath* means "rest." According to Genesis 1, after God created the universe in six days, He rested on the seventh day. That means God ceased from work because He had completed all of creation. It does not mean God rested because He was physically tired. This was to become a model for the Jews of the Old Testament.

Verse 11. the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. The Sabbath day was blessed by God and was holy. There are similarities between the Sabbath day and the Lord's Day, but we should not call Sunday the "Sabbath." By definition the seventh day of the week refers to Saturday.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now answer this question: How would you describe the similarities and differences between the Sabbath day and the Lord's Day?

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1–2 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 2

Verse 2. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save. Another part of the corporate worship of early Christians on the Lord's Day was giving money in an offering.

Since God is our Creator and Redeemer, He commands and deserves our worship on the first day of each week. Remember when the people of Israel began to move into the promised land after the Exodus? Jericho was the first city they took. God had said the people were not to take any spoils from the victory over Jericho because they were to be totally devoted to the Lord. As Christians, we dedicate the first day of the week, Sunday, as our day of devotion and worship of the Lord.

Because our culture increasingly is turning its back on God, many are losing any sense that Sunday should be devoted to Him. The business world increasingly sees Sunday as another day to make money. Those who plan athletic, artistic, or academic competitions increasingly see Sunday morning as just another time to plan events. But God calls believers to honor Him and not the culture. He says, "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some" (Hebrews 10:25). Abandoning corporate worship to make money or enter competitions is of the world and not of Christ.

We honor the Lord's Day because of the principle of the day of rest, which is rooted not only in the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments but in creation itself. As a model for us, God rested on the seventh day after creation.

We are not bound by the legal requirements of the Sabbath Day as given in the law of Moses in the Old Testament. That law was for Israel as a nation and included precise guidelines concerning just how much work could be allowed. The ancient Jews debated such matters—as whether they could eat an egg that was laid on the Sabbath, or whether they could break a dead twig off a bush. We should not let our keeping the principle of rest on the Lord's Day degenerate into such legalism.

Individual issues and questions about whether we should go to the movies or play a game of football (after corporate worship) are best left to each individual conscience within the guidelines set by God in Scripture for the Lord's Day.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to these questions: Do you think Christians are bound by the legal requirements in the Old Testament concerning the observance of the Lord's Day? Why or why not?

On Your Own

In the space below, list some specific and practical ways you can make the Lord's Day a priority. What activities do you think a Christian should and should not engage in on Sunday? When everyone is finished, the group can share their responses.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** at the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week, immediately following the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day was Saturday, so Jesus was raised on Sunday. Since the days of the early church, Christ followers have met together for worship on Sunday, the Lord's Day, because it is the day that commemorates the resurrection of Christ.

Sunday is primarily to be devoted to worship of God and rest. This is based on the principle of the Sabbath in Exodus 20:8–11. As God rested on the seventh day after the six days of creation, so believers now work six days a week and devote Sunday as a day of worship and rest.

When we meet together for corporate worship on Sunday, we are demonstrating our obedience to the Lord by putting Him first on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day.

Parent Question

Should families spend any time together on the Lord's Day, in addition to worshipping God publicly in church?

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Week 16 Evangelism and Missions

Assignment One

- Read Genesis 3:1-24 and Revelation 12:1-4. Also read the comments related to these passages in the "It's in the Book" section.
- Since the woman is Israel, and Jesus is her "child" (or seed) that she is bringing forth, why do you think the "red dragon" (or Satan) stands ready to devour the child when He is born?
- What are some specific instances that we see the Enemy trying to kill Jesus throughout his life?
- How have Adam and Eve's descendants been effected by original sin? What role did Satan have in that?
- How do we see God's grace on display in Genesis 3?

Assignment Two

- Read Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:4-8 and the the comments related to them in the "It's In the Book" section.
- According to Luke, what is the primary purpose for the filling of the Spirit?
- Was God's plan to send Jesus to die on the cross and to one day indwell believers by His spirit only a New Testament idea?
- How vital is being filled with the Holy Spirit to being on mission with God?
- List various ways that the Holy Spirit is at work when the Gospel is shared.

Assignment Three

- Read the comments related to "Motivation for Evangelism and Missions" in the section **It's in the Book**. Also read Matthew 5:13-16. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What is the ultimate motivation given by Jesus for being salt and light?
- What are some of the fringe benefits when a person is saved?
- What role do you think motivation plays in obedience?
- What is the heartbeat of God? If you truly had a heart like God, what might you have to give up to be on mission with Him?

Scripture to Memorize

"So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." John 20:21

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Who cares? Sam thought, although he would never say it out loud. He had just heard yet another sermon by his youth pastor challenging his youth group to “take the gospel to the nations” (yawn). But truth be told, Sam had better things to do. To start with, he had plans to play ball with his boys later that afternoon, not to mention the fact that he intended to get back to his conquest to save the universe from another attack—all from the comfort of his parents’ basement, complete with high-definition projection. Can you identify with any of Sam’s thoughts?

Read Genesis 3:1–24 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 1, 4, 9, 15

Verse 1. Now the serpent was more crafty. In the Hebrew text the word for *crafty* carries the idea of being cunning or shrewd. We might say this serpent was more “slick” than the others. The word *serpent* or snake appears five times in this chapter and certainly is a reference to more than just an ordinary snake, especially in light of New Testament passages that speak about Satan (i.e., John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3; and Revelation 12:9–11).

Verse 4. The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die!” Jesus called Satan “the father of lies” (John 8:44). Here we see the snake directly contradicting God’s original word to Adam in Genesis 2:17. The deception here was blatant, and it led to dire consequences not only for Adam and Eve but also for the rest of humanity. The moment Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they were separated from God spiritually. Since they were removed from the tree of life (vv. 22–24), they also began the process of physical death immediately. There are two kinds of death in the Scripture, physical and spiritual. Both are a separation.

Verse 9. “Where are you?” Do not miss the tremendous act of grace depicted in this question from God as He called out to His wayward children. Remember, Adam and Eve had just fallen into sin and had run away from God rather than toward Him. In verse 8, God made a move toward them, and in verse 9, He called out to them. The question is not just one of geography—this is a spiritual question as well. Believers need to see the grace of God moving Him toward fallen humanity at this juncture in the narrative.

Verse 15. He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel. In the midst of God pronouncing the consequences of sin (vv. 14–24), God gave what has been traditionally called the *protoevangelium* or “first gospel proclamation.” To make the meaning clearer, some translations of the Bible use the word “crush” instead of “bruise” in the first phrase. In short, what we have is a clear promise from God to destroy Satan one day through the seed (the offspring) of the woman. From this point the seed of the woman will be traced through the entire Old Testament, ultimately culminating in Jesus.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on why Satan tried various times throughout the Old Testament to extinguish Israel and why Herod was motivated to kill Jesus as an infant.

Discussion Questions

How have Adam and Eve's descendants been affected by original sin? What role did Satan play in the fall of mankind? What is the picture of God's grace and heart painted on the canvas of Genesis 3?

On Your Own

In the space below, write the most surprising truth you discovered (or were reminded of) from the Genesis 3 passage.

Read Luke 24:44–49 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 44–49

Verse 44. all things which are written about Me . . . must be fulfilled. When Jesus spoke of the "Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms," He was designating the totality of the Old Testament canon. The "things which are written" and "fulfilled" are the scores of prophecies concerning His incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus fulfilled more than three hundred messianic prophecies, further proving He was and is the Son of God sent forth by God for mankind's salvation.

Verse 47. and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations. The fact that the Old Testament prophesied that the gospel would be preached to all the nations reveals it was always God's intention to include every people group in salvation. The nation Israel had failed to understand that they were called to be "a light of the nations" (Isaiah 49:6). Thus, Jesus came forth to be that light (Luke 2:32).

Verse 48. You are witnesses. God's original plan to save people by the preaching of the gospel was given to the disciples of Jesus. They were given this primary mission on earth. This mission for the church, the body of disciples, has not changed. **Verse 49. power from on high.** Since this is a monumental task, Jesus also gives a promise of supernatural power. **promise of My Father.** This is an Old Testament reference to the Spirit who would one day indwell every believer. Luke continued to write in Acts 2 about how the early disciples were filled with Spirit in order to be witnesses.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on a primary purpose for the filling of the Spirit.

