

the WELL

DEEP TRUTHS
LASTING
TRANSFORMATION



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“With joy shall I draw water from the well of salvation.” Isaiah 12:3

I heard John Maxwell say, *“The greatest day in a man’s life is the day he was born. The second greatest day in a man’s life is the day he finds out why.”* You are no accident my friend. God created you on purpose, with purpose and for a purpose. A God-designed destiny to impact the world in which we live. The greatest adventure we will ever live is the journey of following Jesus and discovering why He put us here. It is that great adventure that has brought us here to The Well.

The first step on this grand adventure happens when a person makes a decision to become a “follower of Christ.” For example, in Mark 1:17 Jesus is walking by the side of a sea and sees Peter in a boat and says to him - “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” There are 2 parts to this powerful statement - the first is simple “follow Me,” Jesus said. Every person alive at some point will have that same opportunity. To follow Jesus is to first decide that He alone is Lord of every facet of our life. It is to put our full faith and trust that what the Bible says about Jesus and the way in which I should live is absolute truth. It is a great journey into a personal relationship with this amazing God who created the world, everything and everyone in it. When I commit myself to this process I discover the latter half of the statement where Jesus said - “follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Following Him is the key to discovering purpose and fulfilling our God-given destiny.

Anyone who sets out on a grand adventure, must take stock of the necessary supplies and tools we need in order to succeed in our endeavor. According to the Bible, there are really about 5 things we need:

1. Make a quality decision, to be a life-long follower of Jesus Christ.
2. Develop a daily study of the Word of God.
3. Discover and develop a solid prayer life.
4. Become an active part of the Body of Christ.
5. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

The Well is simply a structure, a set of plans, to assist people who are hungry to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and successfully fulfill this grand adventure. Each month we will look at a different theme and take us deeper into our understanding of the Scripture and how to apply Biblical principles to our daily lives. Thank you for joining us on this adventure of learning to draw the water of life, from the well of salvation.

Drawing water from - The Well

Different parts of this discipleship tool.

Exercising my Faith this month

- Each month I encourage you to have a faith goal. What are you believing God to do in your life? As you work through this early in the month. Learn to grab a hold of the promises of God by faith and join together with God to see His will fully accomplished in every area of your life. *(Example on p. 6)*

Weekly: Each Week there are 4 sections:

- **The Well - Daily Devotional thought written by multiple authors from The Father's House.**
 - Each day we will be looking at a small passage of Scripture and drawing truths up from the Word of God that will inspire the manner in which we live. Each month will have a theme we will be pursuing. Each day ends with a prompting for each reader to "put the Word to work." Remember it's not about how much we simply read, but how much of the Word we apply to our daily life that really matters.
- **Weekly Bible Reading Guide** (4 different options to choose from) *(See Page 9)*
 - Daily reading and study of the Scripture is essential for spiritual health. Here we provide 4 possible reading guides.
 - Option 1 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once in three years.
 - Option 2 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once per year.
 - Option 3 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once per 3 months.
 - Option 4 - Follow this plan to read the New Testament once per month.
- **Weekly Prayer notes**
 - Recording prayer notes is essential both for remembering what the Holy Spirit is speaking and evaluating what we hear based upon the Word of God. It is also encouraging to look back and see how God has been moving in the areas of life we have been praying about. We encourage you to bring this with you to your prayer time and prayer meetings. Regularly visit and revisit your prayer notes sections and write down what God is doing in and through prayer in your life. *(example, see page 7)*
- **Sermon Notes**
 - Often in services there are many great things said that I want to remember. I have discovered what science has already proven to be correct - if I listen and write down thoughts my retention doubles. Included are pages for sermon notes available to be used for each Wednesday and Sunday of the month. *(Example see page 8)*

In addition, we encourage you to join one of our Growth Groups. Inside these groups of up to 5, people will connect and share insights we are learning and growing in. I highly encourage you to get connected and join one of these groups.

(Example) Exercising my Faith this Month

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.... 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Q: What are 1 or 2 things you are believing God to do in your life this month?

1. I am believing God that He will surround me with His peace in the middle of a troubling time in the world.

2. I am believing God will heal my mother and renew her strength and vitality.

Q: Are there any Scriptures that directly deal with these?

Isaiah 26:3 ~ You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. John 14:27 ~ Peace I leave

with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Colossians 3:15 ~ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Philippians 4:6-7 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your

requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus.

Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, I was healed.' Psalm 103:3 - You have 'healed me from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing

is the children's bread'

Everyday, we take the Word of God that deals directly with situations we face, and lift up the promises in His Word that deal directly with these situations. We both remind ourselves that God has spoken and secondly, we take that promise and lift it up in prayer.

Part of my daily prayer: *God You said, You will keep me in perfect peace when I bind You to my mind. I choose today to intentionally think about You and trust that You will keep me in perfect peace. You promised your peace you would give me, that it would remain with me. I choose to let your peace rule in my heart, I refuse to be anxious, but come to You with my prayers and needs with thanksgiving present my requests unto You, and in return I today receive Your supernatural peace.*

"God You said in Your Word - I Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, we were healed.' That according to Psalm 103 - You have 'healed us from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread' and since my mother is a child of God, I thank you that healing is hers, I ask you to heal, and renew her strength this day and exercise my faith believing that you will in Jesus' name."

Weekly Prayer Notes (Example)

Week: _____

Specific things I am praying about for my family. - <i>Daily for God's protection over my wife and children - (Psalm 91 and Isaiah 54:17)</i> - <i>Daily to hear and know God's voice, to be led by His Spirit in all that I say and do. (John 10 and Romans 8)</i> - <i>To walk in His supernatural provision and wisdom, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge (Philippians 4, Ephesians 1 and 3).</i>	Specific things I am praying about for people in my church. - <i>That God would grant wisdom, protection and provision to our leaders.</i> - <i>Every week, I ask for people to come know and follow Christ, to encounter God's presence and to experience His goodness in every service.</i> - <i>That God would bring every person He has called to be a part of The Father's House here.</i> - <i>That God would heal and deliver those who are in need.</i> - <i>_____, the person who was in my row that told me of his desire to see his son come back to the Lord, I am praying for his son by name all week, that God would send someone across His path to lead Him back to Jesus.</i>
Things I sensed from the Holy Spirit while I was praying this week: - <i>When I asked God if there was anything He wanted to say to me today, I heard Him simply say - "You are my son, and I love you."</i> - <i>I was talking to the Lord, and felt like He reminded me this morning of the story in the gospels when He came walking on the water, and said to Peter, "come out here with me." I felt like He was letting me know, sometimes when He leads it will be in areas I have never gone before, and didn't know I could - such as walking on water.</i>	People I am praying for their salvation. - <i>Benjamin</i> - <i>Paul</i> - <i>Keith</i> - <i>Joel</i> - <i>Jordan</i>

Series (if applicable):

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further
Genesis 17:21	- God has more in store for me than I have yet discovered - If Abraham laughed when he first heard the promise of God, and could still find God's favor and believe, then I realize I'm not alone, when sometimes I find it almost "too good to be true."	
2 Peter 1:5 - 11	- If I "add" these 7 areas to my faith in God - there is unstoppable fruit that will come in my life. - I can lead someone to Jesus - I can bear the fruit of the Spirit - I can discover and develop the call of God on my life - I can be fully assured of my salvation - I can live without stumbling	- What is Virtue? - What is knowledge referring to? - I think I understand self-control - Are perseverance and patience the same word here? - What is meant here by Godliness - What's the difference between brotherly love and love in 2 Peter 1:7

Versions of the Bible

There have been many arguments over the centuries about which version of the Bible is the best. Truth be told, I have many versions of the Bible and enjoy reading and studying most. The default version for this study will be the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible. If a contributing author uses a different version it will be labeled as such. Other common versions of the Bible quoted from in The Well include, but are not limited to:

The Amplified Bible (AMP)
New International Version (NIV)
The Passion Translation (TPT)
Young's Literal Translation (YLT)

King James Version (KJV)
The Message Translation (MSG)
The New Living Translation (NLT)

Often people will ask, why is the language so much different from one version of the Bible to the next. Very important question. There are two basic distinctions to pay attention to as you are reading the Bible - is the version you are reading a "paraphrase" or is it a literal translation from original language into our language? The goal of a literal translation approach is to have a word-for-word literal translation from the original manuscripts into our modern day language. The goal of a paraphrase is to capture the idea as communicated in the original language and attempt to use modern language to communicate that same idea. For example when we look at the famous John 3:16

(NKJV) - ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(AMP) - ¹⁶ "For God so [greatly] loved and dearly prized the world, that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life.

