



# 25 Days of Prayer

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

WINTER 2024

# Welcome

As week begin the new year, we want to purposely seek God by praying and listening to the Holy Spirit. We will do this as individuals and collectively as a church from January 6th—30th to put God first in this season. We want to set aside distractions to be more intentional about time with God and get clear about what He’s calling us to in the upcoming season. The 25-Day Challenge will encourage you to have heartfelt conversations with God. Throughout the week, we will encourage you to pray to the King of kings, listen to the Holy Spirit, allow Him to speak into your identity, so we can live on mission to accomplish what he has created us to do.

Each day of the challenge includes a reflection from a PCC staff member or Shepherd, relevant Scripture passages, and an opportunity to put what you have learned into practice. We believe if we begin seeking Him first, He will move on our behalf like never before. We will start to see the power of being fueled by prayer and the Holy Spirit impact our congregation. We would love for you and your entire family to fully engage in this 25 Day Prayer initiative.

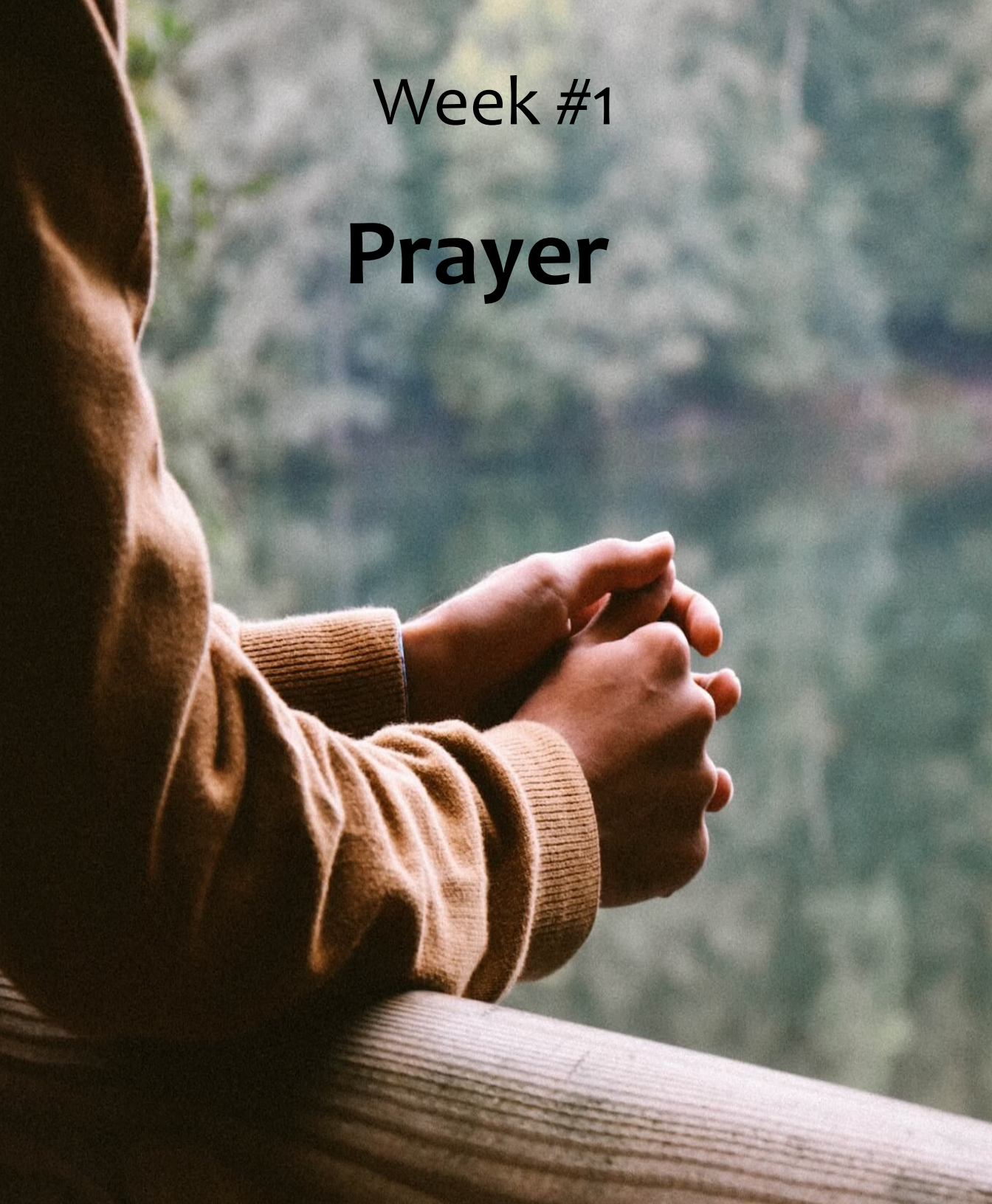
**What is the weekly cadence?** First, do the daily assignments. There is a page set aside for all 25 days. Each day you will read the reflection once, the selected scripture at least twice, answer the four questions and journal how you will put the assignment into practice in your life. Second, attend, or watch the weekend message and take notes. Third, answer the Life Group questions to prepare for your Life Group. Fourth, meet in your Life Group to discuss the daily assignments, Life Group discussion questions and the weekend message.