Discussion Questions

Was God's plan to send Jesus to die on the cross and to one day indwell believers by His Spirit only a New Testament idea? How vital is being filled with the Spirit to being on mission with God?

On Your Own

In the space below, list various ways the Spirit is at work when the gospel is shared.

The Motivation for Evangelism and Missions

Seeing lost people come to Christ for salvation offers many benefits. If we are not careful, we will make the "fringe benefits" the reason for wanting to be on mission with God. Our desire to see men and women come to faith in Christ should be rooted in the heart of God. God is clearly a missionary God. A study of the purposes of God will reveal that His glory is primary in everything He does. We should want to be on mission with God because when the nations are saved, God is glorified. It should be the heartbeat of the Christian.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on the ultimate motivation given by Jesus for being salt and light.

Discussion Questions

What are some of the "fringe benefits" when a person is saved? What role do you think motivation plays in obedience? What is the heartbeat of God?

On Your Own

Think long and hard about the heart of God. Ask yourself if you have His heart for the nations and if reaching them is worth the sacrifice. What are some things you might have to give up in order to be on mission with God? What will you gain? List a few of each.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

The two major passages studied yielded several truths concerning evangelism and missions.

- Genesis 3:1–24 makes clear that from the beginning Satan was the cause of mankind's fall. Adam and Eve's sin plunged the entire human race into sin and death. God showed His grace toward Adam and Eve in that He sought them out in their rebellion against Him. God proclaimed for the first time the good news that He is going to provide salvation and destroy Satan through "the seed" (Jesus).
- In Luke 24:44–49 Jesus gave His disciples some final words concerning their mission on earth. Even though He was about to depart from them, He reminded them that everything that happened, including His death and resurrection, had been foretold in the Old Testament. He revealed that God's plan to reach the nations by preaching the gospel was also a part of God's original plan, and it was the mission of His followers. In order to carry out this massive mission, Jesus reminded them of the promise of the Spirit that would empower them for the task.

Mankind is fallen and in a current state of spiritual death. From the beginning, God determined to provide Jesus for salvation and to allow the church to participate in the mission of reaching the lost with the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit.

God is a missionary God. His heart is and has always been to reach the nations with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Our ultimate motivation to evangelize the lost is rooted in God and a desire to see Him glorified among the nations. Being on mission with God will never be boring and provides a passion and purpose in life that yields eternal dividends.

Parent Question

What are several ways we can participate in God's missionary mission right now?

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Week 17 Animal Rights

Assignment One

- Read Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39, and Genesis 1:24-28. Also, read the comments related to these passages in the "It's In the Book" section.
- What takes priority in the ministry of Jesus Christ—the physical, moral, and spiritual healing of people or the well-being and flourishing of animals?
- Mankind is a spiritual being who is capable of having a relationship with God. What primary issue specifically hinders man's ability to relate properly to God?
- What specific action did God proactively take about this issue to resolve it?
- Since we are made in God's image and are given stewardship of all of His creation, what are some specific ways that we can demonstrate that care over animals and all of creation?

Assignment Two

- Read Psalm 8:4-8, Genesis 2:19-20; 1:26, 28; 9:12-17; and Hosea 2:18. Also, read the comments related to these scriptures in the "It's in the Book" section.
- If man is God's appointed ruler over creation, why does He allow animals to be objects of sacrifice?
- What animal imagery is used in the Bible to describe the necessary sacrifice for mankind? (See Genesis 22:8 and John 1:29, 36)
- Both animals and humans can feel pain. Does that make animals on equal terms with humans? Why or why not?

Assignment Three

- Read Genesis 9:1-17 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- Some have argued it is cruel and unjust to kill animals for food. How do you think one should respond to the issue of vegetarianism?
- What is a Christian's responsibility to care for their own physical health/fitness?
- Which is greater or of more importance physical health or spiritual health? Why?
- What about to care for animals and other creatures?

Scripture to Memorize

"God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" Genesis 1:26

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Imagine your best friend told you that he has decided to become a vegetarian. He claims he did so because he has come to the conclusion that it is cruel to kill animals for human consumption. He believes humans are not superior to any other animals and all creatures should have equal rights to their existence. As created beings of God, what similarities and distinctions are there between humans and animals? What key relationship has God established for humanity relative to the created order?

Humans Are Image Bearers; Animals Are Not

Read Genesis 1:24–28 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 24–28

Verse 24. Then God said. The Word of God is a creative agent. God speaks and it is so. **Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind.** God is the Creator of all living creatures. This verse specifically refers to every animal, excluding mankind. Not every animal is the same in its nature. A distinction exists among animals. A dog is different from a cow and different from a bird and different from a fish, and so on.

Verse 25. God saw that it was good. God was pleased with His unique creations within the animal kingdom.

Verse 26. Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. Humans (mankind) are made in the image of God and thus have a unique spiritual relationship that demonstrates God has assigned a high value to mankind. Man is a spiritual being that has a soul (mind, will, emotions) and lives in a body (home for the spirit). Animals, though not created in God's image directly, are beings deserving of appropriate human care and respect as part of God's creation.

Verse 27. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him. Humans should bow humbly before the honor God has bestowed upon us.

Verse 28. God blessed them. Only humans, not any of the other animals, received a special blessing from God. **subdue it.** Mankind was given authority to be stewards over the entire created order.

Verse 28. rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth. One of the ways humanity reverences God is by ruling over other creatures. As God rules over humanity, in a similar way mankind is to rule over the nonhuman animal kingdom. This ruling includes all creatures of the sea, sky, and earth. It is thus completely comprehensive.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: What takes priority in the ministry of Jesus Christ—the physical, moral, and spiritual healing of people or the well-being and flourishing of animals?

Discussion Question

Mankind is a spiritual being who is capable of a relationship with God. What primary issue hinders mankind's ability to relate properly to God? What specific action did God proactively take about this issue to resolve it? Where does one go to learn about what God did?

On Your Own

Since mankind is made in the image of God, list below specific ways mankind demonstrates God's care over animals and other parts of God's creation. In what ways does mankind demonstrate that God is at the center of our existence?

Humans Are Rulers over Creation; Animals Are Not

Read Psalm 8:4–8 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 5–8

Verse 5. And You crown him with glory and majesty! God gives man a spiritual crown. This affirms that God sees man as a ruler having dominion over the things of the earth but with a stewardship responsibility. Man is to establish worthy relationships with God, one another, and creation, including its creatures (see Genesis 1:26).

Verse 6. You make him to rule over the works of Your hands. Man is ruler over God's creation. **You have put all things under his feet.** Placement at the feet is a symbol that the created order is to be in a position of submission to God's authority and anyone to whom He so delegates (see 1 Corinthians 15:27; Hebrews 2:8).

Verse 8. The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea. The animal kingdom of the earth is given by God to mankind to rule.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report what the connection is between the sacrifice of an animal and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the God-man.

Discussion Question

Read out loud Genesis 2:19–20; 1:26, 28; 9:12–17; and Hosea 2:18. How does the fact that God assigned Adam to name the animals demonstrate that man has a unique authority over the animal kingdom?

On Your Own

Animals have in common with humans the ability to feel pain. Why is just the ability to feel pain insufficient to garner the same rights as humans? Write your thoughts below.

A Covenant with Every Living Creature

Read Genesis 9:1–17 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 3, 9–10

God made every living creature to dwell on the earth and eat (see Genesis 1:30). He loves them. **Verse 3. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you.** The Bible gives

priority to humans, including the right to use animals as food. However, the animal kingdom is connected in a relationship to mankind in a manner that can be compared to the relationship between Christ as Lord and humanity.

Verses 9–10. establish My covenant . . . with every living creature. God has covenanted with every living creature. Mankind is responsible for preserving and helping living beings flourish in a manner that is harmonious to the created order. This responsibility calls mankind to exercise care for creation and specifically those of the animal kingdom. This means mankind is to respect all forms of life and treat them in a manner that allows them dignity and prevents mistreatment and neglect.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on the proper relationship between concern for humans and animals.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

God is responsible for the creation of everything that exists, which is called the created order. The three most distinctively significant living things God made were (1) men, (2) women, and (3) animals. Animals were not created in the image of God and were made to fill the land, water, and sky (see Genesis 1:25). Both men and women are created in the image of God and commanded to be fruitful and multiply (see Genesis 1:26–28). Mankind was also given the responsibility to subdue the earth and rule over the animals (see Genesis 1:28).

