



WEEK SEVENTEEN

Week Seventeen, Day One

Representing Jesus

Your life has been changed by God. Most people are not spending time today reading the Bible and asking God to lead them, but you are. In fact, you have spent more time in the Bible the past few months than many people do their entire life. You are learning more and more about the God who made you and is changing you.

As a follower of Christ, you are His ambassador, His representative to the world. Every day, your life paints a picture of Jesus for the world to see. Your words, attitudes and actions either paint a clear and accurate picture of Jesus that draws people to Jesus or your life will paint a lie that could push people away. If you are going to represent Him well, you've got to know Him well.

Study 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to use you in the lives of those around you.
- Commit to make His name famous.
- My family Monday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Ephesians 6:19-20

Week Seventeen, Day Two

What You Were Meant to Do

Though every follower of Christ is an ambassador, you are not an ambassador to every person on the earth, doing every ministry on earth. Each Christian is assigned his or her own ministry and ministry zone. Usually, that ministry zone is the place where you now live and breathe, and your focus is the people who are already a part of your life. Sometimes, though, God assigns you a ministry outside of your normal routine of life. Either way, God has given you a specific set of gifts, talents, and abilities to do the ministry that He has given you to do.

People sometimes make ministry sound like a mysterious or prestigious pursuit. But, ministry to others is nothing more than giving God's love to others as He gives you the opportunity. True ministry is not fancy and flashy and it rarely gets your name in the paper, but it is real and eternal and more worthwhile than anything else you will ever do.

As ministers, we serve according to God's will and rely on His power to guide us at the right time. His power brings results in the lives of other people. Ministry is allowing God to use your life in their life for His glory. When you understand that simple truth, you stop being focused on yourself as you care for other people.

Study 2 Corinthians 3:1-6, 4:1-7.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to give you a vision for your personal ministry zone.
- Commit to rely on God's power alone in ministry so that you don't get too proud of yourself.
- Your Church...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Acts 16:6-10

Week Seventeen, Day Three

Quote:

“I don’t know what God wants me to be when I grow up, but I know that He wants me to obey Him. Right now, that means being a good example where I am in the way I talk and act and the way I am with my parents and teachers.”

Josh, middle school student

Running Your Race

As followers of Christ, we all have a race to run (a life to live) that has been laid out for us by our Heavenly Father. Each and every step in your race is an act of obedience, taking you one step closer to God and one step further away from self. Disobedience causes you to fall behind in reaching your goal, maybe even taking you off course, which is a scary and lonely place to be in life.

Though we are all trying to live a life of obedience that will please God, each runner’s course is unique. Each life is made up of specific events, tasks, and ministry goals chosen by God for that specific runner. No person’s life looks exactly like anyone else’s life. When we understand this fact, it keeps us from getting jealous of each other or competing with each other. Instead we want to help each other along instead of knocking each other down.

Study 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to give you an intense desire to complete the race that He has laid out for you in a way that pleases Him.
- Commit to stay the course God laid out for you, no matter the cost.
- My Witness Wednesday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Acts 20:17-24

Week Seventeen, Day Four

Keeping Your Focus

As a follower of Christ, an ambassador and a minister, you play an important role in God’s plan to redeem the world to Himself. You are a part of something much larger than yourself. While it’s easy to get caught up in your own race (life) and become preoccupied with each and every little step you take, it’s important that you keep your eyes on the bigger picture – the goal.

Runners who watch their own feet fall because it is difficult to keep your balance with your head down. However, those who keep their eyes trained ahead are more aware of what’s going on and they meet the challenges ahead with more confidence. Don’t become a self-absorbed runner, always focused on you, how hard you are working or how well you are doing. Instead, be grateful for the chance to simply run and live a life that really counts for something.

Study Hebrews 12:1-3, 12-15.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for the example of those who have finished the race in a way worth imitating. Thank God specifically for some older adults at your church who have lived with Jesus for years and are setting a good example of finishing well.
- Commit to run your race with your eyes locked in on Jesus, not on yourself.
- Thirsty Thursday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 Timothy 4:6-10

Week Seventeen, Day Five

Jumping Hurdles

Study 2 Corinthians 4 and Ephesians 6:10-20.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for equipping you with all that you will ever need to run your race successfully.
- Ask God for the will and the strength to stay focused and to meet challenges in His strength, not yours, so that you can stay the course.
- Friends Friday...