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Week #1

# Prayer





Simply put, prayer is the way we communicate and commune with God. It's one of the ways we get to know God, spend time with God and grow in our relationship with Him. When we spend intentional and regular time with God in prayer, it opens us up for God to transform us to be more like His Son, Jesus. Prayer also helps us listen to God and begin to recognize His voice so we can follow His leading. And lastly, when we spend time in prayer, God helps us learn to recognize how and where He is at work in the world so that we can join Him in that work. When Jesus' disciples asked Him how to pray in Luke 11, He gave them words to use as they prayed. We can use these same words when we pray as well. In today's Bible reading, we'll look at this prayer that Jesus gave His disciples. This prayer is often referred to as "The Lord's Prayer" or the "Our Father Prayer".

**Read Luke 11: 1-4** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions. You may find it helpful to re-read the verses after each question and spend a minute or two in silence, listening to God after each reading.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

### Practice: Pondering The Lord's Prayer

Spend some time reading the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2-4) Read it once silently. Read it once out loud. Read it slowly and pay attention to any words that stick out to you. Ask God what He wants you to remember from this prayer that Jesus shared with His disciples.

As you go throughout the rest of your day, try to keep the words of this prayer on your heart and in your mind. Consider repeating each phrase in your mind at different times throughout your day. At the end of the day, ask God if there is something from this prayer that He would like you to remember. You might also ask Him if there is something from this prayer that He would like you to practice on a regular basis.

### Journaling Space...

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God cares about the things we care about, and He wants us to ask Him for what we need and want. In Mark 10, when Blind Bartimaeus approached Jesus to be healed, Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” This shows us that Jesus had care and concern for Bartimaeus’ desires and needs. Isn’t Jesus so kind to care about our desire!

Today we’ll read two short passages from the Bible. The first reading picks up where we left off yesterday, with Jesus continuing to teach His disciples to pray. Jesus reminds the disciples that they can ask for what they need. When we come to God asking Him for the things we need and want it is a form of prayer called Petition.

**Read *Luke 11:5-11*, and then *Mark 10:46-52*** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

### **Practice: Expressing Your Desires to God**

Take a few minutes and reread Mark 10:46-52. After you read, close your eyes and imagine this scene in your mind. Imagine yourself in this story. Imagine you are Bartimaeus, and you hear that Jesus is headed your way. Now imagine what it would feel like to hear Jesus approach you and say, “What do you want me to do for you?”. Spend some time sitting quietly with Jesus and imagine him asking you that question. Tell him what you want Him to do for you. Consider taking some time to journal about this experience.

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As we travel on this journey of prayer, God invites us to not just pray for ourselves, but to pray for others and their needs. This type of prayer is called Intercessory Prayer. Praying for the needs of others is a practical way to show love and concern for others.

In our Bible reading for today, we see the story of Moses leading the Israelites into battle against the Amalekites. We'll see how Joshua led the troops into battle, and while they fought, Moses, Aaron, and Hur, interceded for the troops.

**Read *Exodus 17:8-15*** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions. You may find it helpful to reread the verses after each question and spend a minute or two in silence, listening to God after each reading.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice: Intercessory Prayer**

When we think of praying for others, some of us like to make lists to help us remember to pray for certain people and their needs. This can be a very helpful practice for some. However, there is another way to intercede for others with the help of the Holy Spirit. We can simply pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind others that He would like us to pray for. We can even picture those people in our minds as we pray, asking the Holy Spirit to intercede for them. Sometimes the Holy Spirit may bring to mind people to pray for, but we might not know how to pray for them. No need to worry, the Holy Spirit knows how to pray and will pray on our behalf.

As you practice interceding for others, pay attention to what God does in you and in others and take some time to journal about what you notice.

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We live in a broken world. People are broken, systems are broken, and even parts of creation are broken. Living our lives with God and walking with Him daily doesn't guarantee that our lives will be easy. In fact, suffering can be something that God uses to draw us closer to Him. God understands our suffering and promises to always be with us in the suffering.

When we walk through difficult circumstances in our lives, we can be honest with God about the things we are feeling and the emotions we are experiencing. He can handle all of our thoughts, emotions, and feelings. When we offer our honest frustrations, anger, grief, or our disappointment, this is a way of prayer called Lament. As we offer prayers of lament to God, He meets us in our grief and reminds us that we have hope in Him. The Psalms are full of prayers and songs of lament. Through these writings, God gives us permission to cry out to Him in lament. Today, let's take some time to look at one of the Psalms of lament.