Humans and animals are distinct and different in that (1) humans are spiritual beings having intrinsic value; animals are not spiritual beings, and (2) humans are rulers over animals and the created orders; animals are not rulers over the created order. Both humans and animals are in a covenant with God, which is an expression of God's concern for the general welfare of all created beings.

This God-centered view means humans are image bearers of God and God's designated rulers within creation. Mankind should be stewards of God's creation and work to ensure that animals and other parts of the creation prosper and flourish. God is concerned for the care and welfare of animals (Exodus 23:4, 12; Job 39; Psalm 50:10; Proverbs 12:10; Jonah 4:11; Matthew 10:29; and Luke 12:6).

Animal rights are thus subordinate to human rights. It is not proper to place animal rights on the same plane as human rights because God incarnate, Jesus Christ, the God-man, did not come to earth as an animal but rather as a man to die so that through His atoning sacrifice mankind may be brought back into a personal and eternal relationship with the triune God (see Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5:2; Hebrews 9:12, 22; 12:24; 1 Timothy 2:6; 2 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 3:5; and Revelation 5:9).

Parent Question

All creation is moving toward a peaceful kingdom (Isaiah 11), which has not yet come to pass. But until that time arrives, what are our biblical duties and responsibilities toward the animal kingdom?

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Week 18 Creation Care

Assignment One

- Read Genesis 1:26-31 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- How can environmental policies be dangerous to the welfare of humans?
- What is man's basis for having dominion and authority over the rest of creation?
- Why is it a bad thing to try to control human population through abortion or other such measures?
- What do you think it means to bear God's image or to be made in His image? Why does that make humans unique among all of creation?

Assignment Two

- Read the comments related to Genesis 1:28-31 in the "It's In the Book" section.
- What does it mean for humans to subdue and rule over creation?
- What is included in our dominion over creation?
- What was the one area of the garden that Adam and Eve were not given dominion over?
- Why does that matter? What does that say about God and man's relationship to him?

Assignment Three

- Read Genesis 2:15 and the comments related to it in the "It's in the Book" section.
- How does work represent a stewardship of what God has given us?
- How should we view and use the resources God has given us in creation if we are stewards and not owners?
- What are some ways that we, as stewards, can benefit from the creation that God has given us?
- What ways should we be protecting this creation?
- How would you explain to your friends the role between the rest of creation and mankind?

Scripture to Memorize

"God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" Genesis 1:28

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

In science class at school, your teacher makes a comment that animals deserve more protection than humans because they are in danger from our aggressive misuse of the earth. In fact, the teacher says it would be better for some humans to die than for an endangered species to disappear. Should you say something in response to your teacher? What would you say if given the opportunity to respond?

Subdue and Rule over Creation

Read Genesis 1:26–31 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 26–27

Verse 26. rule over. God intended from the beginning for mankind to rule over the rest of creation. The term *rule* is sometimes translated as “have dominion.” This means mankind has a position of authority over the rest of the animal kingdom. Man and woman are not on the same level as animals. We have specific instructions from the Lord to rule over creation.

Of course, this should not mean that we pillage all of the resources in the world and leave it as an absolute wasteland. At the same time, however, we must not elevate the created world to a status above that of humans. When we implement environmental policies that harm human life, we invert the authority structure. The resources of the earth—plants, animals, natural resources, etc.—are to be used for the good of mankind.

One of the problems with the modern environmental movement is that it elevates the earth to the status of being worshipped. This is dangerous for two reasons. First, it places the value of the earth above that of humans. Second, it replaces God with the earth as the object of worship.

Verse 27. in His own image. The basis for mankind's authority over the rest of creation comes from the fact that we are created in God's image. We are the only part of creation that bears His image.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on how environmental policies can be dangerous to the welfare of humans.

Studying the Passage, Genesis 1:28–31

Verse 28. Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. One of the first instructions God gave to the humans He created was to be fruitful and multiply. God's intent was for Adam and Eve to have children that would begin to fill the earth.

In recent decades there has been a great amount of discussion about controlling the population. Fifty years ago many people believed a population greater than five billion people would result in catastrophic hunger and a shortage of natural resources. Today we have more than seven billion people living on the earth with more room to grow.

In fact, countries that have begun to experience population decline are also experiencing economic decline. The desire to limit the number of people in the world has also resulted in some ugly policies of eugenics over the last century.

Verse 28. subdue it. This instruction is similar to the one given in verse 26. Adam and Eve were to subdue the rest of creation. This meant they were to make it subject to their control. **over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.** God gave Adam and Eve authority over all the major groups of animals. This reflects the same language used in verses 20–25 when He created the rest of the animals.

Verse 29. every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed. Not only did God give Adam and Eve authority over the animals, but He also gave them all the plants and trees to use. Many of these would be used for food. We see here that nothing in creation was outside the control and authority of man.

The one exception was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In Genesis 2:16–17, God told Adam he could not eat from that tree. Adam and Eve's disobedience to this command would lead to their fall (Genesis 3).

Verse 31. it was very good. At the end of each day of creation, God had declared what He had made to be good. At the end of day six, God added the modifier "very" to demonstrate that it was now complete.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on what it means to subdue and rule over creation.

Cultivate and Keep It

Read Genesis 2:15 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 15

Verse 15. cultivate it and keep it. God also gave Adam specific instructions about what he was to do in the garden. His job was to cultivate and keep it. Therefore, he was to till, plant, and harvest the garden. Even though the garden was in a state of perfection, Adam still had to work. In fact, God created us all to work. We may do different things, but work is part of our responsibility as humans.

Adam's role of cultivating the garden was an act of stewardship. God gave him this responsibility, but God still maintained ultimate control over all of creation. We see this in Psalm 50:10–12 where we read, "For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains."

Stewardship means we manage what God has given us. As managers we benefit from the proper use of His resources, but God remains the ultimate owner.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on how work is a stewardship of what God has given us.

Discussion Question

How should we view and use the resources God has given us in creation if we are stewards and not owners?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Creation care is an important but difficult topic to address. On one hand, we are the pinnacle of creation, and God has given us specific instructions to rule over, subdue, and cultivate the rest of creation (see Genesis 1:26–31; 2:15). Without human stewardship the earth would return to wilderness and become a dangerous place to live.

On the other hand, we cannot simply destroy creation to accomplish our short-term goals. Humans have a tendency only to look at the present rather than keeping the future in mind as well. We need to keep in mind the good of mankind in both the present and the future as we rule over creation.

Since God owns all of creation (see Psalm 50:10–12), we cannot act as if we have complete control over the earth. David tells us, “The earth is the LORD’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it” (Psalm 24:1). This means God is in control of every aspect of creation—even us.

Therefore, we must act as wise stewards in our care for creation.

We can admire creation, but we must not worship it.

We can use it, but we must not destroy it.

We can care for it, but we must not exalt it.

The key for creation care is to have the proper perspective on the earth. It is a valuable resource that demands our wise management, but it must not become our master.

You are likely to encounter countless perspectives on the environment during your lifetime. In fact, the dominant perspective on creation care will most likely change multiple times in the next fifty years, just as it has in the last fifty years. Just remember that you are a steward of God’s resources, and He has given you the responsibility to use them.

Parent Question

How does God’s ownership over all creation impact the way we rule over the earth?

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Week 19

Bullying

Assignment One

- Read Matthew 5:9 and the comments related to it in the “It’s In the Book” section.
- Are selfishness and revenge Godly concepts?
- Should disciples of Jesus pursue their own goals and agendas to the point where they injure or intimidate others to accomplish these goals?
- If Christians are not to be involved in bullying, does peacemaking stop there?
- How can Christians be peacemakers even with those that are not bullying them?
- Does being a peacemaker mean that you can never disagree with someone?
- How would describe to a friend what it means to disagree with a person but not be a bully?

Assignment Two

- Read Matthew 5:39 and the comments related to it in the “It’s in the Book” section.
- Why do you think that God called His people to be characterized by peace and not by violence? Is this a sign of weakness? Why or why not?
- What is the difference between self-defense and bullying? Where do you draw the line? Why?
- Give some real world examples of how you can live out the value of peace in a culture that seems to celebrate violence and bullying?
- Read Philippians 2:8. Jesus endured suffering and intense persecution in a way that we can never fathom. You may have experienced bullying in your life. Just know that our savior has endured to the finish for us. We can endure what life has to throw at us, not because of our toughness or our resolve, but because Jesus has endured before us and for our benefit. Write out a prayer of thanks to Jesus for bearing our sins and enduring our shame. How does this help you as you think about bullying or intimidation that you may face?