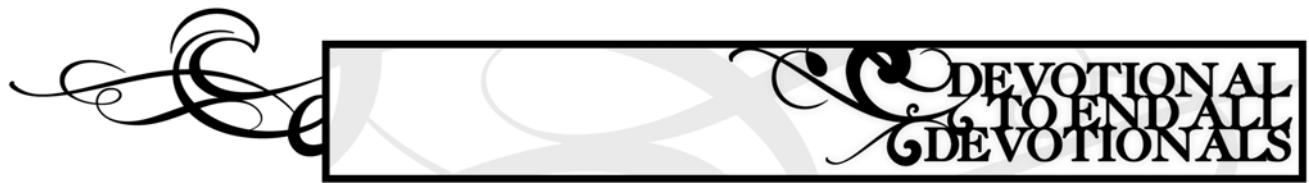
FOR FURTHER STUDY: Galatians 5:7-10

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: Exodus 2-4

This is just the part of the story of Moses. As you read, pay close attention to the unusual path that Moses' life took, especially at the beginning. Note, too, how each and every event in his life prepared him for a special task that God planned for him to complete later in his life. If anyone ever openly acted as God's ambassador, it was Moses...right in his hometown, too!

New memory verse next week! Are you ready?



WEEK EIGHTEEN

Week Eighteen, Day One

For the past three months, you have been using the “God Follower” method of Bible study; asking two simple questions – what does this say about God and what does this say about how to follow God? Today it is time to learn a new method of Bible study. This is another tool that you can use to feed yourself God’s Word. It’s called the “Target Method.” Taking an outside to inside approach, the Target Method of Bible study helps you apply God’s Truth to your own life, encouraging you to respond honestly to God and to act immediately on what you have learned.

The Target Method uses just three questions to guide you through the Bible study process. Picture in your mind a round “bull’s eye” target with two rings and a heart in the center. Each of these three elements represents one of the questions included in the Target Method.

First Question: Outer Ring-
What does it say? (Summarizing the passage)

Second Question: Inner Ring-
What is God saying to me? (Taking it personally)

Third Question: Center Heart-
How will I respond? (Planning for change)

You will practice this method in today’s lesson. Remember that you will get out of your personal Bible study only what you put into it. Don’t rush. Listen. Think. Be thorough.

Applying Scripture to Your Life

Using the Target Method, study James 1:19-27. Take time to answer each question as completely and thoughtfully as possible, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to give you the desire and courage to live what you learn in His Word so that you can live out your faith in a real way in front of the world.
- Commit to listen carefully when the Holy Spirit reminds you of truth you have studied and obey His instructions.
- My family Monday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Use the Target Method to study 1 Corinthians 8:1-3.

Keep going if this passage peaks your interest and see what God reveals to you. Remember that it’s okay to have questions. Hopefully, you are still keeping a journal and can keep track of the questions that you have.

Week Eighteen, Day Two

Wisdom

Spiritual wisdom is “knowing how, when, and where to practice God’s Truth.” People that do not know God have their own version of truth that is very different from God’s truth. Let’s see how the two compare.

Use the Target Method to study 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for revealing His Truth to you and giving you the chance to share in His wisdom.
- Commit to be a good steward (caretaker) of His Truth.
- Your church...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Use the Target Method to study Psalm 19:7-14 and Proverbs 3:7-8.

CHALLENGE

It’s time to memorize a new passage of scripture. Let’s add Proverbs 3:5-6. Want to live a life that pleases God? Live by this passage. Remember to read it, write it and post it.

Week Eighteen, Day Three

Quote:

“My favorite verse is Luke 1:37. It tells me that nothing is impossible with God. Every time that I feel discouraged, it reminds me that God is still in control and is over everything.”

