



# PRAY AS **ONE**

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7 WEEKS OF PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

**FORKS**  
of  
Dix River Baptist Church

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# PRAY AS ONE

#Pray as one is a 7-week period in which we as a church are committing to pray & fast together as we seek the Lord's will for Forks Church. For 7 weeks, we ask that every member of Forks Church set aside time to pray each day. Daily prayer reminders will be posted on social media. A full 49-day prayer guide as well as a corresponding daily devotional is contained in this booklet.

It is our firm conviction that there is power in prayer! We know that as we pray as one church, we will see God move in a mighty way in our church. We believe we will see lives changed, our church body unified and energized, and our pastors led toward a fresh and renewed vision for Forks Church. Join us as we **#PrayAsOne**. It will be glorious what God will do through our prayers!

# WEEK 1 - DAY 1 (Jan 7)

## THE HOLINESS OF GOD

### ISAIAH 6:1-8

The seraphim proclaim the holiness of God with an antiphonal chant of “Holy, Holy, Holy.” In doing this, they express holiness as the central and most essential characteristic of the Lord.

But the seraphim do not stop with God’s holiness; they also exclaim His glory. While God’s holiness expresses His transcendence over His creation, His glory expresses His nearness by the display of His power.

Such an exalted view of God brings to Isaiah—and to us—a clear view of sin and a realistic view of self. Before this, Isaiah may have been satisfied with his self-righteousness, but that changes quickly when He encounters the Lord in His unspeakable glory. The light of the glory of holy God immediately made Isaiah aware of his own unholiness, as well as the sinfulness of all those around him.

As did Isaiah when confronted with Holiness, we must ask ourselves if we can be satisfied with unholy living. In comparing ourselves to others or our own self-styled view of right living, we deceive ourselves with a false standard. So, when we encounter holy God our only response can be “Woe is me!”

Recognizing and confessing our unholiness (sin) in the light of God’s holiness prepares us for the cleansing that only He can bring. We confess with our mouth that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

That cleansing then brings us to a place of genuine worship and preparation for service. When He says “Whom shall I send?” we readily respond with “Send me!” **Pray for the Lord to captivate your heart with His holiness today!**

## DAY 2 (Jan 8)

# THE GREATNESS OF GOD

### JEREMIAH 33:1-9

God is greater than our circumstances! We might say “but not this one.” Yet He has shown time after time—over thousands of years of history—that it is in the greatest difficulties of our lives that He is able to show you great and mighty things, which you do not know (v.3).

In the midst of the uncertainties of life, the difficult circumstances, the times of great stress, He gives us the simple instruction call to Me, followed by the promise and I will answer you.

We have confidence in His promise because of who He is. He is the Creator: He made the world, He formed it, and He established it (gave it a purpose). He is the Lord! By His Name He expresses His character: His greatness, His eternity, and His mercy. It is in Him we trust; it is on Him we call. The One who creates is the One who can release, reclaim, and restore.

Are you ready to experience His answer—to see great and mighty things? Are you expectantly waiting on Him? Are you living with expectant and unwavering hope. Biblical hope is the settled confidence that God will do what He has promised. It is the surety that His plans will not be thwarted. It is living the truth of Romans 8:28, And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Jeremiah goes on to express his hope in the promise of God for national healing, for treasures of prosperity and security, for release from captivity, for cleansing, and for forgiveness. And he expressed such hope in the greatness and the power of God while in the midst of great trial—while shut up in the court of the prison.

No matter where you are or your circumstance: **Call on Him!** Wait on His answer. ***Expect to see great and mighty things!***

# DAY 3 (Jan 9)

## THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

### COLOSSIANS 1:15-19

Jesus Christ is “God of very God!” He is not a lesser than the Father; He is in His very essence all God. Paul expresses a number of ways that the “fullness” or supremacy of Christ is made known.

**He is the firstborn over all creation.** Firstborn is not a statement of being created or of birth, it is a recognition of position or rank. Jesus, as God, existed before the creation and is exalted in rank above it. Being firstborn also states the right of inheritance (Hebrews 1:2).

**He is the Creator of all things.** All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3).

**He is before all things.** When the universe began, He already existed. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-2).

**In Him all things consist.** He is the energy of the universe. He maintains the balance necessary for life’s existence. He is upholding all things by the word of his power (Hebrews 1:3).

**He is the first-born from the dead.** His Resurrection is highest in rank; His resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection (1 Cor. 15).

**He is the Preeminent One.** Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

**Does He reign supreme in your life?**

# DAY 4 (Jan 10)

## THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

### PSALM 135:6

“The sovereignty of God is a most precious doctrine. It is the strong wood of the tree that keeps our lives from being blown over by the winds of adversity. It is the rock that rises for us out of the flood of uncertainty and confusion. It is the eye of the hurricane where we stand with God and look up into the blue sky of His mastery when everything is being destroyed. ‘When all around my soul gives way, this is all my hope and stay.’”

— John Piper, A Godward Life

God’s sovereignty means that His design for us cannot be frustrated. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens to those who love God and are called according to His purpose, except what is our deepest and highest good (Romans 8:28; Psalm 84:11).