Assignment Three

- Read Matthew 5:44 and the comments related to it in the “It’s In the Book” section.
- When you think of the term “enemy” is there a certain person’s face that comes to mind?
- What steps might you need to take to reconcile that relationship or forgive them?
- Before your group meets, take some time and pray for that person and maybe ask your group to pray with you about it.
- Why do you think it is so important that we follow through with forgiving our enemies and even praying for them?

- The Bible begins with peace and ends with peace. God is about making peace. Do your friends/classmates think of you as a peacemaker or a trouble maker? What is your reputation among your peers?

Scripture to Memorize

"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

A boy you know opens up about his childhood. "My big sister was better than me at everything except sports. To make things worse, when she turned twelve, she had a major growth spurt and towered over the boys in her own class, much less me in the second grade. By the time I passed her in height, she had gone off to college and the 'rivalry' was over. But in those early years, she was a threat to me. She used it to get her way on things." As you listen, you think, *Disciples of Christ should never intimidate, but love.*

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Read Matthew 5:9 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 9

Verse 9. peacemakers. The Greek word for *peacemakers* is a compound of the word for "peace" and the word for "to do" or "to make." Generally, we think *peace* means "the absence of conflict." However, from a Christian perspective, it has more to do with the internal satisfaction and tranquility that comes from understanding eternal security. The knowledge that death, the worst thing that can happen to an unbeliever, transports the soul of a Christian into eternity in the presence of God creates an incredible amount of calmness.

Verse 9. sons of God. The issue of making peace is not reserved for judges, military leaders, and politicians. Anyone who claims to follow the teachings found here in the great Sermon (Matthew 5-7) has the responsibility of making peace, perhaps because disciples understand peace better than unbelievers do.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to these questions: Are selfishness and revenge godly concepts? Do disciples pursue their selfish goals and ambitions to the point where they will injure or intimidate others to accomplish them?

Discussion Questions

1. If Christians are not to be involved in bullying, does peacemaking stop there?
2. How can Christians be peacemakers with other people who are not bullying them?
3. Does being a peacemaker mean one can never disagree with someone else?

On Your Own

Since God speaks through His Word, find several Bible verses that describe the peace of God. List them below.

Turn the Other Cheek

Read Matthew 5:39 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 39

Verse 39. resist an evil person. Improper reading can cause a problem here. The prohibition is more against "fighting back" than simply resisting evil. But it is important not to read this too literally. You can take a stand for biblical, ethical positions that are not popular in the culture,

and your reactions may be strong. At the same time believers are not to “fight fire with fire.” We fight hate with love. Do not confuse this with an inability to protect yourself and your family or stand for your convictions.

Verse 39. turn the other to him also. To the first century Jew, being hit in the face was the ultimate insult. Imagine having something happen that humiliates you or causes a loss of dignity. Jesus says not to retaliate to something like this.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share an answer to the question: Why did God call His people to be characterized by peace rather than violence?

Discussion Question

What is the difference between self-defense and bullying?

On Your Own

The model for not fighting back was Jesus. Reflect on the trials and physical abuse He endured during the crucifixion. Whatever trial you experience cannot compare to His. He never complained and never even defended Himself. He knew the mission and He endured it. Philippians 2:8 says, “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

The next time you endure bullying or intimidation, what do you want to remember about His suffering for your sake? Write a few thoughts about this below.

Love Your Enemies

Read Matthew 5:44 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 44

Verse 44. love your enemies. This notion is unique to Christian ethics. This concept is so difficult to perform without supernatural power that scholars who comment on the Sermon on the Mount often refer to it as “ideal” and almost impossible to achieve.

However, Jesus did not duck the issue or lower the bar. At the beginning of His earthly ministry, He gave clear teaching on interpersonal relationships.

Jesus noted that the Pharisees said we should love our neighbors, but Jesus taught to love even our enemies. The word for “enemy” should not be restricted to someone from a different country, team, or even religion but should include anyone who is hostile to you. This could be a much taller sister, a teammate, a boss, a parent—anybody. Loving someone who is hostile to you requires the type of love God has for people who come to Him seeking forgiveness. We forgive since we have been forgiven.

Verse 44. pray for those who persecute you. Here it gets even tougher. People who are hostile naturally expect hostility to be returned. A powerful Christian witness results when believers pray for hostile people.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share a recent story of offering forgiveness to an "enemy." (A response of forgiveness can be a great testimony to the power of God in someone's life.)

On Your Own

The Bible begins and ends discussing peace. When God created a man and a woman in the garden of Eden, there was peace before they sinned. Revelation ends with a time of peace when a new heaven and a new earth are created, sin has been removed, and peace is everywhere.

Consider what your classmates think about you. Are you someone with a reputation of peace and forgiveness or of bullying and intimidation? Write your answer below.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Bullying is the furthest thing from a biblical ideal for Christ followers. Jesus is the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6) and the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Granted, He did overturn tables in the temple where certain Pharisees were profiting from foreign currency exchanges and selling less-than-faultless sacrifices. But His goal was not extortion. He was preserving the sanctity of the temple.

Near the end of His days on earth, He became the perfect, sinless sacrifice whose death would provide a pathway for forgiveness of sin. At the beginning of His public ministry, He instructed His followers to be peacemakers, to turn the other cheek, and to love their enemies. In short, disciples are to treat others the way they want to be treated.

Disciples must understand God's love for them so they can model that love to other people. In relationships with family and friends, not everyone will love disciples. Some will be hostile toward disciples because they are either physically bigger or in a position to abuse their authority. Some people will bully just because they enjoy it.

Disciples should never abuse others physically or with their authority. Notice that Jesus did not say "if" His followers would experience hostility. That's understood. Not only do disciples have a calling not to be hostile to others, but King Jesus instructs them to respond to hostility with humility, love, and forgiveness.

Parent Question

How can bullying be physical, verbal, emotional, or intellectual?

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Week 20 Drugs and Alcohol

Assignment One

- Read Ephesians 5:3-20 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- If alcoholic consumption is not prohibited in Scripture, what, if any, limits are placed on consumption?
- What is a virtuous strategy to avoid crossing these limits?
- How does one best make available their body and mind to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
- What special considerations exist for you, a person under your parents authority, and under the age of 21?
- How are Christians to fill themselves with God's Spirit? As a Christian, how much of the time are we to allow Jesus Christ to be King and Master over our lives?

- Write down your thoughts to the questions posed in the "On Your Own" section below?

Assignment Two

- Read Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37-40, and 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 as well the comments related to these passages in the "It's In the Book" section.
- What does it mean to love God with your "heart, soul, strength, and mind?"
- As it pertains to drugs and alcohol how would interpret this scripture?
- How does what people place into their bodies reflect on their love of God and their desire to give Him glory?
- How does the fact that God wants your life to bring Him glory impact every decision and action you undertake, including the consumption of alcohol and drugs?
- If we are to be imitators of Christ, as the Apostle Paul writes, what impact does this have on getting drunk or intoxicated on drugs?
- Given our fallen nature, what steps might we need to take to safeguard ourselves and/or to get help in this area?

Assignment Three

- Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and the comments related to these verses in the "It's In the Book" section.
- If Jesus Christ is our Lord and Master and if inheriting eternal life is at stake, what should be our response when it comes to using alcohol and drugs?
- What are your thoughts on using drugs for medicinal purposes? What about CBD oil? What about using THC (active ingredient in marijuana) to treat seizures?
- One principle to use when considering any decisions to make in your life is this. Simply ask "Does this behavior/practice glorify God?" If not, then you shouldn't take part in it. If it does, then feel free to continue doing it.
- What are some issues in your life that you can use this principle in?
- Can you glorify God by using drugs and alcohol?

Scripture to Memorize

*"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."
Ephesians 5:18*

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Your high school football team has just come from behind to win their homecoming game. To celebrate, one of your friends invites you and others to rendezvous at the park. Upon your arrival some people from school are smoking cigarettes, others are drinking alcohol, and you notice the scent of marijuana. You are invited to partake. You want to be cool and liked by your friends. How should you handle the situation, knowing that almost everybody around you is participating in one manner or another? Is celebrating events by using alcohol and/or drugs acceptable?

