

WEEK ONE

Week One, Day One

*"...Followers of Christ should learn to study God's Word for themselves because, as they study it, the Holy Spirit will open their eyes...and transform the way they think and live. Bottom line...It is the chief way that they will come to know and understand God."
Jeremy, Pastor*

Introduction

Congratulations! You have just taken the first step in developing one of the most beneficial habits that you will ever develop. We encourage you to commit right now to see this journey through to the end. You have obviously made a commitment to learn more about God and ways to follow God's plan for your life. This study is written to help you;

- Experience real life change as a result of having personal Bible study as a priority in your life.
- Take responsibility for your own spiritual growth.
- Gain a strong foundation of Bible knowledge to build on as you grow and mature.

Because this study is designed to help you meet these very specific goals, it is very important that you work through the daily lessons in the order that they are presented. If you miss a day, pick up where you left off so that you don't miss any important information that you will need to build on later. Do not skip ahead! This study will start slow and then grow as the weeks progress. The goal of this study is to help you learn to read the Bible on your own, without an outside guide like this one.

Some tips as you get started...

This study should take about ten minutes each day to complete. Take a hard look at your schedule and decide where you can carve ten minutes out of your day. If possible, pick a time that won't change from day to day or week to week. Consider this time your appointment with God, and don't stand Him up! The ten minute study time is a beginning point; over the weeks this time should grow as you learn to study and spend more time with God in prayer.

Come to your appointment with God prepared to learn. Bring your Bible (a study Bible with concordance if you have access to one), a pencil/pen (and a highlighter if you have one), and a notebook that you can use only for personal Bible study notes.

Meet with God in a private place with as few distractions as possible. Begin your time with God by praying each day to ask Him to clear your mind of distractions. Confess any sin that might get in the way of your hearing Him clearly and hand over to Him any worries that might distract you and cause your thoughts to wander.

Expect great things! God's Word is powerful. Turn in your Bible to Hebrews 4:12 and read the verse at least three times. Think about what you pray God will do in your life in the next few months of study.

Then, spend a few moments in silent prayer.

- Tell God how excited you are to learn more about Him and grow spiritually.
- Thank God for speaking to you through the Bible and ask Him to give you a craving for truth.
- Tell God when you plan to meet with Him every day and ask Him to bless your time together.

Right now, begin preparing for your time with God tomorrow.

- Gather together the items listed in today's reading and put them in the place that you plan to meet with God tomorrow.
- Write down the time that you plan to meet with Him and lay it on top of those items in plain sight.
- Tell someone that you trust about your plan and ask them to check up on you to see if you followed through on your promise to God.

Week One, Day Two

Before we begin, make sure you have your Bible, a notebook and a pen with you. Start the time by asking God to help you stay focused on the study today. Let's get started!

Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines are "the means by which we gain God's perspective and align with His will" and include things like Bible study and prayer. While the Bible talks about, encourages, and even commands us to practice many of the habits that we consider spiritual disciplines, it doesn't give us a definite list of spiritual disciplines to follow and does not actually use the term spiritual disciplines.

Over the years, many believers have used the Bible to put together a list of habits that they consider to be the most important to the spiritual development of followers of Christ. Over the next few days, you will learn about a few of these spiritual disciplines that we consider the most basic and most important to your personal spiritual growth. They are:

- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Connection with a local church
- Worship

It's important that you make these spiritual disciplines a priority in your life. They are the gas in the car of your faith and will help you get where you want to go spiritually. Without them, you are spiritually stalled right where you are and may begin to roll backwards, if you aren't careful. Don't let that happen! Great things are ahead of you.

Write today's date and the title of today's study in your notebook. Write the references of the verses that we read and the answers to the following questions there.

Read 1 Timothy 4:7-9.

Look at verse seven. What is God telling you to do?

Look at verse eight. What promise do you find in this verse?

Do you have any spiritual goals? Think for a minute about what you would like God to do in your heart and life. Write down this spiritual goal.

Keeping today's verses in mind, how do you think that you will reach this goal?