**Read Psalm 6:1-10** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions. What stood out to you in these verses?

- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice: Expressing Lament to God**

When we find ourselves needing to express our uncomfortable emotions to God, expressing a prayer of lament may be helpful. Consider sitting quietly with God in a space where you won't be distracted. Begin by taking a few deep breaths in and out. You may want to close your eyes. Take a minute or two to notice the emotions or feelings that you are experiencing. It may be grief or sadness or anger, etc. Try not to judge those feelings or tell yourself those feelings are good or bad. It's ok to be honest and vulnerable with God, He can handle it. Now take a minute to express to God how you are feeling.

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Prayer is about more than just talking to God, it is also about listening to God. God longs to speak with us and He does so in many different ways. Some of those ways include through Scripture, through a word or phrase, through our circumstances, through others that are close to us, through our thoughts, through a picture or vision, and sometimes even through our dreams. It takes some practice to develop the ability to listen and recognize the voice of God in our own lives. Setting aside intentional time to listen to God is an important part of our practice of prayer.

In our Bible reading for today, God speaks to Elijah in an unexpected way, a gentle whisper.

**Read 1 Kings 19:9-15** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

### Practice: Listening Prayer

We live in a noisy world. We have no shortage of information available to us and no shortage of things that can distract us from our relationship with God. If God speaks to us in a gentle whisper, we will likely have to practice quieting the noise around us in order to hear His voice. Taking a few minutes each day to quiet the noise around us and sit in a posture of listening to God is an important spiritual practice. Find a quiet place in your home where you are free from distractions. Express to God your desire to hear His voice and sit quietly and listen. After you finish your time of listening, notice if there is anything that you may have heard. If you don't feel like you heard anything, don't judge yourself, just remember that God will speak when He is ready to speak. If you did hear something, test it against what the Bible says and other trusted spiritual friends. If you clearly heard God invite you to do something, follow in obedience. Consider taking some time to journal about what you might be hearing God say to you.

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As we continue on our journey of listening to God through prayer, we may start to notice patterns or themes in the way God speaks to us or in the things that God says to us. We start to become more familiar with God’s voice and are able to recognize His voice above all other voices. We may even begin to start noticing how God is at work around us. Today’s Bible reading will remind us that Jesus is our Shepherd and we have the opportunity to hear His voice about others, but it does take practice.

**Read *John 10:1-18*** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions. What stood out to you in these verses?

- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?
- What are the moments that you felt God’s Presence with you? When did you pull away from God’s Presence?

#### **Practice: Prayer of the Evaluation**

God is at work all around us, every day. He is working and speaking to us, but sometimes we don’t notice or too busy or distracted to hear His voice. The Prayer of Evaluation is a prayer practice that helps us pay attention to God’s voice and notice how He is working around us. Some find it helpful to do this practice at the end of each day. Others find it helpful to do this at the end of each week. Spend a few minutes thinking back over the last 24 hours (or the last week). Imagine that you are sitting with Jesus and you both are watching a movie of the things that happened in the last day (or week). After you’ve taken some time to remember, notice if there was anything that you would like to change or do differently. What activities, people, moments drew you closer to Jesus? What activities, people, moment drew you further away from Jesus? Is there a particular time or way that I did not exhibit Christ-like character? If so, take time to confess this to Jesus. Ask Jesus to help you know what may have contributed to that situation and what might help you respond differently in the future. Ask Jesus if there is someone He would like you to confess to, apologize to, or follow up with.

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# **Weekend Sermon Notes for Week #1**

## Week 1 Questions for Life Groups Discussions

- Describe your daily conversations with God. What types of things do you routinely pray for?
- Take a minute and remember when you were a child. Did your parents bend down and listen when you talked because you were precious or did they ignore you?

### **Read 2 Kings 18:1 - 19: 37**

- The king of Assyria wrote Hezekiah a letter mocking God and demanding unconditional surrender. (2 Kings 19:10-19) Hezekiah spread out the letter before God and prayed. What do you need to spread out before God this week?
- Do you believe God cares about your concerns and wants to relieve your burdens? How would it change your prayer life if you truly trusted God and were convinced He is willing to bend down when you talk to Him and listen?
- Are you ever tempted to trust your own wisdom, strength, ingenuity or another fallible human being? What will happen to Plymouth Covenant if we rely on our own wisdom, strength, ingenuity or human strategies for the direction of our church?
- What primary lesson we learn from this passage? What if anything would you like to change about your life after reading these verses?

A person wearing a brown sweater is shown from the side, with their hands clasped together and resting on a wooden ledge. They are looking out over a vast, blurred green landscape, possibly a forest or a valley. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Week #2

# Holy Spirit

Without a doubt the Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood member of the Trinity. Often, because of such misunderstandings, false teachings will arise concerning Him. The Bible though, is quite clear in what it teaches concerning the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is neither an “it,” a “thing,” or a mere “influence.” The Bible teaches that the Spirit is a Person having the characteristics of personality, not some impersonal force.