Live as Children of Light, Not as Pagans

Read Ephesians 5:3–20 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 8, 10, 18

Verse 8. walk as children of Light. To do so is to follow after what is good, true, and right.

Verse 10. trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. One should take only those actions the Lord would want us to take.

Verse 18. And do not get drunk with wine. King Jesus strictly prohibits getting drunk on wine. The practical implication extends to all other alcoholic beverages and would also apply to taking drugs in a manner contrary to medical practices.

Verse 18. For that is dissipation. Drunkenness (or drug abuse) is reckless, careless, immoral, unrestrained, lacking in self-control, vicious, and is thus not acceptable behavior.

Verse 18. but be filled with the Spirit. In contrast to drunkenness, Christians are to be filled with God's Spirit. An implication is that when drunk, Christians are not properly oriented in the manner they are meant to be for God.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: If alcoholic consumption is not prohibited, what, if any, limits are placed on consumption? What is a virtuous strategy to avoid crossing these limits? How does one best make available his body and mind to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

On Your Own

God clearly has placed limitations on drinking alcoholic beverages. And people have a hard time knowing when they have crossed the line to drunkenness. What implications does this have for disciples as they consider whether to partake? Is abstinence (avoidance) being legalistic, or is it a prudent and practical method to employ? Write some of your thoughts below.

Discussion Question

How are Christians to fill themselves with God's Spirit? As a Christian, how much of the time are we to allow Jesus Christ to be King and Master over our lives?

Do All for the Glory of God

Read 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 out loud

Studying the Passage, 1 Corinthians 10:24, 31, 33; 11:1

Verse 24. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. The disciple has two priorities: God and others. **Verse 31.** do all to the glory of God. Everything one does, including the partaking of food and drink, must always be done with a heart intention of bringing glory to God the Creator and Redeemer.

Verse 33. not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many. Place others first in your consideration. that they may be saved. Place other people first because you desire that your lifestyle witness and testimony lead them to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Verse 1. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. We should imitate the apostle Paul who imitated Jesus Christ.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following question: How does what people place into their bodies reflect on their love of God and their desire to give Him glory?

Discussion Question

How does the fact that God wants your life to bring Him glory impact every decision and action you undertake, including the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs?

On Your Own

If we are to be imitators of Christ, as the apostle Paul states, what impact does this have on getting drunk or intoxicated by drugs? Given our fallen nature, what steps might we consider in our handling of alcohol and drugs? Write several of your thoughts and reactions in the space below.

Inherit the Kingdom of God

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 out loud

Studying the Passage, vv. 9–10

Alcohol and drugs are present in the Scriptures because the Bible describes historical reality. This inclusion in Scriptures does not imply that alcohol and drugs are therefore without proper biblical guidelines and limitations based on biblical wisdom. **Verse 9.** the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who consistently abuse alcohol are characterized as drunkards and are called out by the apostle Paul as living unrighteous lives.

Verse 10. drunkards. Note how Paul's listing shows that drunkenness is surrounded by other sins of the flesh and the flesh's craving for what is sensual. Peter describes drunkenness in the same way, demonstrating that it is characteristic of a person who lacks self-control (see 1 Peter

4:3). Those under the intoxication of alcohol lack wisdom and are prone to suffering, sorrow, and woe (see Proverbs 20:1; 23:29–35).

The abuse of drugs for nonmedicinal purposes is an appropriate and applicable extension of this biblical principle. What is socially acceptable to the culture is not necessarily wise and prudent for disciples to incorporate and live out in their lives.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to the following question: If Christ is our Lord and Master and if inheriting the kingdom of God is at stake, what should be our response when it comes to using alcohol and drugs?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

If you love and adore King Jesus, then His written Word is valuable to you. Take time to read all that Scripture has to say on the topic of this lesson.

- Disciples recognize the importance of properly administered medicine while strongly standing against consuming alcohol to intoxication:
Ecclesiastes 10:17; Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19–21; 1 Peter 4:1–5
- Disciples use drugs for virtuous medical purposes:
2 Samuel 16:2; Proverbs 31:6; Mark 15:23; Luke 10:34; 1 Timothy 5:23
- Disciples know how to make a distinction between virtuous and prohibited uses of drugs:
Genesis 9:20–26; 19:30–38; Proverbs 23:33–34; 31:4–5; Isaiah 5:11–12; Luke 21:34; Romans 14:21; Galatians 5:21
- Disciples joyfully surrender to the lordship of Christ. They live lives that are for His glory, including how they respect their body and mind:
1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20; 10:31
- Disciples realize that Satan longs for them to stumble so he may devour them:
1 Peter 5:8
- Disciples recognize that God has saved them so they may reflect His love, grace, and mercy toward others. Christianity is not primarily focused on the self but is rather outwardly directed and concerned with the love of God and the love of others:
Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37–40; Mark 12:30–31; Luke 10:27; 1 Corinthians 8:8–13; 10:24
- Disciples voluntarily lay aside their rights for the opportunity to responsibly reveal love for God and others:
Romans 13:13; 14:19–22; Ephesians 5:18
- Disciples sacrifice, not because of legalism but in order to take up their cross and follow their beloved King Jesus:
Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23
- Disciples want to hear “Well done!” when God judges their thoughts, intentions, and actions:
1 Corinthians 11:31
- Disciples deeply desire to imitate the regal Christ they adore:
1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Ephesians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6

Parent Question

What Scriptures have guided your decisions regarding alcohol and drugs?

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Week 21

The Father, Evangelism, and Missions

Assignment One

- Read Luke 15:1-2, 11-24 and the comments related to this passage in the “It’s In the Book” section.
- In Jesus’ parable, who does the son represent, and who asked for his father’s inheritance?
- What does the son’s request reveal about his character?
- How does the character of the son reflect the character of those who are living without knowing God?
- Was there a time in your life when you could have identified with the prodigal son?

Assignment Two

- Read Luke 15:13-16 and the comments related to them in the “It’s in the Book” section.
- How does the son represent the universal condition of all people since Adam? (Hint. It has to do with sin.)
- Discuss the following statement: sin takes you farther than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs you more than you want to pay.
- How do you see this played out in the life of the son?
- Are there any examples of this from your own life?

Assignment Three

- Read Luke 15: 17-24 and the comments relating to it in the “it’s in the Book” section.
- What does the earthly father in this parable teach us about the Heavenly Father?
- What characteristics do we see in both of them?
- How does this passage help us to understand how God providentially brings sinners to himself?
- This story is an amazing picture of grace. How would you describe the father’s grace toward his son?
- How would you tell a friend about the grace that God has showed toward you?
- Spend some time with your group this week in prayer. Thank God for his providential salvation in your life and for never giving up on you.

Scripture to Memorize

“I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” Luke 15:7

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Suppose you have a friend who is living an immoral life filled with drinking, drugs, and sex outside of marriage. You have shared your faith with him, prayed for him, and invited him to church many times. How long do you persist in your efforts before giving up altogether?

The Father, Evangelism, and Missions

Read Luke 15:1–2, 11–24 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 11–12

The heart of the Father is to seek and to save the lost. His love led to the sending of His Son to die and rise again for sinners. In this parable of the prodigal son, Jesus reveals the true heart of His Father as one who loves sinners and receives all who come to Him in faith. God calls on His disciples to reflect this same heart and to be His instruments to go into all the world and call sinners back to a relationship with a loving God.

Verse 12. give me the share. This society placed great emphasis on honor and shame. The son did a disgraceful thing by disrespectfully asking for his share of the inheritance while his father was still alive. **wealth.** This word also means "life." The son was asking for his share of everything his father had worked for and accumulated. The elder son had priority in the share of the inheritance, but the younger son still asked for his share of the inheritance before the death of the father.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: In Jesus's parable, who does the son represent, and who asked for his father's inheritance?

Discussion Question

What does the son's request reflect about his character?

On Your Own

Reflect on how the character of the son reflects the character of all who are living or have lived without God? Was there a time in your life when you could have identified with the son?

Studying the Passage, Luke 15:13–16

Verse 13. went on a journey. The son wasted no time. Not many days after receiving his share of the inheritance, he left home for a place far away. While there he squandered everything he had on partying and having a good time. **squandered.** This word means "to scatter." He was "making it rain" on his fair-weather friends. **estate.** This word means "being," suggesting he squandered his very being, including all of his wealth. **loose living.** This refers to reckless living.