### OUR GOD IS IN CONTROL

*Our God is in control, Though pressures burden the soul; He  
allows both major and minor In His perfect harmony.*

*Yes, our God is in control, Though pressures burden the soul; His  
sovereign plan is a symphony Which will sing for eternity.*

*As we place our faith in the Lord,  
Our worry will decrease;*

*And when we delight ourselves in His word, We sense His perfect  
peace.*

*Words and music by Don Wyrzten. ©1976 by Singpiration*

What are you holding onto that denies your belief in the sovereignty of God? What fear or worry has replaced God’s place of being in control? **Trust in the One who works all things for your highest good!**

# DAY 5 (Jan 11)

## THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

### DEUTERONOMY 7:9

Have you thought lately about the faithfulness of God? Too often we are prone to focus on our own faithfulness and our own faith. Our living a victorious Christian life indicates that we are trusting a faithful God who cannot fail.

The Psalmist (Psalm 89:1-10) speaks repeatedly of the faithfulness of God. He presents us with an expected response to God's faithfulness.

**First, we sing of His faithfulness.** I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations (v1). Are you praising God today for His faithfulness? When you find yourself unfaithful to the Lord, consider His faithfulness. After all, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

**Second, we share God's faithfulness with others.** With my mouth will I make known your faithfulness to all generations (v1).

**Third, we submit to His faithfulness.** God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those who are around Him (v7).

Can you trust Him today? Yes, you can. Is His Word going to fail? No, not one word of all His promises has failed. Is His grace going to run out? No, He has vast riches of His grace. God is faithful in everything!

**When was the last time you sang of the mercies of God? You don't have to have a singer's voice, just a singer's heart! Who was the last person you told of God's faithfulness?**



# DAY 6 (Jan 12)

## THE GRACE OF GOD

### 2 TIMOTHY 1:9

**Grace**—that’s how our spiritual journey begins. We are saved by God’s grace. But His grace doesn’t end there. As we journey through life, He gives us an immeasurable supply of enabling grace and sustaining grace.

**It is Abundant Grace** - *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:17).

**It is Rich Grace** - *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace* (Ephesians 1:7).

**It is Kind Grace** - *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:7).

**It is Hope-filled Grace** - *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace* (2 Thessalonians 2:16).

**It is Inheriting Grace** - *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered* (1 Peter 3:7).

Finally, we are reminded not to take God’s grace flippantly. We then, workers together, also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1). **His grace calls us to a life of urgency for the spread of the gospel and to a life of holiness** (2 Corinthians 6).

# DAY 7 (Jan 13)

## THE LOVE OF GOD

### DEUTERONOMY 7:7-8

“The love of God is not God’s making much of us, but God’s saving us from self-centered sin so that we can enjoy making much of Him forever.”

--John Piper, Taste and See

### THE LOVE OF GOD

*The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell,  
It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell;  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win:  
His erring child He reconciled and pardoned from His sin.*

*When years of time shall pass away and earthly thrones and  
kingdoms fall, When men, who here refuse to pray, on rocks and  
hills and mountains call, God’s love so sure shall still endure, all  
measureless and strong: Redeeming grace to Adam’s race – the  
saints’ and angels’ song.*

*Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment  
made, Were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by  
trade, To write the love of God above would drain the oceans dry,  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole tho stretched from sky to  
sky.*

*Text and Music: Frederick M. Lehman  
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*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we  
were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8) **Pray for the  
love of God to captivate your heart today!***

# WEEK 2 - DAY 8 (Jan 14)

## THE LORD'S DAY

### REVELATION 1:8-18

In considering the Lord's Day, let's compare it to what the Apostle John experienced on a similar day.

John certainly took the day seriously. He knew what day it was—the Lord's Day, and he was prepared for worship: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. While “in the spirit,” John was acutely attentive to the voice of the Lord: and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet.

Properly prepared and attentive, John then encountered the Lord! God became the center of his universe, fully capturing his thoughts. He found the Immense One who filled his thoughts, the One worthy of worship, the One now encountered in a striking new way.

John stood in the presence of the Omniscient One

**Who is it that you worship today?** Are you prepared in your spirit for an encounter with the One John worshipped? Are you ready to hear Him?

**Prepare yourself for the Lord's Day with a heart of worship:** Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name (Psalm 100:3-4).*

# **DAY 9 (Jan 15)**

## **A HUMBLE HEART**

### **PSALM 51**

Many people have the wrong idea about humility. They think being humble means groveling in front of others or thinking they're no good and others are better. But God says when we are humble, we are free from pride and arrogance. We know that in our flesh we are inadequate, yet we also know who we are in Christ.

Humility is recognizing that we need God's help, knowing we can't truly succeed in our own strength. For the Christian, humility understands the need for honesty in recognizing and confessing our sin before God. It acknowledges that the only way up is to get low. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up (James 4:10).