**Read the following verses slowly to understand.**

(1) His attributes – intellect (1 Cor.2:10-11), knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11), mind (Rom. 8:27; Eph. 1:17), Emotions (Eph. 4:30), will (Acts 16:6).

(2) His works – He teaches (John 14:26), He testifies (John 15:26), He convicts (John 16:8), He regenerates (cf. Ezek. 36:25-27; Titus 3:5), He commands (Acts 13:2).

(3) His ascriptions – He is to be obeyed (Acts 10:19-21), He can be insulted (Heb. 10:29), He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30), He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice: Spend time building a relationship with the Holy Spirit.**

Knowing the Spirit as a person means the possibility of deep connection with God who dwells within us. God does not come to us through a lesser, impersonal intermediary. He does not speak to us at a distance and relate to us from far away. Instead, the Father and the Son sent the Spirit, to inhabit us, and bring us into a personal relationship with them.

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Correction is one the Spirit’s major roles. This is a work done in our hearts. It starts with conviction that brings about repentance, not condemnation. Conviction comes in three parts, sin, righteousness, and judgment. Conviction is defined as “the act or process of convincing”. He will convict the world concerning their sin of rejecting Christ specifically and any sin in general. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, a helper who could transform us from the inside out. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

To sin is to miss the target of what is God’s best for us. The Spirit shows us when we are headed down the wrong path.

To be righteous is to be in right relationship with and approved of by God. The Holy Spirit helps us move on to the right path.

Judgment refers to consequences and or punishment. The Holy Spirit reveals the consequences of our choices.

**Read John 16:1-18** slowly to understand. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God’s word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** Allow Him to correct your course

John uses the Greek word “Paraclete” to describe the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This word means someone who comes alongside to render aid or assistance, and can be translated as advocate, comforter, encourager, counselor, or simply helper. Can you think of a time in your own life when you have experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in one of these ways? How do you need someone to come alongside to help you now?

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John Ortberg uses an illustration that may help you understand how to be led by the Holy Spirit. Consider the difference between piloting a motorboat or a sailboat. We can run a motorboat all by ourselves. We can fill the tank and start the engine. **We are in control.** But a sailboat is a different story. We can hoist the sails and steer the rudder, but we are completely dependent on the wind. **The wind does the work.** If the wind doesn't blow, we will sit still in the water no matter how frantic we act.

Transformation is the work of God done with our cooperation. God supplies the power, but we must put up our sails to catch the wind. We must be plugged into the power source to experience the transformation available to us. We can pursue it, but we can take no credit for it.

**Read John 16:1-15** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** The Holy Spirit is always available. We must put up our sails to catch the wind. Our task is to do whatever enables us to catch the wind. How do you recognize the Spirit's voice? The Holy Spirit takes up residence within the believer at the moment of salvation and empowers them to overcome sin and live for God's glory and purposes. However, the Spirit's power can be "turned off" or ignored. Only those who choose to walk with Him have unhindered access to His **strength and guidance.** How do you catch the wind and welcome the Spirit's guidance?

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The Holy Spirit does important work in the life of every follower of Jesus, provided they are open and receptive to His work. Sanctification is the process of the Holy Spirit stripping away our bad habits and helping us become who we were meant to be. Think of it like peeling back an onion. There are layers. Allow the Holy Spirit to transform you from the inside out.

The Holy Spirit:

1. Makes us more like Jesus, so we can become the person God wants us to be
2. Gives us power to witness to people who do not have a relationship with God
3. Reveals God's word to us so we can understand it and do what it says
4. Brings us closer to other believers so we can be unified

**Read John 14:26, Acts 1:8; 4:32, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Timothy 1:7; 3:16, and 1 John 3:2** slowly to understand. You may even want to read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions. You may find it helpful to reread the verses after each question and spend a minute or two in silence, listening to God after each reading.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** Seek to know the Holy Spirit more fully and allow Him to do some incredible work. As we learn about what the Holy Spirit does in our lives we can open up ourselves to Him my prayer is that your heart will be open to Him. Take what you have learned and share it with a friend and help them realize they need more of the Holy Spirit. We can always use more of Him. As you get to know the Holy Spirit more explore His other characteristics and learn about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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Picture for a moment that you are driving in the car with a loved one at the start of a long road trip. You have pressing matters on your heart, a favor to ask, unresolved conflict, questions that require answers, or simply want to hear his or her opinion. With miles of road ahead of you, time is on your side so you lean in and present your request, fully expectant to receive the answers you desire.

But rather than hearing your loved one's voice, you hear instead the melodious beat of the radio, blasting through the speakers and filling the car with the lyrics to your favorite song. You can see your loved one's lips moving and hear his or her distorted words getting lost in the musical pandemonium. The song pulsing through the car is the ultimate distraction.

You are faced with a choice. You can't listen to both.