Verse 14. severe famine. In a providential turn of events, a famine occurred in the land where he was living. He was now homeless and penniless. **impoverished.** The word means that he was lacking in the basic necessities of life. A citizen of that country hired him to feed his swine. As the Jews considered pigs to be unclean, this would have been a disgraceful thing and evidence of how far he had fallen. He was so hungry that he would have eaten what the pigs were eating.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share an answer to this question: How does the son represent the universal condition of all people born since Adam, except Christ?

Discussion Question

Discuss the following statement: Sin takes you farther than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs you more than you want to pay.

On Your Own

Think of friends or family members who are far from God and pray that God will bring them to their senses. Pray that they will run to Father God and to salvation.

Studying the Passage, Luke 15:17–24

Verse 17. came to his senses. After living so far from God and reaping the consequences of his own actions, the son came to himself. Sin had affected his thinking and deceived him. But now we see the work of God in his life. He immediately remembered his father. He determined to return to his father, make a confession of his sin, and then hire himself out to his father.

Verse 19. hired men. The phrase means "hired labor." Even though he was a son, he desired to be as the hired help. True repentance had come to his heart. He rehearsed the speech he was going to give to his father.

Verse 20. he got up and came. The son began the long journey home. The father, surely daily scanning the horizon for his son, saw him at a great distance. Jesus placed the emphasis on the father's response: he **saw him, felt compassion for him, ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him.** The father's response was generous and extravagant!

Verse 21. the son said to him. The son attempted to deliver his speech. He acknowledged that his sin was first against God and then against his father. The true nature of sin is always against God first and must be confessed as such before forgiveness is granted. The son must have looked wretched, but the father was not put off by his appearance or smell.

Verses 22–23. The father commanded his servants to put a **robe** on his son, a **ring** on his finger, and **sandals** on his feet. Jesus presented us with a picture of complete restoration. The father prepared a feast and celebrated the return of the son.

Verse 24. for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found. This phrase is the key to understanding the heart of the heavenly Father, as the prodigal's father announced the cause of the celebration. Jesus's parable captures the nature of our sinful condition. We are dead and lost. Only through the love of the Father and the work of the Son and the Holy Spirit can anyone experience the restoration of relationship with God.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share an answer to this question: What does the earthly father in this parable teach us about the heavenly Father?

Discussion Question

How does Luke 24:17–24 help us understand how God works providentially to bring sinners to Himself?

On Your Own

Reflect on how God brought you to saving faith in Jesus Christ and thank Him for it. In the space below, write a brief prayer that expresses your gratitude.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

God the Father desires all men to be saved (see 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). He not only desires for us to be saved, but He also has made the way for us to be saved through His Son, Jesus Christ. The Father sent the Son to die and rise again for sinners. He also sends the Holy Spirit to bring sinners home.

The story of the prodigal son is the story of us all.

We have all strayed like sheep from God's fold (see Isaiah 53:6).

We have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory (see Romans 3:23).

Adam and Eve rebelled against God, and likewise we all have rebelled against Him.

We were all dead in sins (see Ephesians 2:1) and in need of new life (see Ephesians 2:4–7).

As followers of Christ, we can say that we once were lost but now we are found.

God the Father planned our salvation, sent the Son to secure it, and sends the Holy Spirit to apply it to the lives of those who hear, confess, repent, and believe in Jesus. He works in the lives of sinners to bring them to faith in Him, often letting them hit rock bottom before He draws them.

He has commissioned the church to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to all people and to be as intent as He is on seeking and saving the lost. The heart of the Father for sinners should also be our heart and driving motive for winning the world to Jesus Christ.

Parent Question

What does this parable tell us about the heavenly Father's heart for sinners?

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Week 22

Jesus Christ, Evangelism, and Missions

Assignment One

- Matthew 28:18-20 and the comments related to it in the "It's in the Book" section.
- What does the term "Make disciples" mean?
- What are the action items that you see laid out in the Great Commission from Matthew 28? (hint the first one is GO...)
- What do you think is the difference between making converts and making disciples?
- Can Christians make disciples without making converts?
- What is your role in making disciples?

Assignment Two

- Read Mark 8:38 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- What does being ashamed of "me and my words" mean?
- Do you think people try to shape and twist who Jesus is to fit their own lifestyle or agenda? Why do you think they do this?
- What could be some dangers of doing this?
- How can you be sure that you don't fall into the trap of making Jesus in our image?
- In the space below write some things that you know **FOR SURE** about Jesus. This should be non-negotiable and not to be distorted. Compare your list with the others in your group. If they can't be backed up by scripture, then you will want to adjust your list.

Assignment Three

- Read Romans 1:16 and the comments related to it in the "It's In the Book" section.
- In what ways can disciples show that they are "not ashamed of the Gospel?"
- How much time does it take for the average convert to become a fully trained disciple?
- Where are you in that process?
- Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. List the ways in which Paul suffered for the Gospel. Compare your list with your group.

Scripture to Memorize

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of His Father and the holy angels." Mark 8:38

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Bill responded to an altar call at his church, and he was baptized at a young age. He intellectually believed in Jesus then, but he is now not sure whether he ever surrendered his life to Jesus in repentance and faith. Bill, now in high school, enjoys the social interaction at church, but he was embarrassed recently when his pastor participated in a panel discussion at his school and discussed Christ's atonement for sin and the second coming of Christ. He is not interested in evangelism. As Bill's friend, what should you say to him?

Read Matthew 28:18–20 (the Great Commission) out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 18–20

Verse 18. authority. Jesus said He had the authority to give a command to His disciples.

Verse 19. Go therefore. Because He had the authority, He commanded them to go. The Greek word translated as “go” has the same command force as the main Greek verb, which is translated “make disciples.” The verse does not say “as you are going.” Christians must be intentional about going. They should not merely wait for opportunities to witness. Rather, they must engage in planned witnessing activities on a regular basis.

Verse 19. make disciples of all the nations. This includes cross-cultural missions. Not all believers will become vocational missionaries overseas, but they can support missionaries in various ways.

Verse 19. make disciples. Depending on the context in which the word *disciple* is found, the word can mean a temporary listener who is not a Christian (John 6:64–66), any Christian including a new convert (Luke 14:33; Acts 6:7), or a fully trained Christian who is mature (Hebrews 5:14; Luke 6:40). The context in Matthew 28:19–20 is clear because of two words that follow the main verb. The Greek words translated as “baptizing” and “teaching” show how disciples are made. In this context, to “make disciples” means to make fully trained Christians.

Why is baptizing important in this process? Baptizing is one of the first steps of obedience after conversion. The immersion of the new convert in water is a public witness that represents a spiritual reality. One statement of faith describes it as “an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.”

Teaching is also necessary to make fully trained disciples. Disciples must teach converts to obey “all” that Jesus commanded. Handing new converts a Bible and telling them to obey it is insufficient. The Bible can easily be misinterpreted by new converts. Maturing disciples must teach all the basic doctrines. This process takes time.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: What does “make disciples” mean?

Discussion Question

What is the difference between making converts and making disciples? Can Christians make disciples without making converts?

On Your Own

In the space below, write some immediate steps you can take to be obedient to the Great Commission. When everyone is finished, the group can compare answers to the Scripture passage and make changes where needed.

Read Mark 8:38 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 38:

Verse 38. ashamed of Me. Notice that Jesus condemned those who were ashamed of Him and His words. This shame can take many forms. **adulterous and sinful generation.** Some people try to distort Jesus and His words in an attempt to make Him more acceptable to a sinful generation. Other people say that good people can go to heaven without faith in Jesus. Prosperity teachers see Jesus as a Santa Claus figure who can be manipulated to give people what they desire. Other people view Jesus as merely a good teacher, not as God.

The Nicene Creed (325 AD) describes Jesus as having the same substance as God the Father: "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: What does being "ashamed of Me and My words" mean?

Discussion Question

How do people try to distort Jesus on television and at school to make Him more acceptable to an adulterous and sinful generation?

On Your Own

In the space below, write some things you know for sure about Jesus Christ. These things should be nonnegotiable characteristics that can never be distorted. When everyone is finished, the group should compare their answers to the Scripture passage and make changes where needed.

Read Romans 1:16 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 16

Verse 16. ashamed. The same Greek root word is used for "ashamed" in this verse and in Mark 8:38. Sometimes people sneered at the apostle Paul (see Acts 17:32), but he continued to faithfully make disciples as a cross-cultural missionary. Jesus spent about three years teaching His disciples, and Paul taught disciples "night and day for a period of three years" in Ephesus (Acts 20:31).