For David, the Psalmist, expressing humility must have been especially hard. He was God's appointed and anointed king. He was God's man! He was a man of great renown: a man of position and power. Yet David was restless, dealing with the conviction of his sins. It was in the midst of that restlessness that he learned the absolute necessity of humility. His only hope was to express his utter inability to do anything about his sinful condition. All he had left was a call to God for the relief that only He could bring; he called out for mercy. The evidence of his humility was the confession of his sins! He recognized that the only relief from his sins was the healing power of God's mercy. The key to restoring his joy was the merciful forgiving hand of God! He understood that the only way he could once again enjoy salvation's joy was to humble himself before God by being honest about his sin.

Are you looking for the return of the refreshing flow of the joy of salvation? Are you ready to lay yourself low—in humility—before Him right now? Then confess the sins you do know, and ask God to reveal the hidden sin(s) of your life. Call upon His mercy.

# DAY 10 (Jan 16)

## SEARCH MY HEART

### PSALM 139:23-24

God knows. He knows it all. He knows our every thought and action. He knows our motives, our fears, and our deepest desires. We can try all we want, but there is nothing we can hide from Him. Yet, we often persist in doing just that. We hide our sin through denial and rationalization. We re-label sin based on the social or cultural norms, taking what God calls evil and calling it instead good (or at least “not so bad”). We compare our sin to the sin of others and smugly declare ourselves okay.

That’s why the Psalmist asked God, who knew his heart even better than he did, to reveal his sin, his imperfections, and his fears. He knew God would be completely honest, forcing him to be just as honest with himself. God would reveal the most hidden sin from the deepest recesses of his heart. It was then that He would be ready to be led in God’s way.

So, as the Psalmist did, we are to make a habit of asking God to search our own hearts; and to present us with the reality of our secret lives. We do well to be reminded of just what sin is.

Sin is anything we do that falls short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). Sin is also defined as “faithless independence” (Romans 14:23). Whatever does not derive from our attitude of total dependence upon God, whatever does not release God’s activity through our life, is sin.

Every step we take, attitude we adopt, decision we make—everything we do and all we hope to be—is either in dependence upon the God who created us, or our own independent and faithless sense of self. Faithful dependence is an attitude exhibited by a moment-by-moment reckoning on who we really are.

As did the Psalmist, ask God to, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me...*

# DAY 11 (Jan 17)

## CONFESSION

### JOHN 1:8-10

Christians confess. It's that simple. A life that is absent a pattern of confession of sin is evidence of the absence of salvation (V.10).

Confession means to say the same thing about sin as God does. It accepts His standard as that by which all else is measured. Confession does not deny, hide, or rationalize sin. When confessing sin we acknowledge sin as "cosmic treason." While often sin is involved in our relationship with others, it foremost is an act of rebellion against a holy God.

True confession incorporates repentance. Genuine repentance is more than mere sorrow for something I have done. It goes much deeper than that. It acknowledges that I have grieved the heart of God, and makes the conscience decision to turn from the sinful action. How do I know whether my repentance is real? Ask, "am I simply regretful that I was caught in sin?" That's short of repentance. Ask, "does my confession simply just make me feel better about myself, and maybe get me out of trouble?" That also is short of true repentance. Or ask, "have I made the choice to change my mind about the action, move away from it and toward God?" That's real repentance! (see 1 Thessalonians 1:9)

Repentance admits that without the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit, I am incapable of full or genuine confession. In my flesh (self-life) I do not have the ability to not sin. However, abiding in the Spirit, I not only know the authority of sin in my life has been defeated (Romans 6), I now have the power not to sin (Romans 8).

Are you a confessor? Is there a sin you have confessed but from which you have not truly repented? Recognize that without repentance sin will maintain a stranglehold in your life. Enjoy the faithful forgiveness and refreshing joy of the Lord by asking the Spirit to reveal your heart and grant repentance.

# DAY 12 (Jan 18)

## SELAH

### PSALM 32:5

One of my favorite words in the Psalms is that little word that frequently shows at the margin. It is often an unappreciated or undervalued word, easily overlooked. That word is “Selah.” While the exact meaning of the word is not clear, I take it to mean something along the line of “What do you think about that.” It serves as a pause and a call to mediate on what has just been said.

The Psalmist talks about his confession to the Lord, and then exclaims his certainty that You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah [What do you think about that!]

That example should serve as a call to us to contemplate our forgiveness. Let’s mediate on the awesomeness of His forgiveness with a walk through Scripture.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace... (Eph 1:7).

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in who we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14).

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation...For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

**SELAH!**

# DAY 13 (Jan 19)

## THE FORGIVEN FORGIVE

### COLOSSIANS 3:12-13

Instead of condemnation—forgiveness! Instead of being enemies of God, we have been reconciled to Him! Instead of being captives to the power of darkness, we have been redeemed and forgiven!

If He is willing to forgive us when it was our sin that caused His death, how can we withhold forgiveness? What right do the forgiven have to refuse to forgive those who have caused us harm or hurt?