Pray:

- **Read your spiritual goal out loud to God and ask Him to show you His spiritual goal for you as you study His Word in the days ahead.**
- **Promise to train spiritually by making the spiritual disciplines a priority in your life.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

(This section is for those who want to learn more about the day's topic and further practice their Bible study skills.)

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. How is spiritual training different from other training you may have experienced? Which is more important? Why?

Week One, Day Three

Ready? Get your materials together, and let's dive right in. Date and title today's study in your notebook.

Bible Study

Some people hear the word "study" and cringe, but studying the Bible is more exciting than many other types of study that we do because what we learn from it has the power to change our lives and the lives of those around us. It teaches us about our creator, the secrets of the universe and the purpose of our life...real stuff, important stuff, stuff that we can actually use for the rest of our lives!

Read Matthew 4:1-4 and Psalm 119:105. (Don't forget to write the scripture references down and your answers to the questions below in your notebook.)

Think about these two verses for just a moment. Why is it important to study the Bible?

Just so you know, reading the Bible and studying the Bible are two different things. We read the Bible to hear truth. We study the Bible to swallow truth and draw strength from it like food.

Pray:

- **Thank God for the Bible and for loving you enough to give you a road map for your life.**
- **Ask God to help you want to really study your Bible.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Read Psalm 119:105-112.

In general, how would you describe the writer's attitude toward God's Word? What can you learn from him?

Write down a verse that stands out to you from Psalm 119:105-112.

Week One, Day Four

Feeding Yourself

Like food, God's word is meant to be chewed, swallowed, and used. We need it like we need food, but many believers are content to have one or two meals a week (Sundays and Wednesdays) and to eat those meals from someone else's hand (in the form of a lesson or sermon) like a toddler who can't handle a spoon yet. No wonder so many Christians are weak in their faith. They have starved themselves. It's really very sad because it's not hard to learn how to handle "the spoon" of personal Bible study and get truth for yourself.

During the course of this year, we are going to teach you how to feed yourself spiritually by introducing you to three different Bible study methods. They will be your eating utensils. We will start with the simplest and move to the more challenging. By the end of this year, you can be skilled at using each and then you can choose which method to use in order to get the most out of your personal Bible study. You may even choose to use all three in one sitting, just as you might use a spoon, fork, and a knife in a single meal. Sound good? Let's begin.

The "God Follower" method of Bible study is made up of just two simple but powerful questions that can be asked of any passage of scripture:

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about how to follow God?

Let's practice this method.

Read Matthew 4:1-4. (Got your notebook handy?)

You read this verse yesterday and answered a question about it. But, you will learn that each time you read a passage from the Bible, God can continue to teach you new things.

Let's find out by using the God Follower method of Bible study. (Try to answer the following questions on your own before looking at the possible answers.)

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about how to follow God?

Possible answers:

1. *This passage tells me that every word that God speaks is important, and that God is the source of what I need to live.*
2. *This passage tells me that, as a follower of God, I should consider God's word to be at least as important as food and depend on God's word for guidance and life. It also tells me that God's word is important when I have temptations to do things wrong.*

Your answers may be worded differently, and you may have gotten a bit more or less information from your study of this passage. Don't be concerned. The important thing is that you to concentrate on the scripture and to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Be careful not to read anything into scripture that isn't there, or to overlook what may be uncomfortable for you to think about.

Did you find that there was more to be learned in this verse than you originally thought? If so, then you have taken a step toward feeding yourself spiritually. You are beginning to understand what people mean when they tell you to "dig into God's Word." True Bible study is like eating an apple down to the core or getting the last bit of meat off of a bone. It requires effort, but it pays off!

Pray:

- **Thank God for speaking to you today. Tell Him what you learned and how you plan to use it.**
- **Ask God to help you learn to hear His voice more clearly and to continue to get better at understanding what you read in the Bible.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Read Psalm 119:73. Practice the "God Follower" method of Bible study on this passage and thank God for what He teaches you.

Week One, Day Five

Digging In

You can use the God Follower method of Bible study to study both individual verses and longer passages of scripture as a whole.

Let's practice doing both by taking a look at a passage within Psalm 119. We will start by asking the God Follower questions of just one verse within the passage and then ask the same questions of the passage as a whole.