(YLT) - ¹⁶ for God did so love the world, that His Son -- the only begotten -- He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-

(MSG) - ¹⁶ This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

You can quickly see the different approaches in these versions of Bible translation. Some are focused on a direct word for word translation regardless of the difficulty in reading in current language. On the other end of the spectrum authors focus on taking the concept and making it easy to read in our current language.

I am not one that will mandate a single-specific version of the Bible. However, three things I would look to avoid in study of the Bible: 1) Any translation that eliminates the deity of Christ. 2) Some "woke" versions of the Bible being made, for example the "gender neutral" Bible. 3) If an author has attempted to "water" down absolute truths included in Scripture I pay no attention to those versions.

There are many websites that provide access to these translations and more such as biblegateway.com providing free easy access to those who want to compare various translations and paraphrases of the Bible.

Bible Reading Plan September

	3 year (1)	Once/year	Once Quarterly	New Testament in a month
1	Psalms 58-59	Daniel 9-10	Ezekiel 35 - 45	Matt. 1-3; Rom. 1-4; Act 1; Rev. 1
2	Psalms 60-61	Daniel 11-12	Ezekiel 46 - Daniel 7	Matt. 4-6; Rom. 5-8; Acts 2; Rev. 2
3	Psalms 62-64	Ezra 1-3	Daniel 8 - Hosea	Matt 7-9; Rom. 9-12; Acts 3; Rev. 3
4	Psalms 65-67	Ezra 4-7	Joel, Amos, Obadiah	Matt. 10-12; Rom. 13-16; Acts 4; Rev. 5
5	Psalms 68	Ezra 8-10	Jonah, Micah, Nahum	Mat. 13-15; I Cor. 1-4; Acts 5; Rev. 5
6	Psalms 69	Nehemiah 1-3	Habakkuk & Zephaniah	Matt. 16-18; I Cor. 5-8; Acts 6; Rev. 6
7	Psalms 70-71	Nehemiah 4-6	Haggai, Zechariah	Matt. 19-21; I Cor. 9-12; Acts 7; Rev. 7
8	Psalms 72-73	Nehemiah 7	Malachi - Matt 4	Mat. 22-24; 1 Cor. 13-16; Acts 8; Rev. 8
9	Psalms 74-75	Nehemiah 8-9	Matthew 5 - 13	Matt. 25-28; 2 Cor. 1-4; Acts 9; Rev. 9
10	Psalms 76-77	Nehemiah 10-11	Matthew 14 - 22	Luke 1-2; 2 Cor. 5-8; Acts 10; Rev. 10
11	Psalms 78	Nehemiah 12-13	Matthew 23 - Mark 5	Luke 3-4; 2 Cor. 9-13; Acts 11; Rev. 11
12	Psalms 79-80	I Chron. 1-2	Mark 6 - 16	Luke 5-7; Gal. 1-3; Acts 12; Rev. 12
13	Psalms 81-83	I Chron. 3-5	Luke 1 - 9	Luke 8-10; Gal. 4-6; Acts 13; Rev. 13
14	Psalms 84-86	I Chron. 6	Luke 10 - John 4	Luke 11-13; Eph. 1-3; Acts 14; Rev. 14
15	Psalms 87-88	I Chron. 7-8	John 5 - 14	Luke 14-16; Eph. 4-6; Acts 15; Rev. 15
16	Psalms 89	I Chron. 9-10	John 15 - Acts 5	Luke 17-19; Phil. 1-4; Acts 16; Rev. 16
17	Psalms 90-91	I Chron. 11-12	Acts 6 - 16	Luke 20-22; Col. 1-4; Acts 17; Rev. 17
18	Psalms 92-94	I Chron. 13-15	Acts 17 - Acts 28	Luke 23-24; I Thess. 1-5; Acts 18; Rev. 18
19	Psalms 95-97	I Chron. 16-17	Romans 1-14	Mark. 1-3; 2 Thess. 1-3; Acts 19; Rev. 19
20	Psalms 98-100	I Chron. 18-20	Rom. 15 - 1st Corinthians 10	Mark 4-6; I Tim. 1-6; Acts 20; Rev. 20
21	Psalms 101-102	I Chron. 21-23	1 Cor 11 - 2 Corinthians 8	Mark 7-9; 2 Tim. 1-4; Acts 21; Rev. 21
22	Psalms 103, 110	I Chron. 24-25	2 Corinthians 9-13 & Galatians	Mark 10-12; Titus. 1-3; Philemon 1; Acts 22; Rev. 22
23	Psalms 104	I Chron. 26-27	Ephesians & Philippians	Mark 13-16; Hebrews 1-4; Acts 23
24	Psalms 105	I Chron. 28-29	Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thess.	John 1-3; Hebrews 5-8; Acts 24
25	Psalms 106	2 Chron. 1-4	Books of 1st & 2nd Tim, Titus	John 4-5; Hebrews 9-13; Acts 25
26	Psalms 107	2 Chron. 5-7	Books Philemon - Hebrews 8	John 6-7; James 1-5; Acts 26
27	Psalms 108-109	2 Chron. 8-10	Heb. 8 - 13 & Book of James	John 8-9; I Peter 1-5; Acts 27
28	Psalms 110-112	2 Chron. 11-14	1st & 2nd Peter; 1st John	John 10-12; 2 Peter 1-3; Acts 28
29	Psalms 113-115	2 Chron. 15-18	2nd, 3rd John, Jude & Rev. 1-5	John 13-16; I John 1-5
30	Ps. 116-119:48	2 Chron. 19-21	Revelation 6-22	John 17-21; Books of 2nd & 3rd John & Jude

Exercising my Faith this Month

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 - **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.... 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

Q: What are 1 or 2 things you are believing in God to do in your life this month?

Q: Are there any Scriptures that directly deal with these things you are believing in God for?

Everyday, we take the Word of God that deals directly with situations we face, and lift up the promises in His Word that deal directly with these situations. We both remind ourselves that God has spoken and secondly, we take that promise and lift it up in prayer.

Example: "God You said in Your Word - I Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, I was healed.' That in Psalm 103 - You have 'healed me from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread' and since I am a child of God, I thank you and receive healing in Jesus' name."

Week One

Week One Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.

Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.

Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.

People I am praying for their salvation.

October 1

Next Steps - You must be born again

John 3

Nicodemus was shocked when during an evening encounter with Jesus, Jesus told him, "You must be born again." Jesus went on to explain that Nicodemus had experienced physical birth, but not spiritual birth.

Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, according to their likeness – the Three in One. That image was the three-fold nature of humanity – body, soul, and spirit. In their innocence, their spirit was uppermost. Their soul and body were obedient to their spirit. But when Eve was deceived by Satan and Adam sinned, their spirit immediately became dormant, just as their Creator had warned them, "Dying, you shall surely die." Even as their bodies began decaying, their body became uppermost, and they were dominated by physical appetites until their physical death. Death – means "separation." Since man was created a multi-dimensional creature, death or separation first came spiritually. Adam's spirit died, but Adam lived physically for nine hundred years and then separation secondly came physically, and Adam's body ceased to live biologically. If left in a state of separation from God, the third separation would be eternally.

Paul, the apostle explained to the believers in Rome: *"Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned"* (Rom. 3). Thus, all of us, descendants of Adam and Eve, inherit at our physical birth that sentence of death and are by nature born sinners. Paul also confirmed that the physical has no natural capacity to understand spiritual things nor comprehend God. The image of God Adam and Eve bore was lost when they fell and may only be regained in the new creation at the moment the individual believes God's word about the Lord Jesus Christ, and is born again, not by the will of man, but by the will of God.

Paul explained the miracle of being born again: "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

Putting the Word to Work

Q: Describe the moment you were born again:

Q: Describe what changed when you were born again:

October 2

Next Steps - Jesus Is Lord

Matthew 28:18

"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me."

The dictionary describes "Lord" as a title, or to describe someone who has total authority and power over everything.' The Bible refers to Jesus as being Lord. It is not just a title, but everything He sees He created and it all belongs to Him. He has complete authority and control of it all.

When you declare "Jesus is My Lord," you are in essence saying, "I intentionally and willful submit control of my life, everything I am and everything I have belongs to Him." There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Jesus Christ is not Lord.

The Bible describes the Lordship of Jesus Christ Ruler, Judge, Sustainer and Savior. Jesus was declared "Lord" by prophets of old who prophesied of His coming and described who He is.