Does the sin of another hold you hostage, in a prison of sorrow, despair, and anger? Sinning people should not have the power to steal your joy. When we forgive there is the release of an unspeakable joy in the purposes of God being worked out in others' lives. If our joy is lost—through harboring bitterness and a lack of forgiveness—then Christ's work in our life is belittled. Our lack of compassion betrays His abundant compassion toward us. Our testimony as a follower of Christ is damaged or even destroyed when we do not practice the compassion of forgiveness.

While we cannot remove the guilt of anyone's sin—God alone does that—we are called upon to freely forgive those who have wronged us, just as God freely forgave us. Forgiveness prompted by love is the greatest demonstration of our being a child of God.

Often our inability to forgive is the result of our lack of realization of how much we have been forgiven. Read again the verses above. Now give praise and exaltation to Him for your forgiveness! Next, follow the command to forgive others: *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you* (Ephesians 4:32).



## **DAY 14** (Jan 20)

# **FORGIVENESS: THE ANTIDOTE FOR BITTERNESS**

### **HEBREWS 12:3, 14-15**

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, a former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. “How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein. To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!” His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? ‘Lord Jesus,’ I prayed, ‘forgive me and help me to forgive him.’ I tried to smile; I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. ‘Jesus, I prayed, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.’

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world’s healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.

—The Hiding Place (Corrie Ten Boom)

**Who do you need to forgive?** Realize that you can’t forgive in your own strength. Only God can give the desire and ability to forgive other’s sins.

# WEEK 3 - DAY 15 (Jan 21)

## A HEART OF WORSHIP

### ROMANS 12:1

**We are created to worship.** But what is worship? Worship is more than going through the motions of singing, giving, participating in the fellowship of believers, and listening to the Word as it's proclaimed. All of those things certainly have their place of significance. But you can do all those things and still not worship. True worship is the wholehearted dedication to God of heart, mind, will, words, and deeds—in fact all that you are, have, and do. It is a total way of life.

That's exactly what Romans 12:1 is getting at—the heart of worship. Let's break it apart and see what makes for true worship.

**Worship involves believers.** Only those who know God through saving faith in Jesus Christ can genuinely worship. That's one of the things Jesus was getting at when He said that true worshippers worship in Spirit and Truth. Worshipping in Spirit involves the Holy Spirit, who indwells believers.

**Worship recognizes God** for who He is (read Romans 11:33-36) and what He has done (*by the mercies of God*). Worship ponders His salvation, His holiness, His grace, etc. It is ever ready to express gratitude for His beneficence towards us.

**Worship presents a living sacrifice to God.** We give our physical bodies to be laid upon the altar of God for Him to do with as He pleases.

**Worship is our service!** So, everything that we do is done as an act of worship. *Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father* (Colossians 3:16-17).

**What are you presenting to God today?** Is your worship acceptable to Him? What are the barriers to worship that need to be removed?

# DAY 16 (Jan 22)

## A SERVANT'S HEART

### PHILIPPIANS 2:3-5

No attitude of a Christian is more contrary to the life of Christ than the attitude of pride. Nothing destroys a relationship faster than does pride. *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud* (Proverbs 16:18-19).

Pride shows up in a lot of ways. A critical spirit, an unbending stubbornness, an unbalanced competitive drive, superficiality, lack of contentment, lack of sympathy, and a lack of compassion are just some of the signs of a prideful heart.

In today's passage, Paul gives us the antidote for pride. It is humility. Humility doesn't destroy relationships, it builds them. A humble spirit lets go of self and looks for the best in others. The humble life is the Christ-life He demonstrated as He took on humanity and suffered the death of the cross (vv7,8). We are to have the same mind as Christ (v5)!

**How do you develop humility?** First of all, recognize the destructive power of pride and its grip on your life. Then appropriate the Christ-life you were given in salvation (Galatians 2:20). Consider next what Paul says in Romans 12:16, *associate with the humble*. So associate more with Jesus! As you begin to spend more and more time with Him, you will learn to be more and more like Him. Finally, as you associate more with Jesus, you will find greater opportunity to develop like-minded relationships with other followers of Christ. Value one another; listen to one another; edify one another.

Ask Jesus to cultivate in you a genuine childlike humility. Ask Him to deflate your ego, to release your grip on fierce competitiveness, and to soften your harsh words and attitude.

# DAY 17 (Jan 23)

## RELEASE YOUR RIGHTS

### ROMANS 10:9-10

Over the past few decades there has been a stirring debate within Christianity over an issue called “Lordship Salvation.” There are some who argue that to be saved, all a person has to do is “receive Jesus in your heart,” or “confess Jesus as Your Savior.” They go on to say, “Now there will come a point in your Christian life when you may be called to “surrender to His Lordship.” That’s often stated as “make Him Lord.” The big problem with that is it goes against what the Scripture clearly lays out as the path of genuine salvation. As we see in today’s passage, salvation is not just believing some things about Jesus, it is believing everything about Jesus.

At the moment of salvation He is immediately Lord of your life. What does that mean? It is laying down your life, including all of your rights, your desires, and your demands to His control. No one has said it better than the Apostle Paul: *More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...*(Philippians 3:8-10).