Read Psalm 119:97. (Don't forget your notebook!) Use the God Follower method of Bible study to study this verse. (Make your own notes in your notebook, before you read the "possible answers" below.)

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about how to follow God?

Possible answers:

1. *This passage tells me that God gave us the Bible and that it is good.*
2. *This passage tells me that God's truth should affect me all day long.*

Now read Psalm 119:97-104. Think about this passage as a whole for a minute or so and try to get a feel for the overall message. Answer the God Follower questions about the passage as a whole.

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about how to follow God?

Possible answers:

1. *God gave us the Bible to make us wise and to protect us.*
2. *If I love the Bible and concentrate on what it teaches, it will help me become wise. Knowing the Bible will allow me to understand life even more than people who are older than me who do not study the Bible. The truth of the Bible will protect me from evil and from making dumb mistakes.*

Compare the answers that you got from reading one verse to the ones that you got from reading the passage. How are they different?

Does it help to look at the verses surrounding an individual verse that you may be studying? How?

Now, let's move backwards. On your own, practice the God Follower method on one of the other individual verses (not verse 97) within the same passage:

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about how to follow God?

How are your answers different from the answers that you gave over the passage as a whole?

Does it help to stop and take a closer look at the individual verses within a longer passage you may be studying? How?

Pray:

- **Thank God for the Bible and the edge that it gives you over your enemies.**
- **Ask God to teach you how to use His word to fight temptation.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Read Psalm 119:113-120. Using the God Follower method, study the passage as a whole first, and then study an individual verse within the passage.

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: 1 Kings 2:1-4, 3:3-15.

This is just part of the story of King Solomon. Use the God Follower method to study these passages of scripture and see how the truths that you have learned in Bible study this week play out in the life of Solomon. How essential is God's Word in a life that really counts? Do you treat it that way?

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WEEK TWO

Week Two, Day One

“When I really let God speak to me and apply the Bible to my life, I start to hear God's words come out of my mouth in place of my own, and He says things a lot better than I ever could!”
Jordan, High school senior

Taking Bites

Any time that you sit down to study your Bible, resist the temptation to find the quickest or most obvious answers to the questions that you ask just so that you can be finished and move on to other things. As you've learned from Psalm 119, studying God's word is the key to becoming a successful follower of Christ and living a life of meaning and joy. Many people want to grow in Christ or change their life direction; but few people want to actually get their face and their mind into God's word so He can work in their heart.

So, how do you know whether you have studied enough to change your life? That's a tough question to answer. Only God knows what He wants you to learn during your Bible study on any given day, and only you and God know whether you gave your study your full attention and best effort. The key is submitting yourself to God's leadership as you study the Bible so that when you discover truth in God's word you evaluate how it applies to your life.

Usually, if you have studied well and done your best to apply the Bible to your life, you will come away from your time alone with God with a sense of having learned or experienced something significant. Whether you feel convicted or inspired, you will know that you have taken a bite of truth and given your heart and mind something to chew on all day long.

Let's experiment...

Read Psalm 119:58-60. (Notebooks ready!) Use the God Follower method of Bible study with this passage just as you have been.

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about how to follow God?

Look at your answers. Could they be more specific? For instance, instead of answering the second question like this, “I need to seek God with all my heart,” you could be more specific and say something like this, “I will go to church, read my Bible, and listen to lessons and sermons closely so I can learn more about God.”

Use the God Follower method again using the same passage. This time, try to be more specific, especially in your answer to the second question.

By answering the questions listed in the God Follower method carefully and specifically, you develop a sort of “game plan” for your own life that you can begin following immediately when you get up from your study time.

What will you take away from your study today? What's your game plan? Have you given yourself something to think about through the day?

Pray:

- Ask God to give you a heart that wants to hear His commands and obey them.
- Ask God to teach you what it means to seek and follow Him.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Use the God Follower method to study 2 Timothy 2:15. Concentrate and give your best effort, being as specific in your answers as possible.

Week Two, Day Two

Chewing

Now that you know how to study your Bible without help, let's talk about what you do with what you've learned.