In Isaiah 61:1-2 He will bind up the broken-hearted and set captives free. (paraphrased)

Jeremiah 23:5 declares Him to be *"The Lord of our righteousness."*

in Daniel 7:13-14, *"And to Him was given dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion..."*

In John 1:1-4, *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."*

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus declares, *"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me."*

What a sad time for mankind as we rush through our days building our kingdoms, neglecting the things that matter the most in life, things eternal in exchange for the temporal. I once was building my kingdom, but God (thank you, Jesus) got a hold of me. One day while at a conference, I ventured into a shop. On the walls as you entered were signs and 'wisdoms' hanging there waiting for me to enter. It was a simple sign, that had my name all over it. I declare to this day that it was the only sign there. If there were others, they only mocked me more. The sign simply read, "What good is success if you're a failure at home?" It reduced me to ashes. My life turned around. My Lord, my family, my priorities fell into subjection to the only Lord in my life. I've not looked back since I surrendered all. It's audacious of us to think we can live any way we choose and have the mind to create a new kingdom within the Kingdom of God when our Lord has already marked what is rightfully His – "You are Mine!" saith the Lord.

Putting the Word to Work

Make the decision and declare it out loud right now, "Jesus, You are Lord of my life. I submit all that I am and all that I have to You."

Take stock of your life, are there any areas in which you need to work on your level of surrender to His will?

October 3

Next Steps - Jesus is Savior

1 Thessalonians 5:9

“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Do you ever stop and wonder what the difference is between Jesus as my personal ‘savior’ and Jesus as Lord? How does all this Christian ‘stuff’ work in your life? Yesterday we dealt with the need to ‘surrender’ to Him as Lord. Today, we recognize that He is our Savior, and that is a real and comforting thing. It means He loves you and always works for your good.

There was a time when I searched for “spiritual meaning” and considered many possibilities. I always believed in Jesus, but lacked an inner knowledge and peace. I tried spiritualism, astrology, and reincarnation, but my need only grew stronger. A Christian friend was praying for me and gave me a few Christian books. I finally read the ‘smallest’ one so I could give them back. But, instead, by the end of it, I got on my knees and gave my life to Jesus, my Savior. For months afterward, people said my face had a “glow.” I couldn’t see it, but I truly felt it inside and my life changed. Wow! It was as if the Holy Spirit ‘unzipped’ my head, took out the false ideas and replaced them with a deep desire for His TRUTH. Knowledge came as I studied the Word.

The world always has new ideas of how to find peace and be “enlightened.” There are programs, studies, ideologies, teachings, etc. All offer THE “answers” to what you are searching for. Jesus is the only TRUE answer. *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* Acts 4:12 Jesus is Lord and He is Savior!

By the way, when you meet people who are ‘dabbling’ with occult concepts, they, too, are seeking for ‘spiritual meaning.’ It’s just the wrong kind. Pray for him/her... then listen for God’s direction for what He would have you do or say. (Or not!) Let the Holy Spirit lead you. Listen! It may be timing.

Putting the Word to Work

Yesterday, we made the decision to declare Jesus as Lord. Today we add to that declaration,

“Jesus, You are Lord of my life. I submit all that I am and all that I have to You. Thank you for saving me. Thank you for forgiving me of all my sin. Thank you for shedding your precious blood for me. Thank you that Your Word declares if anyone believes in their heart and confesses with their mouth Jesus as Lord, he shall be saved. I am a born-again, child of God.”

In your life, how do you distinguish the difference between Jesus as Lord and Savior? It’s the same Jesus, with multiple roles in our lives.

October 4

Next Steps - Taking your relationship with Jesus public

Acts 2:38

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I was baptized at the age of six, but I knew who Jesus was and what He had done for me, even as a child. My brothers and I were praying for another child who had epilepsy and the Spirit of the Lord came down on all of us. We were in His presence for three hours in which time we all received the baptism of the Holy Ghost just as they did in Acts 19:6. John the Baptist baptized with water, then came the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Our first request of our parents was to be baptized with water.

I think the baptism in water brings peace and comfort to a weary soul, both for those who get baptized and also to those who are witnesses. It is a spiritual event playing out in real time, marking a new beginning in the life of a believer. If you have strayed from God and want a new beginning, even if you have been baptized before, do it again. Remember, God loves a repentant heart and He'll not turn you away. So, get wet again! Bring peace and comfort to a weary soul.

It is a public demonstration of what happens on the inside of a person when he or she is born again. Making your relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior visible and outward is a very important step. Matthew 10:32-33 Jesus said *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

Salvation does not come at water baptism, the water is not where our sins are washed away, that happens when a person is born again. Water baptism is called the first step of obedience in the life with Christ. In Acts 2 it was the first step giving to the crowd after they repented. Have you taken that step?

Putting the Word to Work

Have you taken your relationship with Jesus public in water baptism?

What are some other steps you can take to to make your relationship to Jesus as Lord and Savior public?

October 5

Next Steps - Commit to a Bible reading and study Plan & strategy

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Study of the Word of God is absolutely essential to the spiritual health and well-being of a born-again believer in Jesus Christ who has surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and received His salvation. The Word of God is where we discover the pathways of truth, discern the day in which we live, develop a sense of right and wrong and cultivate the heart of God.

Paul and His team were traveling on his second missionary journey and came to a town in Acts 16 called Berea. Here they began to preach the message of Jesus as Lord and Savior to a group of people who had a knowledge of the Scriptures and a heart for God. When they heard the Word preached, they liked what they heard but immediately it says they searched the Scripture to see if the preaching was accurate.

10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

8 benefits to the study of the Word in the Life of the believer:

1. It is inspired (in-spired) it produces the breath of life in the soul of the believer. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
2. It is truth (Prov. 30:5)
3. It is authoritative, James says we need to hear it and do what it says (James 1:22)
4. The Bible is clear and gives light (Psalm 119:130)
5. The Bible contains what we need to be thoroughly equipped and to live Godly (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16).
6. The Bible is powerful (Heb. 4:12)
7. The Bible provides guidance (Psalm 119:105)
8. The Bible is our precious treasure (Psalm 119:72)

Putting the Word to Work

What is your strategy for Bible study? If you have never started with any sort of a strategy here are two ideas. First, in The Well, we have 4 daily Bible reading plans provided for you:

- Read the Bible through in 1 year (average of 10 minutes/day)
- Read the Bible through in 3 years (avg. 3-5 minutes/day)
- Read the Bible through in 90 days (avg. 1 hour/day)
- Read the New Testament in a month (avg. 30 minutes/day)

Secondly, as you read ask the following 3 questions and journal your answers:

- What does this passage show me about God?
- What does this passage show me about man?
- What is one way I can apply what I read today to my life?

October 6

Next Steps - The Importance of Developing a Prayer Strategy

Matt. 6:5-13

5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Jesus' instructions to His disciples in Matthew 6 has commonly become known as "The Lord's Prayer" was less about specific words to memorize and repeat, but was a prayer strategy they could employ so that their prayer time would be effective and strategic, not random and hypocritical. I would highly recommend you use it as one of the "prayer strategies" you develop. If you have never done it before, commit to the next 40 days of "praying through" the Lord's prayer and watch the growth in your prayer life.

Putting the Word to Work

After this manner pray and if I can add, pray verbally, pray out loud. Allow words to actually come out of your mouth, not just prayer in thought internally. Spend at least 5 minutes on each section of the Lord's prayer.

1. *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."* - Out loud, exalt the name of God.
2. *Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* - Out loud ask God to change things that you see in the world that do not reflect heaven. Ask for God to transform those situations until those situations look more like heaven's agenda than they look like being under the influence of sin on this earth.
3. *Give us this day our daily bread* - Thank Him out loud for everything you can think of that He has provided for you in every area of your life.
4. *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors* - Ask God for anything that comes to mind that you need His forgiveness for. Then take some time and ask God if there is anyone you need to forgive. If he brings someone to mind, or if you already know who you need to forgive then do so.
5. *"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."* - Ask God and thank God for leading you, for guiding you, for delivering you and your family today. Ask Him if there is anything He needs you to know today.
6. *For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever, amen.* Thank Him and rejoice that all power belongs to Him, that He is at work in every area of your life. If there are any situations that are heavy on your heart and mind, take them to Him and ask Him to move.

October 7

Next Steps - Commit yourself to be in the House of the Lord at least once a week

Psalm 92:12-13

12 The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.

The trees in verse 12 keep jumping out at me. The Palm grows and flourishes in mostly desert-like conditions. The Cedar in Lebanon is large and strong. Both of these trees are rooted and grounded. The righteous person is compared to the strength and health of these trees, prospering in dry places and maturing in depth and stature. Where are the righteous planted? In the House of the Lord, in His presence, rooted in Him.

As I have walked with the Lord over the last twenty years I have experienced how being planted in God's Presence transforms a life. God's design for flourishing, health, strength, and depth in a righteous person does not just happen. The righteous intentionally plant themselves in God's house encountering His presence, experiencing His goodness and surround themselves with others who are doing the same.