While this is a lighthearted example, scripture tells us that in the same way that we can hinder hearing other people well, we can hinder our connection to God. We can grieve or quench the Holy Spirit through our sin, disbelief, worry, fear, and unforgiveness.

**Read the following passages Ephesians 4:30 - 32, Psalm 66:18, and James 1:6-7** slowly to understand then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:**

Spend some time reflecting on Psalm 139: 23-24. Ask the Lord to search your heart and illuminate anything getting in the way of you hearing the Holy Spirit's promptings. Wait. Remove distraction. Listen.

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Dallas Willard, in his book *The Divine Conspiracy*, tells us about when he was a child in rural southern Missouri where electricity was available only in the form of lightening. In his senior year of high school, the Rural Electrification Administration extended its line into the area where they lived, and electrical power became available to households and farms. When those lines came by his farm, a very different way of living presented itself.

“Our relationships to fundamental aspects of life—light and dark, hot and cold, clean and dirty, work and rest, preparing food and preserving it—could then be vastly changed for the better. But we still had to believe in the electricity and its arrangements and take practical steps that involved relying on it.

If we pause to reflect on those farmers who, in effect, heard the message, ‘The electricity is at hand!’ turn from your kerosene lamps and lanterns, your iceboxes and cellars, your scrub boards and rug beaters, your human-powered sewing machines.

“The power that could change their lives was now available if they were willing. The power was right there near them. If they were willing to make relatively simple arrangements, they could use it. Strangely, a few did not accept it. They did not enter the kingdom of electricity. Some just didn’t want to change. Others could not afford it, or so they thought.”

**Read Romans 8:5-10 and Galatians 5:18-23** slowly to understand:

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** The Holy Spirit’s power is available to you and to me now. Spend time the rest of the week releasing control of your thoughts, decisions and behavior to the Holy Spirit? How is the Fruit of the Spirit developed? According to Romans where is the battle for control of your life going to be fought and won? How does the availability of the Holy Spirit’s power fundamentally change aspects of your life?

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As followers of Jesus Christ, living by the Holy Spirit isn't some crazy idea or something to be feared. It isn't an antiquated lifestyle that was laid to rest with the writers of the New Testament or reserved for the ultra holy "super saints" of our day. In reality, it is the only way we can actually accomplish anything at all. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to surrender our own wills and ways and live in step with God's desires. It is the Holy Spirit's role to empower the changes that must occur inside of us to live lives holy and pleasing to God.

The Holy Spirit is a gift of God's love for all believers, providing comfort, guidance and conviction. It comes with power and provides wisdom to guide our decisions. It compels us to tell others about Jesus. The spirit indwells us, reflects God's love and fosters unity among believers.

**Read, Romans 5:5, John 15:5, Ephesians 1:13-14, John 14: 26, 1 Corinthians 2: 10-12, Galatians 5:22-23, and Acts 1:8** slowly to understand. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What do you the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have heard?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could

**Practice:** Living by the Spirit

The Holy Spirit can speak through scripture, songs, dreams, and conversations with other Christians. Sometimes the voice of the Spirit feels loud and intrusive, while other times it comes in a whisper. You might hear the prompting of the Spirit during a quiet time of reflection, while going for a walk or run, cleaning the house, commuting to work, or spending time in nature.

Spend time noticing how you hear the Spirit. Reflect on Galatians 5:25. Ask God to speak into every part of your life. Take note of how He responds.

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## Weekend Sermon Notes for Week #2

- Why are so many people nervous or afraid of the Holy Spirit?
  
- What stood out from the message this weekend?

**Read John 16:5-15**

- What do you need more from the Holy Spirit. The power to do difficult things like overcome temptation and share your faith with a stranger or guidance to make good decisions and say the exact right words in a difficult moment?
  
- How does the Holy Spirit guides us into the truth?
  
- Since the Holy Spirit empowers you to do what God commands, what is God prompting you to do that in your human power would be impossible?
  
- What would it looks like for the Holy Spirit to bring Jesus glory in your life this week?
  
- As you think back on all that we've learned about the Holy Spirit, what is the primary lesson you need to implement this week?

A person wearing a brown sweater is shown from the side, with their hands clasped together and resting on a wooden ledge. They are looking out over a vast, blurred green forest. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Week #3

# Identity



Who are you? Great question! Our hope for growth, meaning and fulfillment as Christians is based on understanding who we are as children of God. Our understanding of who we are is basic to what we believe and how we behave as Christians. For most of us we have not understood who we are in Christ or we have not fully believed the truth of who we are in Christ. Because of this, we struggle with our identity as person and as a follower of Jesus Christ. Today's scriptures are outlined from Freedom in Christ ministries.

**Read:** John 1:12 - I am God's child. John 15:15 - As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1 - I have been justified. 1 Corinthians 6:17 - I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - I have been bought with a price and I belong to God. 1 Corinthians 12:27 - I am a member of Christ's body. Ephesians 1:3-8 - I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child. Colossians 1:13-14 - I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. Colossians 2:9-10 - I am complete in Christ. Hebrews 4:14-16 - I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.