In order to digest a bite of food, you have to chew it. To get all of the truth from a passage of scripture, you have to meditate on it. Many religions promote meditation, but the kind of meditation that God tells us to do is different than any other. God doesn't want you to empty your mind to think about nothing or to concentrate on words spoken by man. He wants you to meditate, or think about, His Word, the Bible, as you go about your day, allowing your mind to explore what you have studied and see how you might apply it as you go through your day.

Though you should meditate on God's word all the time, always keeping it on the desktop of your mind, it's important to set aside time to be alone with God. There's something about sitting still and listening quietly as you think about God's word that makes it easier to hear the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.

Sometimes, the bite of truth that you have taken in your Bible study time is just too big or too important not to take additional time at some point during your day to just sit quietly and chew on it awhile, waiting for God to explain it to you. Sometimes, you need to sit and wait for God's direction and guidance, and sometimes, you just need to talk to God and wait quietly for Him to comfort you by reminding you of the truth as you've read it in the Bible. Remember, reading the Bible is not like reading any other book. The goal of reading the Bible is not to finish the story; it is to know God and how to follow God.

From this point until a new method of Bible study is introduced, please use the God Follower method of Bible study when told to "study" a certain passage of scripture.

Study Psalm 5:3; Psalm 1:1-2.

Pray:

- **Thank God for speaking to your heart through the Bible.**
- **Ask God to remind you of what you studied today as you go about your daily routine so that you can practice meditating on His word.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Psalm 139:23-24.

Week Two, Day Three

Getting Stronger

As we discussed yesterday, it's important to find time to be alone with God so that He can explain His truth to you, comfort you, and guide you. Most often, God will do these things by reminding you of things that you have read in the Bible. You stand a much better chance of being able to hear God's voice clearly and making sense of what He is doing in your life if you memorize scripture. Each time that you add a verse to your memory bank, it's like adding words to the vocabulary that you and God use to communicate, and it deepens your relationship with Him.

Let's face it; you will not have your Bible open all the time in your hand for quick reference. When you choose not to memorize scripture, you choose to face life unarmed and you will fail more often than you would if you had taken the time to pack the verses that you need the most in your mind.

God Follower Study Proverbs 3:1-6.

CHALLENGE

Let's see if you can memorize just one verse per month throughout the course of this study. Not too hard, right? Not at all.

Let's start with Psalm 119:11. Read over it a couple of times and then write it down on a piece of paper. Hang that piece of paper where you will see it several times a day (on a bathroom mirror, by your bed, in your car, etc.).

Every time that you see it, read it. Practice saying it from memory a phrase at a time until you can say the whole thing at once without looking. Whether it takes several days or just a few minutes for you to memorize a verse, the important thing is that you are arming yourself against the enemy and taking steps to make sure that you live a life that pleases God.

See if you can find a scripture memory buddy. At the very least, let your friends or family quiz you on what you have learned. You will find it easier to stay motivated when someone else is checking up on you.

Pray:

- **Thank God for giving you the Bible so that you can be a successful follower of Christ.**
- **Commit to begin memorizing scripture or to continue to add to the scripture that you have already memorized.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Romans 12:19-21. Notice how Paul quotes scripture when he writes to the church in Rome? Wouldn't it be helpful to have scripture handy like that when you need it?

Week Two, Day Four

Using What You've Learned

God Follower Study Matthew 4:1-11. If an individual verse within this passage stands out to you, study it again after you have handled the passage as a whole.

Pray:

- **Thank God for equipping you (giving you what you need) to face temptation and win.**
- **Ask God for the strength to use the weapon that He has provided when you get the opportunity to do so.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study 1 Peter 3:8-12. Notice how Peter, like Paul, quotes scripture to prove a point? Why is it important for anyone who wants to lead others spiritually be able to apply the Bible to his/her own life first?

Week Two, Day Five

Keeping Track of God's Activity in Your Life

As you continue to grow in your relationship with God, it is smart to keep track of God's activity in your life so that you can stay focused on following Him and take encouragement from the change that He has already brought in your life. Journaling is one way, if not the best way, to keep track of God's activity in your life.