I have these house plants, one is called a Dolphin and the other a Swiss Cheese plant. Both were given to me by friends. Both of my friends let me know that these types of plants flourish when they are closely potted together. The plant roots are strengthened in numbers. As righteous people, we are the same way. Our roots in the Lord are strengthened by those who are also rooted in the Lord. In Acts 2, God calls us to devote ourselves, to listen to the Apostles teaching together, to break bread together, and to gather in prayer together. The Gathering together in devotion to the Lord has been a foundational rooting and grounding in my life. The Bible tells us not to forsake the gathering of believers, of those who are devoted, but to encourage one another, to grow and flourish together.

The Righteous are intentional. Planting themselves in God's presence, and rooting themselves alongside others who are doing the same.

Putting the Word to Work

We are called to be planted and participate as a church, not just attend a church. What does a healthy church commitment look like for a believer? The lowest level of commitment I would urge any believer to make is to decide which service will be yours? Question for you, which service will you not just go to, but adopt the mentality that this is your service? This is my service to worship in, pray for, to participate in, to invite people to join me in, to ensure that people feel welcome, connected and loved., etc.

Week One Sermon Notes

Week One Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series *(if applicable)*: _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week One Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Two

Week Two Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.

Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.

Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.

People I am praying for their salvation.

October 8

Next Steps - The importance of healthy connections in the body of Christ - Accountability
Romans 14:12

“So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

One of the greatest gifts we have as we become a part of the body of Christ is the gift of accountability. I know that accountability has been used at times as a hammer to beat on people for “bad behavior,” but my favorite definition I ever heard for accountability was to “give account for one’s ability.” Real accountability is more about us holding each other to a standard that allows us all to flourish. Consider the following passages of Scripture.

- **Ephesians 4:16** *from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*
- **1 Corinthians. 12:4** *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works [e]all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all*
- **1 Peter 2:5** *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

A body cannot thrive with a single part functioning well, while the other parts are dysfunctional. Nor can a house be built with a single stone. In the human body, when a single part is not able to do it’s job, the rest of the body experiences the stress of picking up the slack and making up the difference. For example, when a person has a knee injury, the body compensates for that knee’s inability to carry the full weight it was designed to carry. The person can likely still walk and get around but either does so through pain or is potentially hobbled in his or her ability to maneuver. When a stone structure loses a stone the rest of the building has to handle the stress of the missing part. The body or the building feels the missing or broken part and communicates to the rest of the body or building to make up for the difference. When an injury occurs the human body signals the rest of the body not only to compensate but to send extra nutrients or blood flow etc., in order to heal itself so that it can fully function and thrive. In the same manner, the body of Christ is designed to provide accountability to itself. When one person is hurting, injured, missing, etc., the rest of the body feels it, and provides the necessary spiritual nutrients to assist in the healing and restoration process allowing that missing part or injured part to get healthy and grow, and be restored into place.

Putting the Word to Work

If you were to measure on a scale of 0 (unimportant) to 10 (essential), how important do you feel you are to the body of Christ?

Anything less than a 10 in my opinion is an inaccurate perception of how valuable you are in the kingdom of God. Most people do not recognize how valuable they are to the people the consistently sit near in a church service. What are three ways you can be a 10 when you come to church?

October 9

Next Steps - Go to God for Forgiveness and to the brothers to be healed.

Galatians 5:1 [NASB]

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

At times, we all need forgiveness from God and others. Receiving forgiveness from AND giving forgiveness to others brings a spotlight to our motives and actions. Take a good look in the mirror. What do you see? Unforgiveness will bind a person up with anger, self-pity, and self-martyrdom that consume attitudes. All three Persons of our Triune God give us the opportunity—yes, opportunity—to walk in freedom when we choose to forgive.

Once that is done, our forgiveness of others will bring freedom and healing for our thoughts, heart attitudes, emotions, and relationships. Healing can happen anywhere, anytime a person meets with God. Then, accept the freedom to truly praise and thank our Savior for His sacrifice that provides forgiveness for us. Like praise with this Scripture... Psalm 103:1-5

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

Now, THAT is healing! Sing it out with your whole heart if you know the tune.

Once before I shared my great ability to hold a grudge. That is unforgiveness! When I first received Jesus as Lord, He made it a priority to teach me about forgiveness through His Word. It worked quickly and made a big difference for the peace within me. But life happens, and I would run into circumstances that would rise up to tempt me to be angry and hold unforgiveness. It never stuck because I knew I had no leg to stand on. There are many times that I need forgiveness, too. Blunders, mistakes, oversight, or ignorance. So often, that is how offenses occur for others and ourselves. Giving and receiving forgiveness is the only way to have peace and move on. God has built-in blessings for us when we practice His principles... like forgiveness. There is something about having a few trustworthy people in the body of Christ that we can go to in our weaknesses so that we can be transparent before and bring things to the light. When we do, those things lose their power and grip on our lives.

Putting the Word to Work

1. Search within yourself for any sign of anger or unforgiveness toward others. Take it to God.

2. Is an apology needed to complete forgiveness for you... and the other person, too?

October 10

Next Steps - Transparency

Mark 8:22-25 (AMP)

22Then they came to Bethsaida; and some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Him to touch him. 23Taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" 24And he looked up and said, "I see people, but [they look] like trees, walking around." 25Then again Jesus laid His hands on his eyes; and the man stared intently and [his sight] was [completely] restored, and he began to see everything clearly

Mark 10 tells the story of "Blind Bartimaeus" who wanted to be healed as he was sitting by the road side. As Jesus was passing he began to yell for attention to get his healing. This man however, was brought to Jesus by his friends. He may not have been yelling and screaming but he wanted healing.

He had certainly heard the news of the healings and he wanted his sight restored. So why did it take two separate actions for his sight to be restored? Well first of all it didn't take the Lord twice to restore sight. Remember that The man had no sight, he was able to see only darkness. Then when Jesus spit in his eyes he was able to see again. Just not completely well. Remember he said "I see people but they look like trees walking" Before this he saw nothing.

I think (but cannot prove) this was a teaching moment. About believing and understanding. We know that Jesus could heal with a word, and did not even need to be present when the healing occurred. Remember the centurion's slave? Bartimaeus reached out for Jesus believing that he could be healed. This man was brought to Jesus because his friends believed he could be healed. With Bartimaeus his faith healed him. "Your faith has made you well". This man may not have had that kind of faith.

However both men were transparent with the Lord, Bartimaeus unflinchingly believed and let everyone know he believed. So Jesus only had to tell him he was healed for the miracle to manifest. The blind man in this story wasn't so open and vocal about his belief in healing. He was however very transparent when it came to the results. Kind of like "oh sorry sir nice try but it didn't completely take hold" That is transparency folks!

Transparency or total honesty is something God can work with. Are we naive enough to think that there is anything that we think, say or do that He doesn't know about? Do you think He doesn't know when you're angry at Him? Do you think He doesn't know when you're harboring anger against your brother or husband or wife or ...? Sorry to say this but we often don't really talk with God. Oh we pray, and travail, and ask for intersection, but how often do we talk? Just sit down and say Lord here I am and I am a mess today. I'm angry and don't even know why. I'm really wondering why you haven't answered that prayer of mine. How long will I wait?

Time after time in God's word we see the heroes of faith being transparent with God and God then moving. Jacob was honest and got his name changed. Bartimaeus and thousands of others were honest and got healed. I was honest and transparent about who I was and got saved. I think we miss a lot when we aren't totally transparent with God.

Putting the Word to Work

Sit down and have a real talk with the Lord

October 11

**Next Steps - Making room for the Holy Spirit - Remove all barriers and go all in
Jeremiah 29:13**

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General declared loneliness a public health issue, emphasizing its widespread nature and severe consequences. The trend of increasing loneliness and isolation is not unique to the U.S. but is a global concern. Loneliness is a subjective experience; it's the feeling that your needs for connection are not being met, even if you are surrounded by people. While we are more connected than ever before with the rise of online platforms yet we also have a decline in meaningful in-person interactions. Loneliness is linked to increased risks of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

While God did design us, to need one another, people will never be able to fill the “God-sized hole” in every person’s heart. We are so blessed and privileged that we can enter into a daily, real relationship with God not just a religious ideology but a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit daily. You never have to be alone. Three keys to making room for the Holy Spirit every day.

First, let go of fears and misperceptions. Proverbs 3:5 (MSG) *“Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own.”* Making room for the Holy Spirit begins with knowing that we may not know nor understand everything we see and experience. It seems to be human nature to want to understand everything. Be willing to acknowledge that there are things in life that will supersede our ability to comprehend. Making room for the Holy Spirit begins with making room to trust beyond our sight.