Jennifer, high school student

Getting Wisdom

Use the Target Method to study 1 Corinthians 2. Remember to write down any questions that you may have and record the answers when you find them.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to deepen your understanding of His Word and to use your words to bless and encourage others.
- Commit to let go of fear and doubt and allow God to speak through you, even if you don’t think others will respond well to what He has to say.
- My witness Wednesday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Use the Target Method to study James 1:5-8.

Week Eighteen, Day Four

Sharing What God Teaches You

Once we understand how big and wonderful God is and how amazing it is that He lets us understand even a little bit about Him, we want to know more. We start to look for opportunities to learn, understand, and grow spiritually by studying His Word; and the great thing is we don't have to wait on someone else to explain it to us. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn truth on our own.

When we learn something cool, we should feel free to share what we know with others. We don't have to know everything there is to know about God to talk about Him. All we have to do is tell what we know from personal experience. Just don't make things up if you do not know them. If we get it wrong now and then, more mature believers should set us straight and we can hit the ground running again. But you would never want to teach something to someone that is not true, just because you spoke before you studied.

Use the Target Method to study Galatians 1:11-2:10.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to stir in you a craving for His Word.
- Ask God for the courage to speak the Truth and the confidence to overcome any self-doubt that might get in your way.
- Thirsty Thursday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Use the Target Method to study Acts 18:24-28.

Week Eighteen, Day Five

What it Means to "Live by Faith"

Before you begin today's study, review James 1:5-8.

Once God teaches you something, you are responsible to live it. What you have learned should become so much a part of your life that it changes the way you live. We should "live as if God is who He said He is and will do what He has said He will do." This is called "living by faith."

The Christian life is about much more than being blessed and feeling good. It is about more than snuggling up to God and feeling safe. Sometimes--a lot of times--it's about obeying God even when you don't feel like it. It's about putting yourself out there even when you have doubts or feel a little selfish, drawing on the support, strength, and example of other believers to get you through those tough moments. The more we know God, the more we trust Him; even when we don't feel like trusting Him.

Use the Target Method to study Hebrews 11.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to continue to reveal more of Himself to you.
- Commit to be a responsible steward of His Truth and to live by faith.
- Friends Friday...

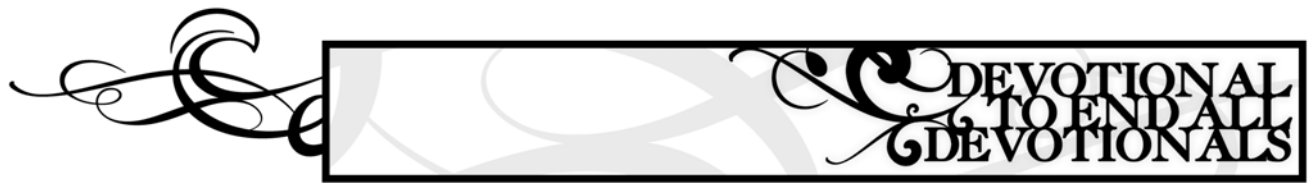
FOR FURTHER STUDY: Use the Target Method to study Proverbs 3:13-26.

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: Exodus 5-12 (paying close attention to 5-7 and 11-12)

This is a continuation of the story of Moses. All of Moses' preparation has come to this. It's time to lead God's people out of Egypt. Though Moses is weighed down by insecurity, doubt, and unanswered questions, he obeys God and lives out his faith.

If you haven't started learning your new memory verse yet, this would be the time! Proverbs 3:5-6



WEEK NINETEEN

Week Nineteen, Day One

The Power of Prayer

Prayer, “two-way communication with God,” is an opportunity and the best way to experience God’s power and to play an important part in God’s will taking place here on earth.

From this point until a new method of Bible study is introduced, please continue using the Target Method when told to “study” a certain passage of scripture.

Study Romans 15:30-33, 2 Corinthians 1:10-11, and Acts 16:25-40.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for the opportunity to participate in the bringing about of His will.
- Commit to take every opportunity to witness God’s power through prayer.
- My family Monday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: John 17

Week Nineteen, Day Two

Quote:

“I’ve been praying for a while now for two of my friends who are lost. I’ve been asking God for an opportunity to talk to them. Nothing has really come of it yet, and I feel frustrated by that at times. Still, I know God is there and listening, even in the middle of the delays. I know that he’s got the ending all worked out already.”