Lordship means no more boasting in the things of this world. It’s not boasting in our educational achievements, our prestige and popularity, our family name, our bank account, or our accomplishments. Lordship living means that we acknowledge that what man considers as success usually only serves to deceive. We recognize that all this world has to offer is considered as rubbish when compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ. Lordship living knows that what is really important is that I “be found in Him.”

Can you say with Paul that you have laid down your rights, and all that is important is to be found in Christ. If not, ask God to work that desire into your heart. Ask God to so deeply invade your thoughts and desires that all other desires fall away.

# DAY 18 (Jan 24)

## WHO AM I, REALLY?

### GALATIANS 2:20

**The old man, the old self, is dead!** *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

**His death—our death.** I have been conformed to His death and “the body of sin is destroyed.” *Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin (Romans 6:6).*

**His resurrection—our resurrection.** *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection (Romans 6:4-5).*

**His ascension—our ascension.** *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1-4).*

**His nature—our nature.** *For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust (2 Peter 1:4).*

**Now, let the new man live!** It’s not so much a believer living for Christ as it is Christ living through the believer.

# **DAY 19** (Jan 25)

## **TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME**

### **LUKE 9:23**

Jesus calls each person who wants to be a disciple to take up the cross and participate in His afflictions (Philippians 3:10). Our sharing in Jesus' afflictions shows our commitment to live as He lived, which earns for us the persecution He also endured from the world. A servant is not above his master, and we cannot take part in the benefits of Christ unless we walk the road of obedience He lays before us.

The cross was a means of execution; thus, Jesus calls us to die. True discipleship puts our way of life at risk. Our values, goals, lives, and activities can and must paint the picture of a people who enduringly serve God's kingdom, not the present world order.

The person who wants to be Jesus' disciple can only truly be said to follow Him when he has made and implemented a radical decision to "deny" himself. This means that as Christians we will not set our desires and our will against the right Christ has to our lives. We now recognize that we live for the sake of Christ, not for our own sake. It is pouring out our lives for others. This is not a one-time event. It must occur daily.

But never forget, in denying self, we also find great gain. We discover the reason for our existence. We anticipate eternal reward. We give testimony of the power of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:11). And we receive a better understanding of the glory of eternity (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

# DAY 20 (Jan 26)

## THE MEASURE OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE

### 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-12

#### Scene 1

“Lord, I really went hard after all my life dreams, and so many of them were realized. I received accolades from the world for my many accomplishments. There are trophies and citations lining my walls. I put a lot of money in the bank, and invested it wisely. I live in the house of my dreams, with a well-manicured lawn, and have two real good looking cars in the driveway.” Jesus looked at him and answered, “There is no place or need here for any of that. It all stays behind. Over time, people will forget your certificates and trophies; the accolades will fade to distant memories. Your money will be spent by others; your house will eventually rot and fall and your lawn will turn to dust. **Now, what did you invest in eternity?**”

#### Scene 2

“Lord, what little I’ve left behind was a gift from You to start with. I tried to be a good steward of Your many gifts. Hopefully, what’s left behind will continue to be used for kingdom purposes. I know You called me to a higher ideal for life. As You lived through me, Your light impacted so many others. The pursuit of godliness, the life of faith, the love of others—those are what I lay before You now.” Jesus looked at him and answered, “**My child, you invested well in eternity.**”

**Look at your life right now!** Which one are you most likely to hear from the Lord? The good news is there is still time to change!

# DAY 21 (Jan 27)

## GRACE GIVING

### 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8; MALACHI 3:8-10

God asked the people, *Will a man rob God?* But the people responded, *How do we rob God?* He answered, *[You rob Me] in tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8)*. God had already reminded the people of their poor excuse for offerings: giving worthless leftovers and tainted goods, with a deceitful heart (1:6-14). So, even though they were giving, it was an unacceptable gift. It was given without thought, without sacrifice, and even in its low value, given grudgingly. It was a reflection of their lack of honor or respect of God.

In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, we are reminded of everything we have been given by Him. It is all wrapped up in His grace. He has called us into His grace-life. The appropriation and experience of such grace-life is largely determined by our heart for giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Someone once said, "Show me a person's checkbook, and I will tell you which god they have chosen." We invest in what we believe in and what we think is best for us. A follower of Christ lays up treasure in the kingdom of God because his heart is there. A person who lives for self invests in the pleasures and security of this world.

Is there anything you own that you would not be willing to part with for the sake of Christ and His kingdom? How have you exercised obedience, faith, or sacrifice in your giving lately? Take a look at your bank account and let God speak to you about the condition of your heart.



# WEEK 4 - DAY 22 (Jan 28)

## ENCOURAGE THE HURTING

### 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11

It's likely that you have noticed that there are some people who know just what to say and to do to encourage others who are going through difficult times. You have noticed how their words give strength to the discouraged and comfort to the struggling or grieving. Many times you have been on the receiving end of the comfort and encouragement. And you may have thought, "If only I could be like that."