Second, go all in. The Holy Spirit is looking for those who are looking for Him. Loneliness can either leave looking on the never ending trail or trying to fill the God hole with other things, or going all in looking for Jesus. As We read above, *“You will find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”*

Thirdly, friendship with the Holy Spirit is the end of loneliness. God the Father loves us, God the Son saves us, and God the Holy Spirit is with us. Hebrews 13:5 - *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”* Making room for the Holy Spirit, means making room to develop a friendship with Him.

Putting the Word to Work

Are there any fears you have regarding the Holy Spirit?

Scale of 1 to 10, where would you rate yourself on being “all in” in your relationship with the Holy Spirit?

October 12

Next Steps - Making room for the Holy Spirit to empower us to live righteously
Ephesians 4:25-30

*25 Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. 26 “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary [h]edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, [i]clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

Yesterday we observed the necessity to make room for the Holy Spirit by removing fears and misperceptions and going all in. Today, notice from our passage, the connection between the developing relationship with the Holy Spirit and the righteous lifestyle. This phrase, “do not grieve the Holy Spirit, is surrounded by righteous living choices. Stop lying, speak truth. Be angry, don’t sin (miss the mark). Stop stealing, put your hands to work so you have something to give. Put away bitterness... instead be kind to one another.

It seems to me that the righteous living is pleasing to the Holy Spirit while unrighteous living is grieving to Him. I have had many conversations with people who seem to assume that if they will live righteous enough they will get the Holy Spirit to be more active in their lives. I think that really needs to be turned around. It seems to me, the more we develop our personal relationship with the Holy Spirit the more our life reflects the righteousness of God.

If you will make room relationally for the Holy Spirit, He will empower you to live in a manner pleasing unto Him. If you do not make room relationally for the Holy Spirit, he is grieved and is in a practical manner unavailable to assist you in your living.

Putting the Word to Work

Have you noticed in your life, that in seasons where you are consistently making room for the Holy Spirit by studying the Word of God, in prayer, in fostering healthy connections to the body of Christ, in living sacrificially for those around you, that right living is easier? If you have never regularly set aside time to meet with God, can I challenge you to make a 40 day commitment to spending time with Him daily and see if right living is more natural for you.

October 13

Next Steps - Making room for the Holy Spirit to empower us to live supernaturally

I Thessalonians 5:16 - 22

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

As a kid, I remember so many times seeing my brother or a friend using a garden hose and trying to sneak up behind them and without them noticing grab the hose and put a kink in it. I was watching and hoping for the moment, the water would stop and instead of looking back at the hose behind them, would turn and try to look down the hose to see why the flow of water was quenched. Most of the time they would turn around and see me, but there were a few occasions when they did just what I hoped and of course I would release the hose and they would get drenched.

As believers I don't think we often recognize the flow of the Holy Spirit into our lives. Think back on your life in the last week, do you honestly think you have recognized and could number/count each and every blessing the Holy Spirit poured into your life? We often do however have a sense of when there is a Holy Spirit flow and when there is not.

I Thessalonians 5 is one of the greatest instructions for keeping the flow of the Holy Spirit open in our lives. Notice how each of the items surrounding the command to not quench the Spirit are attitudinal choices we must make. Rejoice, pray, thanksgiving, not despising prophecy, testing and holding to the good, abstaining from evil. When we make the decision to not quench the Holy Spirit He will empower us to live above and beyond our natural abilities. And I love how Chris Hodges said it, *"Being filled with the Holy Spirit doesn't make me better than you, it makes me better than me."* When we are walking with the Holy Spirit and His "super" is being put upon our "natural" we recognize He is helping us do things we naturally could not accomplish apart from His divine assistance.

Putting the Word to Work

What are some ways that you know and recognize you have been better than you this week?

October 14

Next Steps - Making room for the Holy Spirit to empower us to live on mission

I Corinthians 6:19, 20

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Making room for the Holy Spirit is essential to live on mission. There is a phrase that is often told to children that while coming from the right heart is not something I recommend telling them. "You can be anything you want to be if you work hard enough." While the heart behind it is to encourage children to dream big and not settle for artificial barriers in their minds, the phrase itself is actually a complete lie. Taken to the extreme has led us to a day in which culture is not shouting to our children that they can be any creature they want to be, any gender they want to be, etc. Instead, we need to be teaching our children they can be everything God wants them to be.

We are not the ones charting our own course in history. We were created on purpose, with purpose and for a purpose. The sooner we reconcile the reality that we have been bought with a price and that we owe Jesus our allegiance and our sacrificial efforts, realizing that our only hope of success is to make room for the Holy Spirit to define our mission, develop our strategy and pursue His purpose.

Putting the Word to Work

Do you know and recognize your mission in this season of your life? Here are four steps I share with people in discovering their God-given Holy Spirit led mission. Locally here when I take my kayak out on Cooper Creek I will often see an eagle swoop down and snatch a fish out of the lake. It is not uncommon for someone to be on the bank with a camera looking for an opportunity to photograph one of these amazing birds. In order to capture one, they start with the lens zoomed out as wide as possible, then slowly narrow it in and fix their focus. Using the same approach starting with a wide angle and zooming in, follow these steps.

1. Your mission will always be found inside the great commission. If you are looking for mission and purpose outside of the Great Commission you're missing the point. We are here for God's purpose and His purpose is to establish His kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. It is only inside the great commission that a believer will find his or her mission.
2. Your mission will always be connected to your local church. Jesus said, *"I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16). Find the church God has called you to be in, and plant yourself in it.
3. Serve enthusiastically, join-in, invite people, pray for your church and leadership. Ask God to stir in your heart, what stirs the heart of your pastor until you feel the same urgency as your pastor does to advance the Kingdom of God. We are not called to live isolated, the more we serve in our local church, the more quickly we discover our part of the mission.
4. Keep trying in different areas of serving in your local church until you find your fit. God will often move you in a manner that you did not see coming. These are stretching opportunities and will help you find where the grace of God, the Holy Spirit's involvement in your life is helping you to live on mission beyond your natural capabilities.

Week Two Sermon Notes

Week Two Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Two Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Three

Week Three Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.

Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.

Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.

People I am praying for their salvation.

October 15

Next Steps - We are God's gift to this world.

Psalm 139:14

I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are all His marvelous work. All unique and set apart. God wants to use us & infuse us. As we spend time in His word we get to know the Father's heart. His word is His will for each of us.

- Psalms 19:10 says, *"more to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; they are sweeter also than honey and drippings from the honeycomb."*
- Proverbs 4:5 it says, *"get skillful and godly wisdom, get understanding. Verse 13a, take firm hold of instruction. Verse 20; "My son, attend to my words; consent and submit to my sayings."*
- Proverbs 8:17 *"I love those who love Me and those who seek Me early and diligently shall find Me."*
- Isaiah 55:8, 9 *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. vs.9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."*
- Matthew 11:15 *"He who has ears to hear, let him be listening and let him consider and perceive and comprehend by hearing."*
- Deuteronomy 28:1-14 Describes the blessings of walking in obedience. You are a light, a spokesman. We get the privilege to show them the way.

Allegory of the Rock. One day, Pastor Carl Tiner was walking on the beach and he found a rock that looked just like a barbell. The Lord told him that people would speak to him about the meaning of it. When I heard him say that, I wanted to know what the Lord would say. When Pastor Tiner asked me what I saw when I looked at the rock. I stood it up on its side and said jokingly, it reminds me of a snowman! Then I said, "is the snowblind friend going to see again?"

On the way home, I remembered that a "snowblind friend" was a heroin addict. One who could not get out of his predicament without help. When laying the rock on its side it necked down making like a bridge between the two dumbbells that were on either side. The bridge part was of a darker material like mortar, symbolic of prayer that allows one to cross over from flesh to the other side, the spirit side, leading to life. The Tiners were a bridge, a gift to us leading us into the abundant life.

God has placed you here to be a bridge to help people discover how to walk from the flesh side of life to the spirit side, the abundant life side.

Putting the Word to Work

Do you see yourself as a bridge?

October 16

Next Steps - God Given Temperament

Psalm 139:13-14

“For you formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well.”

Our God-given temperament most likely begins in the womb where we are being knit together and most wonderfully made. There are five basic temperaments. These temperaments could be thought of as a blank canvas. The size shape and style of the canvas that God then also paints on with various creative gifts and characteristics, experiences including things handed down to us by our parents and great-grandparents. My mother was creatively artistic as well as a writer. She enjoyed times alone to do those things as do those of us with a Melancholy Temperament. My grandmother was a wonderful hostess with a large family and circle of friends. There was no doubt there was “Sanguine” in her Temperament as there is in mine.

Pastor Bill allowed me to speak of his Temperament. He was a good part “Choleric,” Which meant that he had the drive and commitment to build a church and a people. His “Phlegmatic” Temperament brings a gift of quiet peace to all other temperaments. Many of us are grateful to have that gift in the mix.