Stephanie, high school student

Intercessory Prayer

“Prayer offered to God on someone else’s behalf” is called intercessory prayer. When we take time to pray for someone else, we are fulfilling a part of God’s call for our life to care for others. For the past month, you have been praying each week for your family, friends, people around you that have needs, etc. That is “intercessory prayer.”

Study James 5:13-18 and Psalm 34:15-18.

God commands us to pray not only for our loved ones, but also for our enemies.

Study Matthew 5:43-48.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for the chance to play an important role in someone else’s life.
- Ask God to create a clean heart in you so that your prayers will be effective.
- Your church...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 Timothy 2:1-8 and 1 Samuel 12:20-23

Week Nineteen, Day Three

Making Sure that You Pray for the Right Reasons

Study James 4:1-3.

The most pure motives (reasons) for prayer are:

- a. The desire to see Jesus' mission on earth fulfilled.
- b. The desire to understand God more.
- c. The desire to get closer to God and interact with Him on a more personal level.

When you are praying about something that you really, really want, it's hard to ignore what you want for what God's wants when the two may not match up. In those moments, you have to make a conscious choice to choose God's will over your own; giving Him complete control of your heart and the situation you are in. You have to ask Him to change the way you look at things so that you start to want the things He wants. We are God's child and He enjoys giving us good gifts. But, God does not exist to give us gifts. We exist because of Him; He does not exist for us. That is tough to keep in perspective.

Study Psalm 37:4 and Jeremiah 29:13, 33:2-3.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to help you to want what He wants so that you can grow.
- Commit to pray that God's will always take priority over yours when the two don't match up.
- Witness Wednesday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 Peter 3:10-12

Week Nineteen, Day Four

Making Prayer Your Life

Once you understand the power of prayer, you want to do it right and more often. Today's passages will lay out some of the when, where, why, and how's of prayer for you.

Study Psalm 5:1-3, Luke 18:1-14, and Philippians 4:6-7.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for talking to you in such a personal way.
- Commit to make prayer a priority, not just a part, of your life.
- Thirsty Thursday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Romans 8:26-28

Week Nineteen, Day Five

Praying in a Group

Individuals can grow through prayer, and so can churches. When church members pray together, they grow spiritually and relationally with one another. The Bible tells all believers to take part in corporate (group) prayer with fellow church members so that we can experience God's power together and become more unified as a group. But, many people are scared to pray out loud with other people; sometimes because they are intimidated by others, sometimes because they are shy and sometimes because they do not understand why it is a big deal to pray with others.

Study Acts 2:36-42, 4:23-31.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for your brothers and sisters in Christ, who share your problems and pray for you.
- Ask God to help you learn to pray with other people.
- Friends Friday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Ephesians 6:13-20

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: Daniel 1, 3 and 6

This is just a scrapbook of some of the major events in Daniel's life. A few weeks ago you read Daniel 1 over a weekend, but this time when you read his story think about his testimony to the power of prayer. Do you think that you would have the courage to stand up and stand out as Daniel did? Does your life tell others that there is a powerful God who answers the prayers of His children or that praying is as pointless as making a wish on a lucky penny or a shooting star?

Remember to study your verses! Don't let the earlier ones slip away.



WEEK TWENTY

Week Twenty, Day One

Unity in the Church Body

Study Ephesians 4.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Commit to love them in word, deed and attitude.
- My family Monday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Hebrews 10:24-25

Week Twenty, Day Two

Serving and Giving to your Church

Study 1 Peter 4:7-11 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to create in you a generous heart.
- Thank God for those who have poured themselves out for you and commit to follow their example.
- Your church...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Acts 2:43-44

Week Twenty, Day Three

Quote:

“It’s hard sometimes to love everyone else in your church, especially when you don’t share the same views that they do or when people stay huddled up in their own little groups.”