Journaling may sound tedious and boring, but it doesn't have to be that at all. Your journal is just that, your journal, and you can choose to use it as little or as much as you want to use it. Your journal may include any one or all of the following things:

- A list of prayer requests and the dates/ways God has answered them.
- Notes from your personal Bible study time (which you have already been doing as a part of this study in your notebook).
- A list of scripture to memorize.
- A list of questions that you hope to answer in future Bible study.
- Any personal thoughts/comments that you may have about what is happening in your life.

As you continue to journal, you will discover what type of journaling works for you and what weighs you down or discourages you from wanting to study your Bible. You may even discover ways to journal that are not listed above.

Some people consider journaling to be a spiritual discipline, while others do not journal at all. We encourage you to try to keep a journal, in some form, as you continue to follow this study so that you can discover from personal experience whether journaling might serve as a valuable tool in your spiritual growth. Those who journal have found the habit to be helpful in many ways. Here are a just few:

- As a reminder of God's faithfulness in the past.
- As a guide in decision-making. By looking at where God has led in the past, you may be able to better determine where He is leading now.
- As a prayer/scripture memory guide.
- As a place to record personal thoughts/questions that may never be spoken out loud.
- As a means of watching the change that God has brought in your heart over time.
- As a source of accountability for the commitments that you have made.
- As a resource for encouraging others
- A place to write down what God has said to you

The key to journaling is to remember that your journal is for your eyes and God's only. Don't ever write to impress others or to impress God. (What's the point? He knows you better than you know yourself.) Your writing doesn't have to be any more readable or detailed than necessary for you to make sense of it later on.

That said; let's take a look at why it is important to make an effort to keep track of God's activity.

Keeping in mind today's discussion on journaling, study Hebrews 11:29-12:1-3 as a whole and Hebrews 12:3 as an individual verse.

Pray:

- **Look back over the journal that you have kept so far in this study. Thank God for specific things that He has taught you.**
- **Thank God for the encouragement of His activity in your life and the lives of others that you are able to read about in the Bible.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Psalm 77:11-12.

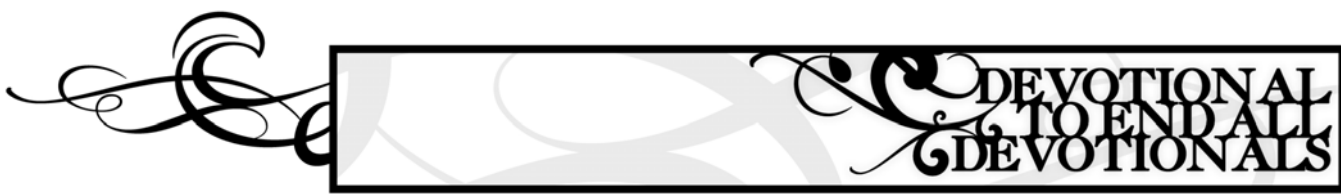
The Weekend

Suggested Reading: Joshua 24:1-27.

This is just part of the story of Joshua. As you study this passage, consider the importance of accountability in the life of a child of God who truly wants to live the way that God wants him/her to live. Why is it so important? Try to think of ways that you can build accountability into your own life.

Be sure to practice your memory verse!!!

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WEEK THREE

Week Three, Day One

Prayer

Prayer is “two-way communication with God” and is one of the most basic and important spiritual disciplines. In scripture, Jesus is the best example that we have to follow when learning how to pray. He not only teaches us what to pray, how to pray, when to pray, and where to pray, but He models the correct attitude to take both when praying and when receiving an answer from God.

Let’s take a look at the most recognized prayer that Jesus prayed, what we commonly call “The Lord’s Prayer.”

For now, just read Matthew 6:5-13.

Notice that Jesus describes His prayer as a model to be followed, not necessarily a script to be repeated, although it is perfectly acceptable to repeat Jesus’ prayer if your attitude is sincere and you speak the words from your heart.

Over the years, believers have also developed other useful prayer guides. One of those is the “A.C.T.S.” acrostic.

- A Adoration (Talking about God’s character, majesty and power)
- C Confession (Admitting to God our sins)
- T Thanksgiving (Being grateful for what God has done in our life)
- S Supplication (requesting something of God)

Notice any similarities between the ACTS acrostic and the Lord’s Prayer?