Lastly, is the “Supine”—that quiet server who easily connects to God. Father didn’t leave any of us out, deciding which temperaments and gifts would best serve Him through us.

Putting the Word to Work

Ask the Holy Spirit to make opportunities for you to learn more about your temperament and giftings. He is our Helper, is He not?

October 17

Next Steps - Discovering Our Strengths and Weaknesses

II Corinthians 12:9

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ “

Some years back, my husband and I met with friends of ours who were getting their Masters degrees in counseling. They began by studying Temperaments. To finish their first course, they needed to give ten tests to friends and family. We were part of their ten. They explained that these simple tests would show us our strengths and weaknesses; and that is exactly what those tests did for us.

The test reads out in three parts: Inclusion (surface social relationships); Control (decision making); and Affection (deeper, personal relationships).

My husband scored high with Melancholy in all three areas. That meant that he needed and enjoyed time alone, and that he didn't have much patience for talking about the weather (surface social conversations).

My “inclination” score was similar. I also needed time alone, especially to spend time with the Father. Not enjoying time with “surface talk” was a weakness, because we certainly need to reach out and have conversation with new folks coming in the door of the church.

Our “Control” area was similar, although I did learn that he needed to have cash in his pockets. When Debit Cards came out that problem was solved.

We are very different in the last area and that is “Affection” (deep personal relationships). He is satisfied with having just a few close friends, and I need many.

As I have used these same tests and assessments with many people now I am amazed at how much help it has provided to people to understand themselves and their spouse better based upon discovering our strengths and weaknesses. Many marriage conflicts have been resolved and avoided simply by clearly understanding how God made us to work.

Putting the Word to Work

It is fun to see how our God-given gifts and characteristics compliment and benefit one another. What are your greatest God-given strengths?

October 18

Next Steps - Discovering Purpose - Bearing Much Fruit

Galatians 5:22-25

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Bearing fruit is an expression we use when referring to an individual who is a maturing Christian. In Galatians 5 Paul describes the fruit as attributes that we should exhibit as we mature in our journey with God. They are called "Fruits of the Spirit" and they are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There are nine in total and all are the essence of a Christlike character to which we should all aspire.

When we first acquired our property, I was excited when I saw we had a cherry tree close by our door. I eagerly awaited the arrival of cherries, but to my utter disappointment few came. It happened that hidden disease had taken its toll inside the trunk of the tree and the cherries could not be eaten. We eventually had to cut it down. That was a tree that did not bear good fruit. So, it is with us. On how we pursue the fruit. And the care we take determines the fruit we possess.

In John 15:5-8 [KJV], Jesus explains how this works in us. Verse 5,

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing. 6, If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."

The Word of God explains better than any man can, for it is the Word that brings forth life with abundance. Trust God to do the necessary pruning in your life. The pruning may be painful at times, but being in the Word helps confirm God's intentions and brings comfort to you in the growing season.

Putting the Word to Work

If life feels hard, write out your trial. Then, find Scripture to comfort you. It is there the Holy Spirit will lead you forward.

October 19

Next Steps - Bearing Much Fruit- Pruning

John 15:1-2, KJV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Last year, I married a wonderful Christian man. For the first time in my adult life, I feel stable and secure. With this came some new hobbies I did not expect. One being a fresh love and appreciation for house plants. As I learn how to care for them, I am realizing the importance of pruning them to bring forth a healthier plant. This can be also applied when working on oneself, both spiritually, and physically. Yes, now I am happier than I have ever been, but many people did not see me at my worst. While for years I had to fight for my survival, both in the hospital and through an abusive marriage.

In the Collins English Dictionary, to prune something in a literal context means that you cut out all the parts that you do not need. God had to do that to me, as He pruned me to help me get rid of many negative aspects of my life and character. Many of those old habits were unfruitful, but He eventually replaced them with the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22.) My love and dedication to be more like Christ, along with His faithfulness is how I got to where I am today.

The Topical Bible portion on Bible Hub.com describes pruning the following way: "The concept of pruning is used metaphorically in the Bible to describe God's work in the lives of His people. It is a process of spiritual refinement and growth, where God removes aspects of a believer's life that are unproductive or detrimental to spiritual health."

Oftentimes, as a believer we see the need to change or any stagnation as a negative thing. I am encouraged by now knowing that it is necessary for growth. Afterall, when God reveals something in your life that needs to be removed to lay a new foundation, He is really trying to bless you. For that reason, when He tries to correct an area of your life, that itself is an honor of sorts, as, "For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom He delighteth." (Proverbs 3:12) Today, I urge you to boldly accept any pruning God is trying to do in your life. Only in your dreams, can you imagine all the good He has in store!

Putting the Word to Work

Are there any negative areas in your life God is asking you to let go?

What are some amazing blessings that could come from letting those things go?

October 20

Next Steps - Discovering Purpose

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Cherry trees blossom in the spring and signal seasonal change. In Washington, D.C. the trees are bred for blooms and not for fruit. The blooms are beautiful, but not nutritional.

Citrus fruit is different. Grown abundantly in Florida and California due to their good weather, Citrus fruit varieties include Navel oranges, Valencia oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes, clementines, tangerines, mandarins, kumquats, etc. These types of citrus fruit have similar nutrition profiles, but different tastes and textures, rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Their health benefits include improved immune function, reduced heart disease and cancer risk, and better iron absorption. You may not see it, but you should feel it. God’s natural provision is amazing.

Citrus benefits are similar to a variety of churches that strive to bring salvation to their communities through different programs and styles. Each must offer the Word inspired by the Holy Spirit to be effective. Jesus IS the Word who brings salvation. The fruit of the Spirit will then become evident as the new ones are disciplined in God’s Truth.

Should we evaluate others’ fruit by what we see? Anyone can put on a “good face” when coming to church. But what goes on at home or at work or in the market place is your business and the Holy Spirit’s. Introspection is a good practice for each of us since there is always room for growth. Our goal should be to develop healthy fruit within us, like the benefits of citrus products. We should not just ‘look pretty’ on the outside like the cherry blossoms.

Walk in Light Ephesians 5:8 “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.”

Charles Swindoll said, “I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes.” I heard a phrase in a movie that has caused me to ponder. Here it is for your consideration. “Are you humbly grateful? Or grumbly hateful?” Think about it. Attitude is everything.

Putting the Word to Work

Which one of the 9 listed “fruits of the Spirit” from Galatians 5 do you feel comes easiest to you? Which one is the area you need to work on the most?

October 21

Next Steps - Bearing external fruits

Matthew 7:15-20

*15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.***

How do you know a dogwood tree? By its bark. How do we distinguish between a pear tree, an apple tree or a cherry tree? By its fruit. The visible product of our lives is an outflow of our spiritual lives. We all bear fruit. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the mount that a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree produce good fruit. As Christ followers we ought to take stock of the fruit we are producing. The more we become like Christ, the better the fruit we should produce.

Over the years in ministry observing people I have come to notice a few things, what you see when you look on the surface of a person's life is not as accurate of a description of the heart of that person, than the end result of where they have put their time, energy and efforts is. What do you see when you look at the fruits of their efforts and labors? Jesus describes a false prophet here is known by the fruit he produces. A "ravenous wolf in sheep's clothing." This means the fruit of a false prophet is likely a sheep being beguiled and pulled away from the rest of the flock for the sake of feeding the ugly cravings of the false prophet. A good question to ask when you are working to evaluate yourself or others around you would be, do I or does this person draw me closer to God and to the body of Christ? Is the impact of being around them a greater hunger for the Word of God and to spend time in prayer? Or does their "ministry" highlight problems in other people or in myself and drive wedges between me and the body of Christ?

Putting the Word to Work

Who can you reach out to this week to try to draw closer to God and to the church, the family of God?

Week Three Sermon Notes

Week Three Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Three Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series *(if applicable)*: _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Four to the end of the Month

Week Four to the End of the Month Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.	Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.
Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.	People I am praying for their salvation.

October 22

Next Steps - Discovering purpose - Soul-winning

Proverbs 11:30

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.”

Accepting Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior is not the end of the journey—it is the beginning. As you move forward, your next steps can include the discovery of purpose and the development of belief—two aspects of growth that shape your life to bear fruit for others. Begin by embracing who you are in Christ. As 1 John 3:1 reminds you: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” Your identity as God’s child is the foundation for both belief and purpose. From this place, your faith can deepen, and you can begin to discern how God has uniquely called and designed you.