The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. This type of belief means more than just agreeing that something is true (see James 2:19). Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

Assignment Three Feedback

The students who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: In what ways can disciples demonstrate that they are "not ashamed of the gospel"?

Discussion Question

How much time does it take for the average convert to become fully trained?

On Your Own

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23–28. In the space below, write the ways in which Paul suffered for the gospel. When everyone is finished, the group can compare answers to the Scripture passage and make changes where needed.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

The Great Commission includes evangelism, baptism, and teaching. Making converts is not enough. The Great Commission calls upon Christians to make disciples. The apostle Paul obeyed the Great Commission as he made disciples cross-culturally. Making disciples requires lots of time. Jesus spent about three years teaching His disciples, and Paul spent three years teaching at Ephesus.

Jesus said that at the time of His second coming, He would be ashamed of those people who were ashamed of Him and His words (Mark 8:38). This warning should be heeded by people who attend churches. Not everyone who attends a church is a believer.

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, and he was willing to suffer for Christ. Becoming a Christian means more than just agreeing that the Bible is true. Satan knows the Bible is true, but he is obviously not a saved person.

Christians are people who have surrendered their lives to Christ in repentance and faith. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith involves complete commitment to Christ. It is a lifelong commitment of one's entire life, including possessions. The rich young ruler appeared to be outwardly righteous, but he was not willing to surrender his wealth, and he walked away from Jesus sadly (see Mark 10:17-27).

People who are disciples of Christ want to be obedient to the Great Commission. They join Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit in making disciples of all peoples. Disciples are active in local churches and continually involved in the ongoing process of evangelizing, baptizing, and teaching.

Parent Question

What is the relationship between Jesus and evangelism and missions?

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Week 23

The Holy Spirit, Evangelism, and Missions

Assignment One

- Read Romans 3:23 and John 16:8-11 and the comments related to them in the “It’s In the Book” section.
- How does Romans 3:23 describe sin?
- Forgiveness for sin is offered in Jesus Christ for everyone, but not everyone receives it. What is the sin that keeps people from being reconciled to God?
- How can we specifically incorporate the need for people to believe in Jesus in our Gospel presentations?
- What does it mean to “Fall short of the glory of God?”
- How would you describe this idea to a friend?

Assignment Two

- Read Romans 3:10 and the comments related to John 16:8-11 in the “It’s in the Book” section.
- Outside of Jesus, who is completely righteous and perfect?
- Who, if anyone, does this verse teach is righteous?
- What are the implications of this verses teachings on righteousness for our lives? Can we be righteous on our own?
- How can we specifically incorporate Jesus’ righteousness in our Gospel presentations?
- List some of the ways that you struggle to reflect Jesus’ righteousness in your own life and list the steps that you intend to take to correct them.

Assignment Three

- Read John 12:21-32.
- In these verses who is the ruler of the world?
- What will happen to Jesus in order that the people of the world will be drawn away from the “ruler” and drawn to Jesus?
- How is God’s judgment of wickedness seen in the death of Jesus?
- How will God ultimately judge wickedness?
- How can we specifically incorporate God’s judgment of wickedness in our Gospel presentations?

Scripture to Memorize

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” John 16:8

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

You meet Kelly at a local coffee shop. From your friendly conversation, you learn that spiritual things (not necessarily Christian) interest Kelly. Sensing an open door, you begin to evangelize her. Although you're nervous, you clearly communicate the gospel to Kelly. She listens intently and says she understands what you are sharing with her. However, her response indicates she is grappling with some new concepts and some feelings she's never felt. Kelly explains she feels bad about herself and the things she has done, which on the one hand makes her want to change the conversation. On the other hand, she says she realizes she needs to accept the forgiveness Jesus offers. What could be causing Kelly's inward struggle?

Read John 16:8–11 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 8–9

When Jesus indicated that the time was nearing for His death, burial, and resurrection, His followers despaired (see John 16:6). Nevertheless, Jesus told them His departure was necessary for the Helper (see John 14:16), or the Holy Spirit, to come in order to live in them (see John 16:7).

Verse 8. And He. The Holy Spirit. **when He comes.** The Holy Spirit would come after Jesus, having died and risen from the dead, would return to His Father. From heaven He would send the Holy Spirit to His disciples (see Acts 2:1–4). **convict the world.** The Greek word for *convict* means “to bring to light, or to expose.” Because mankind has violated God's Laws, the Holy Spirit will confront them about the guilt of their disobedience to God.

Verse 9. concerning sin. Sin occurs when anyone acts in opposition to God, His will, or His Word. Here, Jesus explains that the Holy Spirit will convict people of their willful disobedience to God. **they do not believe in Me.** Although each and every sin someone commits separates him from God, the sin of not believing in Jesus prevents anyone from being reconciled to God.

Some people believe Jesus was a man who actually lived in the first century. They may even accept that He was a good teacher or a good person. However, by saying “they do not believe in Me,” Jesus means they have rejected Him. The Holy Spirit's conviction of people who do not believe in Jesus means He will expose that they have not received Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: How does Romans 3:23 describe sin?

On Your Own

Many times disciples attempt to convince unbelievers to believe in Jesus on the basis of apologetic arguments and facts alone. In the space below, indicate some of the ways you intend to incorporate a dependence on the conviction of the Holy Spirit as you persuade unbelievers to believe in Jesus.

Discussion Question

How can we specifically incorporate the need for unbelievers to believe in Jesus in our gospel presentations?

Studying the Passage, John 16:10

Verse 10. concerning righteousness. Righteousness stands in complete opposition to sin. It is that characteristic resulting from perfect compliance (from the purest of motives) to God, His will, and His Word. Some people confuse goodness and righteousness. While we can do good things or be considered good by others, we do not always do the right thing. However, God is righteous and cannot do anything but the right thing; thus He is perfect and without sin.

Verse 10. I go to the Father and you no longer see Me. Several days after Jesus was raised from the dead, He ascended into heaven back to His Father (see Acts 1:9–11). Since He ascended into heaven, no totally righteous person has resided on earth, even to this day.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: Outside of Jesus, who is completely righteous and perfect? Who, if anyone, does Romans 3:10 teach is righteous?

Discussion Question

How can we specifically incorporate Jesus's righteousness in our gospel presentations?

On Your Own

In the space below, list some of the areas in which you struggle to reflect Jesus's righteousness and the steps you intend to take to correct them.

Studying the Passage, John 16:11

Verse 11. concerning judgment. Because the world has sinned, and only God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are righteous, the world must be judged. This judgment will punish those who have rejected God's Son. **the ruler of this world has been judged.** The ruler to whom Jesus refers is the devil, whose name is Satan. He opposes God, as well as His will and His Word. Because he held influence over those who rejected Jesus in that day, he was their ruler (see John 8:44; 13:27).

John describes this judgment in Revelation 20:10–13, another one of the books of the Bible he wrote, as a tormenting lake of fire into which the devil and all his followers will be cast. Because Satan will be judged for his rebellion, those who follow him will likewise be judged.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: In John 12:31–32, who is the "ruler of the world"? What will happen to Jesus in order that the people of the world will be drawn away from the "ruler" and drawn to Jesus?

Discussion Question

How can we specifically incorporate God's judgment of wickedness and those who practice it in our presentations of the gospel?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Each disciple give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

The Spirit assists disciples, who through their participation in evangelism and/or missions verbally share the gospel, by convicting unbelievers of the following truths:

- They sin by rejecting Jesus (see John 16:9).
- Jesus alone is righteous because He is God and has ascended to heaven (see John 16:10).
- Satan and all those who oppose and reject Jesus will be judged by God to spend eternity in hell (see John 16:11).

Disciples who consistently practice evangelism are not alone in this task. Jesus has sent His Holy Spirit to assist them.

- The Holy Spirit prepares disciples for their evangelistic encounters (Acts 8:27–35; 10:19–22).
- He empowers them to witness (Acts 1:8; 6:10).
- He gives them wisdom (Luke 12:12).
- He emboldens them in their witness for Christ (Acts 4:8–13, 29–31).

Also, the Holy Spirit assists disciples in His work toward unbelievers.