As Christians, we are all tasked with the responsibility to reach out to the hurting. God has invited us to reach into the lives of the hurting, to offer them balm for their physical healing, comfort for their soul, and counsel for their troubled minds and hearts. Notice how He invites us into the lives of the hurting:

*We are to comfort each other and edify one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

*We are to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).*

*We are lift up [our] companion (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).*

*We are to comfort those who are in any trouble (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).*

*We are to remember the prisoners as if chained to them (Hebrews 13:3).*

The believer's lack of eloquent speech, or level of maturity in the faith, or introverted personality, doesn't exempt him or her from the commands noted above. Anyone can offer the gift of "presence." Job's four friends gave him the gift of presence for a week as they sat with him in silence (it was only after speaking that three of them became a discomfort to Job!).

And when we do find it's the right time for words, we find God's Word provides the greatest comfort and encouragement. We then take the time to pray, and search the Scripture for the words the Spirit would speak through us for another's benefit.

One of my personal goals is to be the kind of person the Apostle Paul noted in his friend Philemon. *For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because **the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother*** (Philemon 7).

Let us all strive to be a **refresher** (encourager) to one another.

# DAY 23 (Jan 29)

## PRAY FOR STRONG MARRIAGES

### EPHESIANS 5:22-33

It is the responsibility of the entire church to work for strong marriages among its members. Prayer is the constant option every believer has in ministering to couples involved in the marriage covenant. How might we pray?

Pray that every husband and wife would acknowledge that marriage is a permanent covenant made with each other and with God.

Pray that every couple would acknowledge their wedding vow of fidelity (loyalty). That fidelity is more than sexual faithfulness. It includes:

- a vow for husbands to “honor” their wives (1 Peter 3:7), and wives to “respect” (Ephesians 5:33) their husbands. Honor and respect have a lot in common; it is to show appreciation and to ascribe great value to each other.
- a vow to persevere. That means that when times get tough, one doesn’t abandon the other. There is to be a deep-rooted conviction that it’s worth whatever the cost to see the problem through and the marriage remain intact. When the love of one is waning, Solomon calls upon the love of the other to persevere: *Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it* (Song of Solomon 8:7). In other words, the fire of true love is unquenchable. It’s the responsibility of each partner to push back the waters that would drown such love.
- a vow to God. The most loyal and devoted husband and wife find their first loyalty and devotion to God and His word. Pray that every husband and wife in our church family would make a fresh commitment to God, His Word, and to the spouse of their covenant.

Pray that every couple within the church would strive to have their marriage paint a beautiful portrait of the relationship of Christ with His bride, the church. Marriages centered on God demonstrate to the world the love of Christ. It accentuates the life-changing gospel message of the church.

Pray for those suffering in broken marriages. Acknowledge that God can overcome the obstacles to restoring a broken covenant. Ask Him to make you sensitive to opportunities to minister God's love to husbands and wives who are on the path to marriage dissolution.

# DAY 24 (Jan 30)

## PRAY FOR THE SALVATION OF OUR CHILDREN

### ROMANS 10:1

There is no guarantee of salvation for children of believers. A parent's faith does not secure a child's faith. However, a study of God's Word affirms our observations showing the advantage of believing parents as far as influence and blessing that point children toward salvation.

*For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself (Acts 2:39).*

*But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them (Psalms 103:17-18).*

*They shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them (Jeremiah 32:38-39).*

So, to those who have a heart for God, we know that He will work for their good and the good of their children. What is that heart for God that evokes God's beneficence towards our children? Let's look at a familiar passage. *These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).*

- It is God's Word planted firmly in the heart of parents.

- It is a sincere, concerted effort of parents to teach God's Word to their children.
- It is the parents' whole life commitment to live out the love of God in the home, at work, in leisure moments, and at every turn.

Pray that every parent in the church would commit themselves to God for the sake of their children.

Pray that the church would seek opportunities to pour into the lives of parents, equipping them for the tough tasks of raising children.

Pray that where there are unbelieving parents, the church might have opportunities to influence children's lives with the Gospel, and that those children might in turn be used to proclaim the Gospel to parents.

# DAY 25 (Jan 31)

## PRAY FOR GODLY NURTURING HOMES

### EPHESIANS 6:4

*Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate (Psalms 127:3-5).*

Children are both our current and future wealth—a heritage and inheritance from the Lord. Like anything that God has given to us, we are called, both parents and the church, to be good stewards of His gifts. What then are we to do with this gift, this treasure, this wealth, this inheritance of children?

**We accept our wealth** and the responsibility that comes with it. They are God's gift, and are now our treasure. A treasure is anything we hold of value; the things we hold close and protect. We protect our wealth, and we ought to protect our children.

**We invest our wealth.** We train our children, teaching them to live righteously. Their lives become our primary investment, and we pray for the dividends from our investment.

**We employ our wealth.** Notice the Psalmist says that children are like *arrows in the hands of a warrior*. Our children are future soldiers in the kingdom of God. Each home is a boot camp for training children. It is there we train them to live righteously: *He who sows righteousness will have a sure reward (Proverbs 11:18)*. We train them to stand boldly for the truth: *Walk as children of the light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth) Ephesians 5:8-9*. We teach them the whole counsel of God: *and you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but*

*bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord*  
(Ephesians 6:4).