By praying through the acrostic, a believer can be more thorough in their sit-down prayer time. Sometimes when you sit down to pray, you focus on just one area of prayer (like supplication or confession) and forget to be grateful and remember God’s power and majesty. The ACTS acrostic helps keep your prayer more balanced as you learn to pray. However, many times shorter, more casual, prayers that we pray throughout the day (over a meal, before a test, when you are upset at someone) seldom include more than one or two of the areas of prayer listed in the ACTS acrostic prayer guide and that’s just fine.

Because every day is new, the content of your prayers will vary from day to day. Some days, you may be full of questions for God. On other days, you may just need to vent to Him about the things that you are going through. Sometimes, things will be going so well that all you want to do is give God compliments and thanks. As long as you approach God with the attitude illustrated in Jesus’ prayer, there is really no wrong way to pray. The important thing is that you pray.

Pray:

In your prayer time today, follow Jesus’ prayer as a framework for your own thoughts or practice following the ACTS acrostic as a prayer guide.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Matthew 6:9-13 as individual verses.

Week Three, Day Two

Submission in Prayer

God Follower Study Matthew 26:36-44, focusing on Jesus' attitude, actions, and words.

Pray:

Use one of the prayer guides we have discussed to pray as you feel led and include the following:

- Ask God to be honored by your prayer.
- Ask God for the courage to put your will aside in exchange for His will for your life / day.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Matthew 6:5-8.

Week Three, Day Three

Praying with a Humble Heart

Study Luke 18:9-14, keeping in mind what you learned yesterday.

Pray:

Keeping the prayer guides we have discussed in mind, include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to remind you of His perfection when you pray.
- Ask God to give you a humble heart.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Week Three, Day Four

Praying God's Will

Study John 14:13-14.

As we have discussed, when studying the Bible, it's important always to look back on what you already know to be true and to continue to build on that. When people remove a passage of scripture from the rest and try to interpret that passage without considering the rest of God's word, they fool themselves and others into believing things that are false. The Bible always builds on and reinforces itself. It is a unified whole that must be studied that way.

At first, today's passage seems to promise that God will do anything that we want Him to. Now, using your journal, look back at the other scripture that we have read this week. Consider what you learned from those passages and take a fresh look at today's passage.

Who is Jesus really talking to? What kind of prayer is He promising to honor?

Look at John 14:13. It's important to note that the phrase "in my name" is more than a good luck charm or catchy phrase that you can add to the end of your prayer ("In Jesus' Name, Amen") to try to make God respond the way that you want Him to. In Jesus name means "as my representative." When you pray it, you are saying, "To the best of my knowledge, I believe that what I just prayed is consistent with what Jesus would have me ask and say."

Now read John 14: 12-14.

See what a difference it makes just to back up and read one more verse than before?

The Bible is our weapon against evil and should be handled carefully. Those who don't study their Bible, meditate and test what they have learned are like children running with knives.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- **Commit to pray according to God's will, not your own.**
- **Thank God for being more than a genie in a bottle to do whatever you want, when you want it.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Matthew 21:21-22.

Week Three, Day Five

God Answers Prayer

To review, prayer is "two-way communication with God." God answers prayer. It is up to us to wait, watch, and listen. You will never pray a prayer that God does not hear. But, often our timing, our request or our desires are not God's timing or path for us.

Study Psalm 91:14-16; Psalm 130:2-6.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- **Praise God for His faithfulness in answering prayer.**
- **Ask God to bring your desires in line with His and to help you respond appropriately to His answer to your prayer.**

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: 1 Samuel 1.

This is the story of Hannah, a woman with a very specific prayer request. As you study this passage, think about how the story relates to what you learned this week about prayer. What can you learn from this woman?

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WEEK FOUR

Week Four, Day One

Connection with the Church (The Body of Christ)

The church is made up of all believers everywhere. Together, we are the “Church” that Jesus refers to in scripture. However, because we are so spread out, and there are so many Christians, it is impossible for all of us to get together in one place and create tight-knit community. So, we meet in smaller groups in the form of the local church body. You probably have several churches in your town, but God has placed you in one particular church so you will have a place to learn and grow with other believers.