Ashlynn, high school student

Living Peacefully with your Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Study Romans 14.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to remind you that spiritual growth is a process every time you are tempted to judge others and stir up controversy over non-eternal issues.
- Commit to making the spiritual growth of your brothers and sisters a priority over the need to be “right.”
- Witness Wednesday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Romans 15:1-7

Week Twenty, Day Four

Straightening Things Out

As we learned yesterday, some issues that arise within the body are “disputable matters” and are best left alone to keep the peace. However, when sin and divisiveness creep in to your church, something must be done about it. The Bible is very clear about how such things should be handled.

Study Matthew 18:15-17.

Correcting a friend is never fun, but can work for the good of everyone involved if it is done right. If you ever find yourself excited about setting someone straight, you are not the person for the job or you have the wrong attitude for the job. In fact, it probably means that you think more of yourself than you should in that moment. Your correction will probably come off as harsh and judgmental. Only someone with a humble heart should correct a friend. It’s important that the person being corrected feels valued and loved by the one confronting them.

Study Galatians 6:1-5.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to help you know when a brother or sister truly needs to be confronted or corrected and the wisdom to know how and when to do it.
- Commit to stand up for unity in the church over your own pride or ego.
- Thirsty Thursday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Mark 12:28-34

Week Twenty, Day Five

When You Need to be Corrected

Any father, who loves his child, disciplines his child. We are deeply loved by our Heavenly Father. Knowing that we make mistakes, we should expect to be corrected from time to time. Sometimes, God corrects us through His Holy Spirit, sometimes He uses the Bible and sometimes He uses other people.

Study Hebrews 12:7-11 and Proverbs 3:11-12.

Some people find it hard to take correction from others. When a brother or sister in Christ rebukes (corrects) you in love, resist the temptation to argue or to justify your actions. Recognize that the person may be God’s messenger and try to thank them for caring about you enough to risk an uncomfortable situation. When a brother or sister in Christ corrects you in the wrong way, do your best to look past their wrong attitude and listen to see whether what they have to say is true. Then let God deal with the pride in their heart as you deal with your issue.

Study Proverbs 9:8, 12:1, 15:31.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for loving you enough to bring you back in line with His will when you pull away.
- Commit to receive correction with a humble heart and teachable spirit.
- Friends Friday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Titus 3:9-11

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: The book of Ruth

The story of Ruth has a lot to teach us about commitment and how to serve others even when we aren't obligated to do so. As you read, check your own heart and let God challenge you to stay committed to and serve your brothers and sisters in Christ.

What was that last memory verse again? If you've got it down and want another to work on, choose one for yourself from the passages that you have studied lately. What verse stood out to you? What verse or passage would you like the Holy Spirit to whisper to you in the middle of your current life experience? Choose one and work on it just like the others.



WEEK TWENTY-ONE

Week Twenty-One, Day One

Staying Committed

Study Romans 12:3-21 and Philippians 1:21-26.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for the love and patience that your church body has shown you.
- Commit to return the favor by loving others out of a pure love for Christ.
- My family Monday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Colossians 3:12-17

Week Twenty-One, Day Two

Different Gifts, but the Same Goal

Study 1 Corinthians 12.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to show you clearly what role He wants you to play in the life of your local church body.
- Commit to work with others toward your common goal of pleasing God.
- Your church...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Philippians 2:14-18

Week Twenty-One, Day Three

Quote:

“Sometimes, I get so distracted by the stress in my life that it interferes with my worship. I feel stress from school, work and from my peers. Sometimes it’s just from being around people in general. It’s hard to stay focused.”

Jessica, high school student

Why Worship?

Study Philippians 2:5-11 and 1 Peter 2:4-10.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and the difference it has made in your life.
- Ask God to forgive you for the times that you have become lazy in your worship and commit to make worship the priority of your life.
- Witness Wednesday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Psalm 22:22-24

Week Twenty-One, Day Four

Giving It All You've Got

Study Exodus 20:1-6 and 2 Kings 17:34-41.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to show you where you may have given something or someone else priority over Him and confess that sin.
- Commit to take worshipping the Father as seriously as He takes it.
- Thirsty Thursday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Psalm 29

Week Twenty-One, Day Five

What Goes On in Heaven

As you study today, don't get too hung up on details that you don't understand. This passage simply describes the worship that takes place at God's throne. As you study, try to put yourself in this picture. Think about the attitude of the worshippers, the intensity of emotion, and what the atmosphere surrounding God's throne must be like. If this is the response of the elders and angels around God, imagine what it must be like to see God. How does the worship scene described in these verses compare with what takes place in your heart on a daily basis?