At the same time, Philippians 2:12-13 encourages you to take active steps in your growth: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Discovering purpose and developing belief is a partnership: you respond, and God works within you, shaping your desires, guiding your actions, and producing fruit that blesses others. Together, these truths show that purpose and belief are intertwined. As your faith matures and your identity in Christ grows clearer, your life naturally extends outward—offering life, hope, and wisdom to those around you. Evangelism flows both from the way you live and from the words you speak, as your rootedness in God enables you to bear fruit that draws others toward Him

Putting the Word to Work

Reflect on your identity as God’s child. How does this shape your understanding of your purpose?

Invite God to show you one tangible way to act on His calling this week—through service, encouragement, or sharing your story.

How can you actively participate with God this week in discovering your purpose and letting your belief produce fruit that points others to Him?

October 23

Next Steps - Serve Intentionally

Mark 10:54

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

When Jesus walked the earth, He lived with purpose. Every word He spoke and every action He took was intentional. He didn’t just stumble into opportunities to serve; He actively looked for them. His mission was clear: to bring God’s kingdom to earth through serving others.

Think about it—Jesus noticed people no one else saw. He noticed the blind beggar sitting by the road (Luke 18:35–43). He noticed the woman at the well who had been rejected by her community (John 4). He noticed Zacchaeus hiding in a tree, desperate for a glimpse of hope (Luke 19:1–10). Jesus’ service wasn’t random—it was intentional. He sought out the lost, the hurting, and the broken, and He met their needs.

Serving intentionally means opening our eyes and hearts to the opportunities God places around us. It’s deciding ahead of time, “Today I will be a servant.” Too often, we get busy with school, work, or our own plans, and we miss what God is doing right in front of us. But when we slow down and ask God to show us where to serve, we start to see the kingdom expand in powerful ways.

Jesus said in Matthew 20:26, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.” Greatness in the kingdom is not about titles or achievements—it’s about how intentionally we serve others in love. If we want to see God’s kingdom grow on earth, it starts with small, daily choices to serve. That might look like encouraging a friend who’s struggling, helping your neighbors without being asked, or spending time with those who feel like they are all alone. When we do these things with intention, we aren’t just being “nice”—we’re joining Jesus in His mission to bring heaven to earth.

Putting the Word to Work

Pray for Awareness: Each morning this week, ask God: “Show me one person I can intentionally serve today.” Then look for that opportunity.

Choose One Act: Plan ahead to serve someone in a practical way—write an encouraging note or volunteer your time.

Reflect Daily: At the end of the day, ask yourself: “Did I notice opportunities to serve today? How did I respond?”

When we live intentionally, our service points people to Jesus. And when people see Jesus through us, the kingdom of God expands one act of love at a time.

October 24

Next Steps - Serve Passionately

Matthew 22:37, 39

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... and love your neighbor as yourself.”

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He didn't hesitate. He said it's all about love — love God fully, and love people deeply. That's what serving passionately is all about. True service doesn't come from a sense of duty or guilt; it flows out of love.

Think about the way Jesus loved people. In Mark 1:40–42, a man with leprosy came to Him, begging to be healed. Lepers were avoided and shunned because of their disease. But Jesus was moved with compassion. He didn't just heal the man from a distance; He touched him. That touch said, “You matter. You are loved.” Jesus' passion for people always came from His love for His Father and His love for others.

When we serve passionately, people can feel the difference. It's not the same as just checking off a box or doing something because someone told us to. Passionate service has energy, joy, and authenticity. It reflects God's heart.

Serving passionately also means pushing past comfort zones. Jesus didn't serve only when it was convenient or easy. He served when He was tired, when He was interrupted, and even when people didn't appreciate Him. Why? Because His passion wasn't about applause—it was about obedience and love.

For us, passionate service might mean choosing to spend time with someone who feels lonely, even if it costs us our own comfort. It might mean helping someone in need even if no one else notices. It might mean giving our best effort in something small because we know God is honored when we do.

At the center of passionate service is this truth: the kingdom of God grows when we love with action. People will experience the love of Christ through the passion we put into our service.

Putting the Word to Work

Check Your Motives: Before serving, ask yourself: “Am I doing this out of love or out of obligation?” Redirect your heart toward God's love if needed.

Stretch Yourself: This week, do one act of service that takes you out of your comfort zone—something that costs you time, energy, or convenience.

Stay Fueled: Spend time in worship and prayer regularly. When your heart is filled with God's love, it will naturally overflow into passionate service.

When we serve passionately, we show the world that God's love is real and powerful. Passion turns simple acts of service into kingdom-building moments.

October 25

Next Steps - Serve Excellently

Colossians 3:23

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

Jesus once told a story about a master who entrusted his servants with money, called “talents” (Matthew 25:14–30). Two of the servants worked hard, invested well, and doubled what they were given. When the master returned, he praised them with these words: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” But one servant buried his talent and did nothing with it. The master was not pleased.

This parable teaches us that God cares about how we serve. Excellence matters to Him. Serving excellently doesn’t mean being perfect—it means giving God our very best effort because He deserves nothing less. It means treating every act of service, no matter how small, as if it were done for Jesus Himself. Jesus modeled excellence in service. When He fed the 5,000, He didn’t just hand out scraps—He provided more than enough, with baskets of leftovers (John 6:12–13). When He healed, He restored people fully, not halfway. When He washed the disciples’ feet, He did it humbly and completely, showing them what excellent service looks like.

For us, excellence means showing up on time, being dependable, and giving our full effort. It means not cutting corners or doing things halfway just to get by. Whether it’s helping at church, serving in our community, or even doing chores at home, excellence honors God and points others to Him.

Excellence also requires consistency. One excellent act of service is good, but a lifestyle of excellent service creates lasting impact. People begin to see Christ’s character reflected in our faithfulness. The kingdom expands when we serve in a way that shows the world God’s people are trustworthy, loving, and committed.

Putting the Word to Work

Examine Your Effort: Ask yourself, “Am I giving my best in the ways I serve?” Identify one area where you can improve the quality of your service.

Commit to Consistency: Choose one responsibility (big or small) and commit to doing it with excellence every time.

Shift Your Perspective: Before you serve, remind yourself: “I’m doing this for the Lord.” Let that mindset push you to give your best.

When we serve excellently, we reflect the character of Jesus, who gave His all for us. And when we give our all to Him, the kingdom of God shines brightly through our lives.

October 26

Next Steps - Giving Intentionally

2 Corinthians 9:7

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Right from the start let's get one thing straight, giving does not always mean money. We can give of our time, our prayers, our possessions and yes, our finances. What do you suppose would happen if we were to tithe our time. What if we gave to God a tenth of a day's time each day? That would amount to approximately two hours and forty minutes a day dedicated to God's kingdom and His purposes each day.

Too often we find ourselves tied up over our finances or the lack thereof. Yes, we are to tithe the first of our income to God's storehouse. We need to stop looking at it as the 10% that we “owe God” and look at the 90% that God allows us to keep. We need to look at tithing not as a burdensome obligation but as a key to the vast riches of God's storehouse. Malachi 3:10 *“Bring all the tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me now in this, Says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”*

When we have brought our tithe into God's storehouse, we have just started the process of giving. We need to ask the Lord when and where we can give of ourselves in the areas of witnessing, serving and helping. How can we better serve the Lord than through our service to the body of Christ. If we were to dedicate two hours a day to God, we can begin to proportion that out in several areas. Prayer should be a top priority as well as study of God's Word to become closer to Him. How about serving our brothers and sisters in Christ. Does someone need a ride somewhere, do they need help around their house, can we be an asset to the pastoral staff of our church, does the church lawn need mowing, are they short of help in the nursery?

Giving needs to be a way of life for a Christian believer. We need to be free from the constraints of financial giving only and be able to expand ourselves into a life of service to God, the Body of Christ, and those others around us.

Putting the Word to Work

Take a moment at the start of each day and ask the Lord where He wants you to give today.

October 27

Next Steps - Giving Passionately

Acts 3:6

“Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”

Peter and John were simply on their way to prayer when the Spirit prompted them to look at a man that had been lying in the same spot the whole time that Jesus had been entering and exiting the same temple. When you give, do not always think in terms of monetary contributions. Be ready and willing to give “What you do have.” That could be anything that is within your jurisdiction.

Peter, with passion and exuberance, reached out and without hesitation yanked this lame man to his feet. God will always reward passion and exuberance based on his Word. If you want to see results when you give, give with passion and exuberantly.

I am reminded of an experience that I had in the area of giving. I found out that a single dad in our congregation was having some real problems feeding himself and his daughter. I picked him up and asked him to help me do some shopping for groceries for a person who was single. I did not know what such a person might buy since I was married and had a family. We went to the market, and he showed me the type of groceries a single guy might buy. We loaded up the cart, and often we picked out two of the items instead of just one. I paid for the items, and we loaded them into a car. I asked him if he would mind helping me deliver them to the guy's house. He was surprised when I drove over to his house and told him that the groceries were for him.