Children are God's gift and blessing, and a great responsibility. Ask for God's wisdom as you invest in and train your children. Prepare them for Kingdom warfare and Kingdom living. Rejoice in the inheritance He has given you.

*If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; **but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*** (Joshua 24:15).



# DAY 26 (Feb 1)

## PRAY FOR THE FORKS FAMILY MINISTRY

### PSALM 78:1-4

*The primary responsibility of the nurture of children lies with the parents. Yet it is clear from the Scripture that the church, the community of believers, also takes a key role in the life of its children. We have ministries for children of all ages: preschool, children, youth, and college and career. Within each of those ministries, the teachers and workers invest many hours dealing directly with children of all ages: teaching Bible truths, showing the way of salvation, modeling the Christian life, answering questions, and developing relationships. The purpose is to mirror the parents' work in the home in providing a safe and loving environment where children will learn about God. Collectively we have a surplus of stories of God's wondrous works in every generation. Those stories become spiritual markers—moments to look back to and be reminded of the presence and leading of God in our lives (Joshua 4:8). Those stories are the building blocks of faith and the reminders of the hope that we have in Christ. **Pray that our family ministry would be a place of many stories!***

*Family Ministry is more than telling stories to children. It is to be the equipping center for parents (and grandparents, other caregivers, etc.). Within this ministry, parents continue to learn the stories (we are never too old for that), but now move to the teacher role (Hebrews 6:1). Our responsibility is to equip each parent with the Biblical and life tools that they need to rightly nurture children. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-17). **Pray that our family ministry would be faithful to take every opportunity to equip parents for the heavy responsibility of raising the next generation of story tellers.***

# DAY 27 (Feb 2)

## PRAY FOR OUR OUTREACH PROGRAMS

### 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

The Apostle Paul understood that his utmost priority was to reach people with the gospel of Christ. He knew that many things could serve as a hindrance for him to accomplish the mission he was given to complete. In today's text, we find Paul's heart in seeking to reach a lost world. He knew there were things that were permissible for him to do. His old pharisaical lifestyle had been put away as he followed Jesus. Yet, he also knew his primary responsibility was to serve as salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Therefore, though things may have been permissible, the greater question was, "Will it help me to proclaim Jesus to those around me?"

Today, take a deep look at your own life. What are those things in your life that may seem innocent to you, but appear to be a stumbling block to a lost world who doesn't know Jesus? What traditions do you hold that may seem out of step? What sins am I harboring in my life that diminish my witness for Jesus?

Pray that Paul's heart for the lost will you become your heart today? Pray that God will enable you to bridge the barriers between you and your lost friends? **Pray for our church, that Paul's heart of becoming all things to all people may become our heartbeat.**

# DAY 28 (Feb 3)

## PRAY FOR OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

### EPHESIANS 4:11-12

We see by today's passage that teachers are a gift God has given to the church. The purpose of the gift is for the equipping of the saints, so that the ministry of the church may be effectively accomplished, and the church thereby is built up to all it is designed by God to be.

Each church member has a responsibility to the church's teachers.

*But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).*

Each teacher has a responsibility to the members of the church. He or she is...

**...To set a personal example in a godly lifestyle** - rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe...Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you (1 Timothy 4:12-16).

**...Held accountable for how they lead** - Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you (Hebrews 13:17). Let not many of you become

*teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. (James 3:1)*

***...To devote hard work to the content of their teaching***

*- Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness (2 Timothy 2:15-16). For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27).*

Have you expressed your appreciation to your Sunday School teacher lately?

Will you pray for your teacher's welfare? Pray that as he or she comes under attack by the enemies of the Word, they will remain faithful in their leadership and bold in their proclamation.

# WEEK 5 - DAY 29 (Feb 4)

## NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY

### HEBREWS 10:22-25

In today's passage, we are given some rather specific and clear instructions on what our corporate worship service should involve. Three times we see the words "let us." The "us" implies a plurality of people. It calls individual worshippers to a corporate arena, coming together with unity of mind, spirit, and purpose for worship.

As we prepare ourselves for corporate worship, we notice first that we are linked together by the saving faith we have in common. *Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (v22).* A sincere heart means we are without guile and transparent, approaching one another and God with sincerity. That heart is saturated with faith in Christ and His work on the cross, accomplishing our salvation. That salvation is noted as a heart-work of regeneration that the Holy Spirit has brought about, and given testimony by our public affirmation of salvation in believer's baptism.

Further, we prepare and engage in corporate worship with a mind that is rock-solid firm in hope. That hope is the certainty that what Christ has begun, He is faithful to complete. We are a people of hope, celebrating in praise His promised victory in this life and in the life to come. *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful (v23).*

Finally, our worship of God serves as the platform for our ministry to one another. Our corporate worship stimulates each believer in our love for fellow believers. That love flows out in works for the benefit of one another and for a testimony to the world. *Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of*

*some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near (vv24,25).*

We might ask, “Who is worship **to**?” The answer: It is **to** the One who saves!