Study Revelation 4.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Tell God why you worship Him and explain to Him what you wish were different about the way that you worship Him.
- Commit to worship God in submission and obedience.
- Friends Friday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Psalm 95:1-7

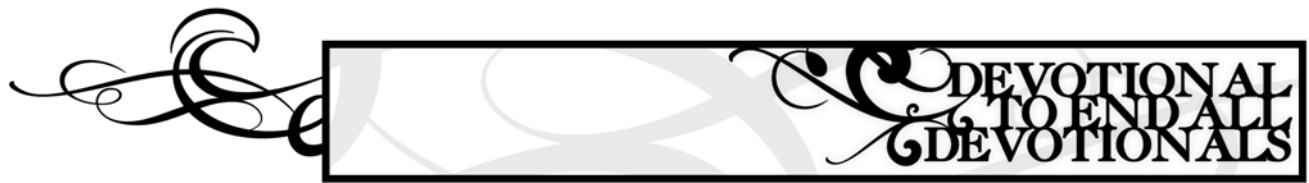
The Weekend

Suggested Reading: Isaiah 6 and Judges 6-8

The first passage is the story of the commissioning of the prophet Isaiah, and the second is about Gideon, the warrior. Both describe the response of a man to the presence and instruction of God. As you read, think about your worship. Are you giving God His worth by responding appropriately to Him?

Isaiah worshipped God his entire life. Gideon worshipped God for a season, then later he turned away from God and he led others to turn away from God. Which kind of worshipper are you?

Review your memory verses! We'll take on a new one next week.



WEEK TWENTY-TWO

Week Twenty-two, Day One

Why is Purity Such a Big Deal?

Most religions encourage people to live morally pure lives. So, what sets Christians apart from the rest? One thing that sets us apart is motive, or what we hope to get out of choosing to live morally pure lives. As followers of Christ, we DO NOT choose to live in a God-pleasing way to:

- a. earn forgiveness or heaven (It cannot be earned)
- b. outweigh the good things with the bad choices that we may have made (every sin is forgiven when you accept Christ as your Savior)
- c. outshine others (compete with other people to look more “holy”)
- d. help God out (He doesn't need our help)
- e. or bring attention to ourselves (worship of self).

Study Matthew 5:13-16 to discover one reason why true followers of Christ choose to live morally pure lives.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to purify your motives for living a morally pure life.
- Ask God to draw others to Himself through His work in your life.
- My family Monday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

CHALLENGE

Good news, it's time to add another verse to your memory. 1 Corinthians 10:31 is a reminder that every single decision you make, large or small, is important and has the potential to impact eternity. As followers of Christ, we've got to stay focused and keep our goal of bringing glory to God in sight at all times! You'll want to get this verse under your belt as quickly as possible, so go ahead and get started right now.

Week Twenty-two, Day Two

What Drives You?

Followers of Christ are different from other people that attempt to live morally pure lives because Christians get their desire, strength, and power to live pure from God so they are able to do what those who try to go it alone could never do. What drives you to follow Christ and live pure?

Study 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and Romans 8:12-17.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for blessing you with the opportunity to live a life that pleases Him and clear reasons to stay on course.
- Thank God for making you His heir and ask Him to begin to show you all that is yours because of Jesus.
- Your church...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Acts 4:23-31 and 2 Corinthians 4:7

Week Twenty-two, Day Three

Giving Jesus Control

Study Romans 6.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for setting you free from sin.
- Commit to honor and obey Christ just as a slave obeys his/her master. Ask God to help you serve Him out of gratitude for what Jesus has done for you.
- Witness Wednesday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Romans 8:1-11

Week Twenty-two, Day Four

The Struggle We All Face

Study Romans 7:14-25.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Tell God about your struggle to overcome self. Be as specific as possible.
- Ask God for the strength to admit your own faults and rely on God's power and wisdom.
- Thirsty Thursday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: James 3:13-18 and 2 Timothy 1:7