- He prepares unbelievers to hear and understand the gospel message (Matthew 13:1–9; Acts 10:1–15).
- He convicts them (John 16:8–11; Acts 2:37).
- He regenerates any unbeliever who will repent of his sin, believe in Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection, and confess with his mouth that Jesus is Lord (John 3:5–6; Titus 3:5).

The Holy Spirit works among unbelievers to exalt Jesus Christ, but nowhere in Scripture does He do so without a disciple also evangelizing those same unbelievers at some point. Likewise, disciples can be thoroughly trained and equipped to share the gospel, but no amount of training, ability, or practice on their own merit can replace the work of the Holy Spirit in disciples' evangelism.

Fulfilling the evangelistic task of the Great Commission does not rest on what the Holy Spirit does without the cooperation of disciples or what disciples do apart from the aid of the Holy Spirit. Instead, they work together in harmony to reach unbelievers with the hope of Jesus Christ.

Parent Question

What three elements from John 16:8–11 should be incorporated into the content of your gospel presentations in order to work together with the Holy Spirit's conviction?

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Week 24

Gospel, Evangelism, and Missions

Assignment One

- Read John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 as well as the comments related to them in the "It's in the Book" section.
- Do you think that saying John 3:16 is the "gospel in a nutshell" can be justified? Why or why not?
- Most people believe what they want to believe, usually to justify their own lifestyle, not matter how sinful. In light of that, we read Paul's account of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15 based in historical fact. Why is that significant? Does that still work today?
- What are the facts of the Gospel laid out in 1 Corinthians 15?
- How would you describe them to your friends?
- Pray and ask God to give you confidence in the Gospel message. Confidence will lead to boldness in proclaiming!

Assignment Two

- Read 2 Timothy 4:1-2.
- To preach means to "speak, explain, or tell." The *word* is the message Paul spent his life telling. In this passage why is Paul saying the good news of Jesus is the most urgent of all messages?
- What reactions can you expect if you proclaim to others that there is only one way to really know God? What about atheists? Muslims? Hindus, etc.?
- What are some things that intimidate you about sharing your faith with others?
- Pray specifically for the Holy Spirit to empower you to do what you may feel you cannot do on your own.

Assignment Three

- Read Luke 24:45-48.
- How is the content of the gospel linked here to Christ's commissioning disciples and sending them on mission?
- If the Corinthians heard Paul's message and believed, both Jew and Gentile alike, do you think that more people are ready to respond to the message now than we may think?
- What are some specific, verbal ways you can share the Gospel with your friends and those you come into contact with?

Scripture to Memorize

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Disciples on a recent mission trip to Jaipur, India, gave this report: "We saw spiritually lost people who were hungry and shivering from the cold while trying to sleep in the street. Seeing their plight, our plan changed. We arranged food sacks, blankets, and gospel tracks in Hindi and Urdu. As they slept, we draped them with blankets, placed the food sacks nearby, and prayed for their salvation.

"Three Muslim men saw this and came saying, 'This Jesus, who moved you to love these people, is who we want to save our lives too.' This was the start of hearts opening to the gospel in that time and place."

Can you love people enough to meet their physical needs while you love their souls? Our ultimate aim is eternal. Social assistance without eternity in view is shortsighted.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 out loud.

Studying the Passage vv. 15:3–4

This passage explains the gospel. It seems simple, yet it is more complex than it may appear. To investigate this, we begin with an outline of this passage. Here the apostle Paul states the gospel succinctly and elaborates on its content and how it impacted him and others.

The gospel has power for salvation because it is tied directly to the resurrection of Christ (v. 1). The arrangement below looks first at the gospel's content (vv. 3–4), then eyewitness testimony of others regarding the truth of the message preached (vv. 5–6), and finally the only reasonable human response in light of the truth of the gospel (vv. 1–2).

Corinth was a city full of religious images, idols, and philosophies. People could believe anything that gave them pleasure. They could even make up truth if they wanted to. Paul contradicted that notion by explaining that the message he preached was anchored in the undeniable, historical fact of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. He invited hearers to investigate the facts and find the gospel true.

Verse 3. first importance. Paul prioritized the gospel in what he said to the Corinthians. That gospel was the thing Paul rushed to say to them. He did not want them to be distracted or miss his message. The gospel's content succinctly defined by Paul had three core truths with profound significance. Each truth is anchored in history for all to check and see that God is telling the truth.

Verses 3–4. Christ died . . . was buried. The Greek verb tense refers to completed action. There is no question that Christ's death happened. People who knew Him took Him off the cross and placed Him in the tomb. Paul added that it was death with a purpose. **Christ died for our sins.** That means all of us essentially placed Him on the cross. As a hymn says, "He could have called ten thousand angels" to defend Him, but He did not do that. Jesus, the only one who is blameless, died for the ungodly world. That is true love.

Verses 3–4. according to the Scriptures. Paul then gave more historic proof, showing Christ's death was something predicted centuries before and now fulfilled. As one example of such prophecies, Isaiah 53:5–11 clearly predicted how Jesus would die as the willing sacrifice for all of humanity. Yet there is even more good news. **He was raised on the third day.** The Greek

verb shifts here to celebrate the fact that the resurrection means He is still alive. Immanuel, God with us, lives today!

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: Do you think saying this single verse is the "gospel in a nutshell" can be justified?

Discussion Questions

Most people believe what they want to believe, usually to justify whatever they want to do, no matter how sinful. In light of that, what is the significance of the gospel Paul proclaimed that was anchored in historical fact? Does it matter today?

On Your Own

In the space below, write a brief prayer. If you are being truthful, tell Him you have confidence in the truth of the gospel. Invite Him to take that confidence and turn it into boldness to declare that He is risen!

Studying the Passage, 1 Corinthians 15:5-6

Verses 5. Cephas. Simon Peter (see Luke 24:34) was the first of the band of original disciples to see the resurrected Lord, **the twelve**. One man could perhaps hallucinate that he saw a corpse that came to life, but Jesus also appeared to the other disciples.

Verse 6. five hundred brethren at one time. Almost no one could believe that more than five hundred people would share a mass hallucination. Paul included himself in the list of those who were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (v. 8). Paul emphasized that this was not some sort of myth because many of the witnesses were still alive at that time. They could verify the forensic evidence that they were eyewitnesses to a living corpse, the proof of the truth of the gospel, revealing victory over sin and death.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: In 2 Timothy 4:1-2, why is Paul saying the good news is the most urgent of all messages?

Discussion Question

What can we expect when we proclaim that there is only one way to God when speaking to others, especially if they are secularists, Muslims, Buddhists, or Hindus?

On Your Own

In the space below, list something that intimidates you about sharing your faith. Then pray specifically that the Holy Spirit will empower you to do what you may feel you cannot do yourself.

Studying the Passage, 1 Corinthians 15:1

Verse 1. gospel which I preached. Paul lived life fully absorbed with communicating the gospel. *Preached* means "proclaimed or heralded." The gospel is the message the Corinthians "received" and now "stand" in. Their reception was genuine, and that was why the gospel sustained them in the swirl of multiple and often contrary truth claims. We live in such times again, surrounded by competing truth claims.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: In Luke 24:45–48, how is the content of the gospel linked to Christ's commissioning disciples and sending them on mission?

Discussion Question

If the Corinthians received Paul's message, Jew and Gentile alike, do you think that means many more are willing to hear today than we sometimes assume?

On Your Own

In the space below list ways, especially verbal ones, you can proclaim the gospel to those you know and to others worldwide.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

Do a web search of the term “unreached people group.” Answer these questions:

1. What does it mean to be “unreached”?
2. What do you think about someone living where they likely have little or no access to the gospel? Can distance be something other than physical—perhaps social or linguistic?
3. Do these circumstances imply action on the part of believers who possess knowledge of the good news?
4. Do you believe Christ intends for disciples to show compassion and to address intense human suffering and other needs? Do you believe Christ intends for disciples to address human needs but then never make reference to Him or the gospel? Do you believe Christ intends for disciples to present the gospel to those with intense suffering and needs while never seeking to meet those needs?
5. Based on your answers to the questions above, what commitments are you willing to make now? What are you sensing King Jesus is calling you to be and to do for a lifetime?

Ask the Holy Spirit to set your life toward Christ’s purposes in order to live your one life for His glory by giving yourself away for the eternal blessing of others.

Parent Question

What are you sensing King Jesus is calling you to be and to do for a lifetime in order to glorify Him?

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