**Questions:**

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God's word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:**

When you think of who you are in Christ, your identity in Christ, pray through each of the verses above about your identity and being accepted by Christ and as you pray, insert your name.

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Understanding our identity in Christ is absolutely essential to living the Christian life, the life that God has called you to and who God has created you to be. If you take in the truth about who you are as a child of God, you will experience incredible freedom through the power of the Holy Spirit that is living in and through you. Know that you are secure in Christ. Take a moment and read these scriptures about being secure in Christ as outlined from Freedom in Christ ministries.

**Read** *Romans 8:1-2* - I am free from condemnation. *Romans 8:28* - I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances. *Romans 8:31-39* - I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God. *2 Corinthians 1:21-22* - I have been established, anointed and sealed by God. *Colossians 3:1-4* - I am hidden with Christ in God. *Philippians 1:6* - I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me. *Philippians 3:20* - I am a citizen of heaven. *2 Timothy 1:7* - I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind. *1 John 5:18* - I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

#### Questions:

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God's word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** To know that you are secure in Christ, take each of the above statements about who you are in Christ and pray through each one.

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Our identity in Christ allows us to talk confidently with the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us. Know that God created you for a purpose and know that you are significant, you matter to God! Take a moment and read these scriptures about being secure in Christ as outlined from Freedom in Christ ministries.

**Read** the following passages slowly to understand you are significant. John 15:5 - I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life. John 15:16 - I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. 1 Corinthians - 3:16 - I am God's temple. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 - I am a minister of reconciliation for God. Ephesians 2:6 - I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm. Ephesians 2:10 - I am God's workmanship. Ephesians 3:12 - I may approach God with freedom and confidence. Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

**Questions:**

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God's word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:**

Know that you are significant in Christ, these are truth statements about who you are in Christ. Pray through each one. I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life. (*John 15:5*) I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. (*John 15:16*) I am God's temple. (*1 Cor. 3:16*) I am a minister of reconciliation for God. (*2 Cor. 5:17-21*) I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm. (*Eph. 2:6*) I am God's workmanship. (*Eph. 2:10*) I may approach God with freedom and confidence. (*Eph. 3:12*) I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. (*Phil. 4:13*)

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Christ can set you free from the lies that we have believe about ourselves. If we understand our identity of who we are in Christ, it will set us free to live a full life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Know that have been created for more. Take a moment and read these paraphrased scriptures about who you are in Christ as outlined from Freedom in Christ ministries.

**Read the following passages slowly to understand:** I am the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13) I am the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) I am a child of God (John 1:12) I am Christ’s friend (John 15:15) I am chosen by Christ to bear fruit (John 15:16) I am Christ’s personal witness sent out to tell everybody about Him (Acts 1:8) I am a slave to God, making me holy and giving me eternal life (Romans 6:22) I am a temple – a dwelling place for God. His Spirit and His life live in me (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19) I am a part of Christ’s body (I Cor. 12:27)

Since you are in Christ, every one of these statements are true about you! Continue to remind yourself of who you are in Christ.

#### Questions:

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God’s word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

#### Practice:

- Know that you are significant in Christ, these are truth statements about who you are in Christ. Pray through each one. I am the salt of the earth (*Matthew 5:13*) I am the light of the world (*Matthew 5:14*) I am a child of God (*John 1:12*) I am Christ’s friend (*John 15:15*) I am chosen by Christ to bear fruit (*John 15:16*) I am Christ’s personal witness sent out to tell everybody about Him (*Acts 1:8*) I am a slave to God, making me holy and giving me eternal life (*Romans 6:22*) I am a temple – a dwelling place for God. His Spirit and His life live in me (*I Cor. 3:16; 6:19*) I am a part of Christ’s body (*I Cor. 12:27*).

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If we know and believe the truth about who we are in Christ, we then have the power to resist temptation, to receive conviction for our sin from the Holy Spirit, to resist Satan’s accusations and to experience the forgiveness and joy of Jesus Christ. Take in the truth about who you really are.

**Read** these passages slowly to understand: I am a new person. My past is forgiven and everything is new (2 Cor. 5:17) I am a child of God and one with others in His family (Gal. 3:26, 28) I am a child a God and will receive the inheritance He has promised (Gal. 4:6-7) I am a saint, a holy person (Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2) I am God’s building project, His handiwork, created in Christ to do His work (Eph. 2:10) I am righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24) I am chosen by God, holy and dearly loved (Col. 3:12; I Thess. 1:4) I am an enemy of the devil (I Peter 5:8) I am a child of God, and I will be like Christ when He returns (I John 3:1-2).