Week Twenty-two, Day Five

"I don't really think that American Christians have to sacrifice like the people in the Bible did. Even when we think we have it tough, we probably have it better than people in most other places in the world, and no one really does anything to us when we say what we believe. Not really. We're kind of spoiled and then we get mad or feel punished when God says no and doesn't give us what we want. We get lazy about God things then. Sometimes, I think that if we really had to give up stuff to follow Jesus, we would take it more seriously and gripe a whole lot less. Maybe that's what we need. Maybe we need to get the chance to hurt a little for God. I can't even believe I'm saying this, but I think it may be true."

Andy, high school student

Personal Sacrifice

Study 2 Corinthians 6:1-10.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to give you a glimpse of the "bigger picture" so that you can better understand how your sacrifice brings glory to Him.
- Commit to see all that is "yours" as God's so that you won't feel the same sense of loss when called upon to make sacrifices.
- Friends Friday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: Luke 1:5-25, 57-80, Matthew 3:1-17, John 3:22-30, and Matthew 11:1-11, 14:1-13, in that order.

This is the story of John the Baptist, a truly humble servant of the Lord Jesus. As you read, think about the personal sacrifice required of him and his family. Think about the power and authority given to him by God and the obvious love and respect that Jesus shows for him in these passages. What did it cost John to live a life of moral purity and strength of character? Was it worth the sacrifice? Is it worth your sacrifice?



WEEK TWENTY-THREE

Week Twenty-three, Day One

Using Discernment

Discernment is the ability to tell the difference between what is good and what is bad. Spiritually speaking, it is “the ability to tell what is of God and what is not.” Discernment is a gift of God, allowing a Christian to hear the leadership of the Holy Spirit, before you make a bad decision.

Study 1 John 4:1-6, Matthew 7:15-20, and 1Timothy 1:3-7, 6:3-5.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to sharpen your discernment so that you can recognize false teachers for what they are and tune them out.
- Commit to study God’s Word closely so that you will be able to recognize false teaching when you hear it.
- My family Monday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 Peter 2

Week Twenty-three, Day Two

How You Act at Home

Study Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:18-21.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for the family that you have, asking God to bless and improve all of the relationships in it through you and your witness.
- Commit to be patient with your family members and show them love and respect, whether or not you think they deserve it, as an act of worship to God.
- Your church...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 Corinthians 7:10-17

Week Twenty-three, Day Three

“I don’t think that being a leader for Jesus means that you have to win everything and have everybody know you. I think you got to learn how to ‘take it on the chin’ without complaining and being nice even to the people who aren’t nice to you. Anybody can be nice when everything is good for them. That’s just being like everybody else.”

Cody, middle school student

Being a Leader

Study Matthew 5:1-12 and Romans 2:1-4, 15:1-7.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to mold you into the kind of leader that others can safely follow.
- Commit to be patient with others, remembering that you struggle with the sin nature on a daily basis, too.
Commit to show others the same grace and mercy that God shows you.
- Witness Wednesday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 Timothy 5:1-2 and 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Week Twenty-three, Day Four

Showing Compassion

Study Matthew 9:35-38, 8:1-4, 14:12-14.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Thank God for the compassion that He has shown you through others.
- Ask God to help you see what others need more quickly than you see their faults.
- Thirsty Thursday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 Timothy 2:24-26

Week Twenty-three, Day Five

Truly Loving Others

Study 1 Corinthians 13 and Matthew 5:43-48.

Include the following in your personal prayer time:

- Ask God to give you the strength to love your enemies.
- Ask God to teach you how to love others with your words and in your actions, even when you don’t feel like it.
- Friends Friday...

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Luke 23:33-38

The Weekend

Suggested Reading: 1 Samuel 8-11

This is the beginning of the story of King Saul. As you read, think about what you have learned about moral character. Is Saul a leader to be followed? Are you? If you know the rest of the story about Saul, you know that he walked away from God and did not live a moral life after he became the leader of Israel. If you are a leader, have you changed and become more focused on God or more focused on yourself?

Do you know your new verse yet? Stay after it.