Because God intends for us to function as a whole, participation in the local church body is a spiritual discipline essential to the spiritual growth of all believers. No church is perfect, but God takes your responsibility to your local church body very seriously, and so should you. You have a job to do in your local church, there is a reason that God put you in that church.

Study 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27, Romans 12:4-8.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- **Thank God for His church and the privilege of being a part of it.**
- **Ask God to deepen your commitment to His church.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Acts 2:41-42.

Week Four, Day Two

Community

Community is “a cooperative spirit or kinship shared by a group of people.” Community is a connection with others that is deeper than just knowing their name or where they live. God never intended for you to “attend” church, His design was “community.” God’s plan was that you would have connection with other people that know Him. If you think church is about showing up or attendance, you have missed God’s purpose.

Study Acts 2:46-47.

Think for just a moment about our culture, our schedules, our games, our gadgets, our goals, etc. What keeps us from having the kind of community that God intends for us to have?

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- **Ask God to show you the importance of spending time with the other members of your church (of all ages).**
- **Ask God to give you a desire to invest time in your church relationships.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Ephesians 3:20-21.

Week Four, Day Three

Service and Giving

Study Ephesians 6:7 and Matthew 20:25-28.

Include in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for the way that He has blessed you. List some of the ways in your notebook.
- Ask God to create in you a generous heart.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Acts 4:32.

Week Four, Day Four

“Without discipleship, there is no such thing as a healthy church... Jesus Himself modeled the importance of mentoring and discipleship. He didn’t hold classes or take people through a curriculum. He lived and taught life to his disciples on a daily basis. He poured into their lives and then expected them to do the same for other disciples...I believe everyone needs a Paul in their life who will challenge them to grow in their faith....” Bill, Pastor

Discipleship

Discipleship is “the training that one follower of Christ receives from another” and can be a very beneficial part of believer’s spiritual growth process. Everyone should have a spiritual mentor, a “father” or “mother” in the faith, and everyone should invest in someone younger in their faith, a son or daughter in the faith. Who has trained you and who is training you? Have you ever considered training someone younger in the faith than you? You are starting to learn more and more about the Bible and church, maybe it is time to consider passing down what you have learned.

Study 2 Timothy 2:1-2 (written by Paul to Timothy) and Colossians 3:15-16.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- If you don’t have a spiritual mentor, ask God to send you one. If you do, ask God to bless them and to give them wisdom as they train you up in your faith.
- Ask God to allow you to influence the life of a younger believer and to give you the wisdom and integrity to be a responsible mentor.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study Titus 2:1-8, 15.

Week Four, Day Five

Evangelism

Evangelism is “the sharing of the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ.” All followers of Christ are to be evangelists and share the gospel with others on a regular basis.

Study 1 Peter 3:15 and Matthew 10:19-20.

Now study Matthew 28:18-20.

Jesus knew that twelve disciples could only reach so many people with the gospel. He knew that they would need to train new believers to share the gospel like they did in order to multiply their efforts. That’s why he told them to take the time to disciple new believers (teach them what they needed to know). He knew that the disciples’ trainees would have opportunities to take the gospel into places that they His disciples would never be able to go themselves.

Evangelism is a group effort. As a follower of Christ, you have a responsibility both to your brothers and sisters in Christ and to those who don’t know Christ yet to share the gospel. It’s not right to depend on others to do your job. If you don’t know how to share the gospel, find out how. And when someone invites Jesus into their heart, don’t leave them to fend for themselves. Help them teach others how to do what you did for them. It really doesn’t matter how many people are on your team if only a handful of them show up to play, does it?

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- **Thank God for the person(s) who took the time to share Christ with you.**
- **Ask God to give you the chance to share Christ with someone this week.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study 2 Timothy 4:5.

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: the book of Jonah (it’s not very long at all)

This is the story of Jonah. As you study this short book of the Bible, consider how Jonah’s story relates to what you learned this week. What do you have in common with Jonah? What can you learn from his mistakes? How seriously does God take our obedience to Him?

How is your scripture memory coming along?