**Questions:**

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God’s word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:**

Know that you are significant in Christ, these are truth statements about who you are in Christ. Pray through each one. I am a new person. My past is forgiven and everything is new (2 Cor. 5:17). I am a child of God and one with others in His family (Gal. 3:26, 28). I am a child a God and will receive the inheritance He has promised (Gal. 4:6-7). I am a saint, a holy person (Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2). I am God’s building project, His handiwork, created in Christ to do His work (Eph. 2:10). I am righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24) I am chosen by God, holy and dearly loved (Col. 3:12; I Thess. 1:4). I am an enemy of the devil (I Peter 5:8). I am a child of God, and I will be like Christ when He returns (I John 3:1-2). When you think of who you are in Christ, your identity in Christ, pray through each of the verses above about your identity and being accepted by Christ and as you pray, insert your name.

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As followers of Jesus Christ we need to know and believe the truth about who we are in Christ as we allow the Holy Spirit to help us discern what lies we are believing and replace the lies with truth. Know that you belong to Christ.

**Read** these passages slowly to understand who you are in Christ. Since I am in Christ, by the grace of God... I am now acceptable to God (justified) and completely forgiven. (*Ephesians 1:7*). The sinful person I used to be died with Christ, and sin no longer rules my life (*Romans 6:1-6*) I have been bought with a price; I am not my own; I belong to God (*I Cor. 6:19-20*) I am God's possession, chosen and secure in Him (sealed). I have been given the Holy Spirit as a promise of my inheritance to come (*2 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13-14*).

#### Questions:

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God's word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

#### Practice:

Know that you belong to Christ, these are truth statements about who you are in Christ. Pray through each one by putting your name in the space. Since (your name) is in Christ, by the grace of God... (your name) is now acceptable to God (justified) and completely forgiven. (*Ephesians 1:7*) The sinful person (your name) used to be died with Christ, and sin no longer rules in (your name) life (*Romans 6:1-6*) (Your name) has been bought with a price; (your name) is not my own; (your name) belongs to God (*I Cor. 6:19;20*) (Your name) is God's possession, chosen and secure in Him (sealed). (Your name) has been given the Holy Spirit as a promise of my inheritance to come (*2 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13;14*).

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Know you are righteous and an accepted child of God. No matter what else you have been taught or believe about yourself, your identity in Christ is solid truth! God wants you to accept your identity in Him and live as a child of God should. He wants you to walk in the Spirit and in faith. He wants you to know who you really are in Christ, your true identity.

**Read** the passages slowly to understand:

I am **LOVED!** *John 15:9; Rom. 8:35-39; Eph.2:4-6; IJohn3:1a,4:10,10*

I am **ACCEPTED!** *John 15:15-16; Eph. 1:3-6*

I am free from **FEAR!** *Ps. 4:8; 27:1; 32:7; I Tim. 1:7; I John 4:18*

I have been adopted by God and I am **HIS CHILD.** *Rom. 8:16, 17; Gal. 4:5-7; I John 3:2*

I am totally **FORGIVEN!** *Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:14*

I have been **CHOSEN** and set apart by God *John 15:16; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11; 1 Peter 2:9*

I am **NEVER ALONE!** *Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 13:5*

**QUESTIONS:**

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God’s word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**PRACTICE:**

Know that you are significant in Christ, these are truth statements about who you are in Christ. Pray through each one. Declare the Truth about who you are in Christ: Pray through each one of the above biblical truth statements.

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- Why do most people only post the good parts of their lives and portray their best selves on social media?
- Are you ever tempted to allow other people to tell you who you are? What are the dangers of giving into that temptation?
- What stood out to you from the testimonies this week?

**Read Ephesians 2:10** "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Take a look at the word "handiwork". The Greek word here is actually "poeme." This word literally means "work of art" or "masterpiece." God is saying that you are His masterpiece.

- If God is the artist that created you and His fingerprints are all over you, then who does He say you are?

**Read Matthew 6:19-20**

- What will happen if we allow our identities to be tied to the stuff we have on Earth that can be destroyed or stolen in an instant?
- Where does your worth come from right now?
- What primary lesson did you learn about your identity from your study this week? What if anything would you like to change about your identity?



A person wearing a brown sweater is shown from the side, with their hands clasped together and resting on a wooden ledge. They are looking out over a vast, blurred green landscape, possibly a forest or a valley. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Week #3

# On Mission

If a person's senses are working normally, they can see a small candle flame from 30 miles away on a clear, dark night. They can smell one drop of perfume diffused through a three-room apartment. They can taste .04 ounce of table salt dissolved in 530 quarts of water. They can feel the weight of a bee's wing falling on their cheek from less than half an inch away. They can distinguish among more than 300,000 different color variations. They can gauge the direction of a sound's origin based on a .00003-second difference in its arrival from one ear to the other. These details are tiny sampling of how amazing God made our bodies.

There are people who would have us believe that over millions of years through a completely random process humans came into being. What do the scriptures say about where we come from and why are we here?