If you have had trouble with giving in the past, ask the Holy Spirit to increase your faith, and give you a passion for giving. God has never failed to reward us for our giving. We have never gone without, nor have we had to miss a meal. God will always reward you for your giving. You will reach a point where you are looking for places to give, just to see how God will come through. Whenever we have a guest speaker at our church, I will give something into their ministry, just to be a part of what they are doing for the Kingdom. The size of your gift does not matter; it is the attitude that you have when you give it. Be passionate!

Putting the Word to Work

You cannot out give God! Whenever you find an opportunity to give, do so with passion and exuberance, no matter how small the gift might be. Remember the widow's mite. (Luke 21:1-4)

October 28

Next Steps - Give generously

Mark 12:41-44

“Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, “Assuredly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury, for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”

Too often we appraise our giving by the amount or size of the offering that we put in the plate on Sunday. In this passage, the poor widow put in the equivalent of a fraction of a penny in today's money values. It is not the size of her gift that caught the eye of the master, it was the size of her heart. She gave everything that she could into the treasury for the use of the priests for the maintenance of God's house. Her overwhelming generosity was the key to her recognition by Jesus.

The story was told of a man that came to his pastor and asked for prayer for his business to prosper. The pastor advised him to begin to tithe on what he had and watch how God would grow his income. He took the advice and began to tithe, and sure enough his business took off. Not too many years later he was a millionaire, and came to the pastor and told him, “It was easy to tithe back when it was just a few hundred dollars, but now it is impossible for me to write a check for such a huge amount of money. The pastor said, let's pray about it. He began, “Dear Lord please reduce this man's income to a point where he will be able to easily give a tithe each month.” The man immediately said, “No, NO don't' pray that for me.”

We need to realize that generosity comes from your heart, not from your wallet. Generosity is defined as “Being kind and generous.” The first part of the definition is being kind. Sometimes just giving someone something is not the generous way to go. We often will have the opportunity to help someone, but what we see as their need is not really what the need is at all. We should always ask the Holy Spirit's guidance when we give. He knows what the person really needs, and sometimes it is a hand up, not necessarily a handout.

Putting the Word to Work

The next time you see a need, pray before you dive right in and try and solve the problem. God may have someone or something else in mind for that person, and you do not want to get in His way. ASK, then be generous with the answer.

October 29

Next Steps - Share the gospel intentionally

Romans 1:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.”

Paul, the apostle, included this bold statement as he explained his intentions to share the gospel with the citizens of the capital of the Roman empire, the seat of power and authority on earth at that time. Because he was excited about sharing the gospel, Paul intentionally made plans to visit the Romans.

Like Paul, we need to boldly proclaim the gospel intentionally. Sadly, many self-proclaimed Christians intentionally avoid sharing the gospel because they feel unqualified, or they incorrectly believe that sharing the gospel is not their responsibility, or because they fear what may happen if they stand up and speak out.

First, to those who may feel unqualified, please remember that all a witness needs to provide testimony is exactly what a witness in any courtroom must promise, and that is to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Your own experiences, expressed in the words you choose will always suffice as eyewitness testimony to the gospel. After he rose from the grave, when Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, He promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would fall upon them and make them His witnesses. On the day of Pentecost, they received the Holy Spirit, and as they opened their mouths, the Holy Spirit spoke through them. Please note the sequence: as they intentionally began to speak, it was the Holy Spirit who gave them the words to speak (Acts 1 & 2). Sharing the gospel is that easy. We intentionally engage, and the Holy Spirit knows exactly what to say through us. It is not a matter of being qualified, it is a matter of being willing!

Second, to those who believe that it is not their responsibility to share the good news, please remember that the Great Commission is not the Great Suggestion! Jesus commanded all His disciples to take the good news into all the world and to share it with every creature.

Third, for those who fear what may happen if they stand up and speak out, please remember that it is the love of God that compels us to take a stand for the gospel and to boldly proclaim the good news. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

The gospel is the power of God. All that is needed is a heart filled with God's love for the lost and a mind that is willing to intentionally share that awesome power with others.

Putting the Word to Work

Q: Make a list of people that you know that need to hear the gospel:

Q: Intentionally begin to pray for each one and listen and record what the Holy Spirit reveals to you about His plans to reach them with the gospel:

October 30

Next Steps - Share the gospel passionately

Acts 18:24-28

“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So, he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.”

Thus, Luke described the effectiveness of Apollos when he arrived in Achaia. What he had lacked in knowledge about the gospel was provided by Aquilla and Prescilla when he arrived in Ephesus, but he had not allowed his lack of knowledge to prevent him from passionately sharing what he did know. Please note that he was “fervent in spirit” and that he “vigorously” debated those who refused to believe that Jesus is the Christ. What a fitting example Apollos is for all of us!

If you will follow his example and allow the compassion of Jesus to flow to and through your heart regardless of what you know or how much you know, you will discover an infinite supply of passion for those who are roaming around lost and drowning in a sea of sin without a relationship with Jesus. Matthew wrote about that infinite supply when he described how Jesus viewed humanity: “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” It is the love of God that provides the passion, all we have to do is tap into that source and choose to allow it to flow through us. The reward is the joy we experience when we unite ourselves with Him in purpose and passion.

“It only takes a spark, to get a fire going.
And soon all those around will warm up in its’ glowing.
That’s how it is with God’s love, once you’ve experienced it.
You spread His love to everyone.
You want to pass it on.

I wish for you my friend this happiness that I’ve found.
You can depend on Him; it matters not where you’re bound.
I’ll shout it from the mountaintop, I want the world to know.
The Lord of love has come to me.
I want to pass it on.”

Putting the Word to Work

Q: Describe your attitude toward the lost:

Q: Intentionally begin to pray for a passion for the lost and explain what happens:

October 31

Next Steps - Share the gospel corporately

Acts 2:42

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Your local church may be the best ally in your quest to win your circle. Luke identified the characteristics of the church shortly after its birth. Then he described their activities and the outcome: “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” The church grew through the proclamation of the gospel in the words they spoke and the way they conducted themselves daily.

The disciples overcame every obstacle and opposition through unity, prayer, and persistence. When troubles arose within the church, the leadership handled the difficulty with honesty, humility, and wisdom. The result: “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

The early church was the template. It was populated with people who worshipped God, prayed, and proclaimed the gospel with boldness. They studied the Scriptures, and applied them personally and corporately, and relied on the Holy Spirit to lead them and empower them every step of the way. If you attend a local church that mirrors the early church, you have an asset that you should utilize constantly.

In our current culture, people will accept invitations, RSVP, and then fail to show up! Promises, promises! People will offer all kinds of excuses for failing to show up. And that is why pastor and evangelist Greg Laurie admonishes his congregation, “Don’t invite people to church. Bring them!” The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has studied the success of their crusades all over the world, and they have discovered that most of the people who respond to the gospel were brought to the event by a friend.

Think of the men who brought their friend who was paralyzed to Jesus, and because they could not get through the crowd, they went onto the rooftop, removed the tiles, and lowered their friend into the room where Jesus was preaching. Think of Andrew who declared to his brother, Peter, I have found the Messiah, and then brought Peter to meet Jesus. Think of the religious leaders who brought the woman caught in the act of adultery to Jesus. Think of the people of Syria who brought desperate people to Jesus.

Putting the Word to work

Write the names of a 2 or 3 people and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal ways you may create opportunities to bring them to church

Week Four to the end of the Month Sermon Notes

Week Four to the end of the Month Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Four to the end of the Month Sermon Notes

Date: _____

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 Pastor Justin Denney
 Camile Ghent
 Ruth Herrington
 Steven Huft
 Gordon Merwin
 Pastor Denny Stahl
 Pastor Brian Vaughn
 Pastor Jennifer Vaughn
 Pastor John Zumwalt
 Pastor Kami Zumwalt

For more information about The Father's House, you can check out our website:

thefathershouseint.org or on Facebook or our YouTube channel. Weekly we gather:

Sunday	9 am & 11 am - Sunday Worship Experience
Tuesday	9 am - Prayer meeting
Wednesday	9 am - Prayer meeting
	5:30 pm - Dollar Diner at 5:30
	6:30 pm - Wednesday Worship Experience
Thursday	9 am - Prayer meeting
Friday	7 pm - Prayer meeting
Saturday	6 pm - Prayer Meeting

You can contact us in the following ways:

Location:	376 E. 2nd Ave in Sutherlin, OR. 97479
Phone:	541-459-2303
Email:	admin@thefathershouseint.org
Mailing:	P.O. Box 427, Sutherlin, OR. 97479
Website:	thefathershouseint.org