**Read:** Psalm 139:1-14 and Ephesians 2:1-10 slowly to understand. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God’s word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:**

The psalmist asks a profound question. "Who are we that God is mindful of us?" and then He answers his own question. We are His creation, created to be in relationship with God Himself. We are fearfully and wonderfully made with infinite care because we matter to Him. We have been given dignity and value and worth. We are also God’s masterpiece who have been given extravagant grace to accomplish His purposes.

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All of us have a desire within us for a life that is meaningful and significant. We have a deep desire to be able to experience it to the full extent of what it was designed to be. There are two approaches to getting the life Jesus is talking about. The first approach is to save your life now. Hold on to what you already have. Hoard it, protect it, cling to it, grasp it. In this approach you take care of yourself and you fulfill your own desires. You are your primary concern. The most important question is, "What's in it for me?" That is one way to live, and millions are living that way today. All of us, at one time or another, do this. The second approach is lose it, or let it go, or release it and pursue the Life God has for you, and move out in dependence upon God regardless of what may happen to you. Following God's calling on your life requires courage to overcome your fears and the willingness to take risks, but it also requires the wisdom to know which risks are worthy of your consideration.

Jesus disciples did not understand His mission or the cost that would be required to follow Him. It was fairly easy to follow Jesus, but Jesus knew that once he got to Jerusalem everything was going to change. His disciples were not ready for the cost. Before He took them on a painful journey, He slowed down and took a moment to bring a group of twelve with him.

**Read Mark 8:31-38**, slowly to understand. You may want to even read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about us as people?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God's word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** The best way to live is to give yourself over to God and devote your life to accomplishing His purposes and participate in what He is doing in the world. You can either, try and fulfill your desires and accomplish your purposes or you can serve God and live to accomplish His purposes.

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God deeply cares about people and He is willing to go to great lengths to find them and bring them back home. When the religious people asked Jesus why he hung out with sinners he told stories about a woman that looked in every nook and cranny for a lost coin, and a shepherd searching so intently for a lost sheep that he left the flock, and a father that celebrated the return of his lost son.

We can live a grand adventure. The all-powerful all-wise God created us with a hunger for risk and adventure. He is not interested in curtailing our freedom or restricting our spirit so He can control us. There is nothing more exhilarating than being a messenger for the God of the universe when someone's eternity hangs in the balance. God made us to participate in something exciting, thrilling, fulfilling, and meaningful. Making disciples is worthy of our time. You can be an authentic witness that genuinely loves people. You can be the instrument God uses to completely transform a person and a family.

**Read Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:14-16, Luke 24:45-49, John 20:19-23, Acts 1:8**, slowly to understand. You may want to even read the verses out loud. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking God to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God's word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** People matter to God and one individual is worthy of your time and energy. Making disciples is the Lord's chosen method. He designed us to share our lives. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-11

Only the gospel removes shame, offers acceptance, provides intimacy and promises hope.

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As Christians, we are called to reach out to people who do not have a relationship with God. It is understandable that we are uncomfortable with the darkness and be careful not to be of the world. However, God has placed us in the world to shine his light into the world.

When we are fueled by prayer and the Holy Spirit and know who we are, then we can move out into a broken world to reflect God’s love to people who matter to Him. It is important that we communicate the message of the Gospel, but the way we treat them is equally important.

**Read Philippians 1:27, Colossians 4:5-6 and 1 Peter 3:15-16** slowly to understand. After you read the verses, spend a minute or two in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand the verses. Then spend some time with God, answering the following questions.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do these verses have to say about your identity in Christ?
- What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do in response to what you have read in God’s word?
- Do you feel like the Holy Spirit is asking you to share what you learned with someone else? If so, who could you share it with?

**Practice:** Shining your light to reflect God’s love. The words we use are important, but the way we treat people makes it possible for them to hear the message. God wants us to walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, make the best use of our time and speak words that are full of grace and seasoned with salt. We must live outwardly and be good stewards of our time, looking for opportunities to share the Gospel wherever we are gently with patience. Whenever we walk in the fruit of the Spirit, we accurately reflect God to others. Paul highlights gentleness in his letter to the Philippians and ties it to the Lord’s return.

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# Weekend Sermon Notes for Week #4

## Week 4 Questions for Life Groups Discussions

- What does it mean to live on mission?
  
- What Stood out for you from the sermon this weekend?

### **Read Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:14-16, Luke 24:45-49, John 20:19-23, Acts 1:8**

- Is Disciple-making simply a suggestion for some people or a command for all followers of Jesus? Why? What difference does your answer make?
  
- When you think of Plymouth Covenant Making and Multiplying Disciples, what are some of your concerns or fears? What are your hopes or dreams?
  
- Broken people can be hard to get to know, bitter from the pain they have received, and difficult to deal with. How do you see past their rough exterior and love people in the midst of their pain?
  
- What would you need to change to live on mission?

# Notes



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