Then we ask, “Who is worship **for**?” The answer: It is **for** believers!

# DAY 30 (Feb 5)

## A STRONG, LOVING FELLOWSHIP

### 1 PETER 1:22

Christians love. There you go. That's it. Period. There is no room for argument. Now, be sure that we are not talking about the world's usual mushy, sentimental, emotional, or romantic kind of love. We are talking about willful love that is unconditionally and unselfishly expressed between and among genuine followers of Christ. It is God's love that becomes a part of every believer at the moment of their salvation: *and hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out within our hearts** through the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Romans 5:5).*

People of the world are constantly falling "in and out of love." But God's love doesn't change! His love is not capricious, whimsical, or sentimental. It is an expression of His perfect will. That willful love lived out in the daily life of a believer is the ultimate mark of Christian genuineness. *For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another...We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren...Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 3:11-4:11).*

Notice in today's passage that our love is a matter of **obedience!** That follows exactly Jesus own words: *This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you (John 15:12).* Therefore, obedience is the root of our love.

Second, we see that that the source of our love is **truth.** That truth is both Christ Himself (John 14:6), and the written Word of God (John 17:17). Genuine Christian love is based in truth. It is not diluted; it is not compromised; it is not wavering; it is objective and; it is an integral part of who we are in Christ and in our Christian community. We have been given the Spirit of truth who enables us to love: *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but*

*you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you (John 14:17).*

Third, we see the object of our love is **the brethren**. That is the “one anothers” of the Body of Christ—the church.

Fourth, we understand that our love is to be **sincere** and **from the heart**; it is without hypocrisy and without partiality; it does not discriminate. This love is our deepest heartfelt desire for the welfare of every brother and sister in Christ.

Lastly, we are to be **fervent** in this love. We commit ourselves to it with nothing less than our whole being. It consumes us because it consumes God. This love is the highest expression of praise that we can offer to the One who saved us!

*“Live your lives in love, the same sort of love which Christ gave us, and which He perfectly expressed when He gave Himself as a sacrifice to God.” — Corrie ten Boom*



# DAY 31 (Feb 6)

## SALT AND LIGHT LIVING

### MATTHEW 5:13-16

Christians are God's preserving agents for a world that is corrupt and degenerating because of sin. Our lives are designed and commissioned by God to enhance our communities and to preserve what is good and right. Christian fellowship and the world are distinct communities. One community exists "in darkness," and the other community shines light into that darkness. The church is to permeate the world with the preserving influence of the Gospel of Christ (salt), while taking every effort to avoid being tainted by the world (salt becoming **tasteless** and therefore **good for nothing**). As salt preserves meat from rotting, the Gospel preserves the world from total decay. We can hardly blame unsalted meat from going bad. It cannot do anything else. It is not the world's responsibility to change; it can't! It is every believer's responsibility to rub the world with the salt of their lives, living out the Gospel of Christ. That's when change happens! It only takes a small quantity of salt to preserve food; likewise, a small, even vastly outnumbered, army of believers can suppress or slow the spread of decay around them.

**Light** boldly and unabashedly announces its presence and vigorously dispels the darkness. God wants us to shine as a brilliant testimony of His power and presence in our life, so that the darkness in the lives of those around us is displaced and replaced by the light of His truth and glory. Each individual follower of Christ is a light to the world. Notice in our passage the implications of the effect of a multitude of lights shining the light of Christ. Working together, believers become a city of light perched on a hill and seen from a distance, not hidden in the valley and unseen. A lampstand holds multiple candles, and the candles, therefore, shine a brighter light.

The light we are to shine is our good works. Those works are every outward and visible manifestation of our faith. They are works that emulate the works that Jesus began: *The Spirit of the*

*Lord is upon me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18).* Everywhere Jesus went, God's truth was boldly proclaimed, people were healed, hypocrisy was exposed, and sinners found forgiveness. His works are to become our good works.

**Point a lost world to Christ.** Live salty and shine brightly, so that others might come to glorify God!

# DAY 32 (Feb 7)

## LOVE SPEAKS

### JOHN 13:35

One or two days each month I wear a badge. That badge identifies me as “Chaplain: Knoxville Police Department.” The badge opens doors of opportunity for me to share the love of Christ with the law enforcement community and with the greater Knoxville community. When I walk in a restaurant or a store, or arrive at an accident or a death scene, that badge usually causes people to notice me. But the badge isn’t about me. When I leave the scene, most people I’ve encountered will not remember who it was they talked with. Hopefully what they will remember is that someone cared enough to spend time with them, offered encouraging words, provided some measure of comfort in a difficult time, and in some way shared a special kind of love with them.

—Mark McKeehan

Thinking about that reminds me that **every** Christian wears a badge. The badge distinguishes Christ-followers from the world. Though not a physical thing, the badge is still visible and distinct. It is unlike any other badge ever designed. It is the badge of **Christian Love** that causes the world to take notice of who we are. We are to wear the badge honorably and respectfully. The badge represents someone greater; it represents Christ!

What does it mean to wear the badge of love honorably and respectfully? It means that we live our lives in a community where love for one another is on constant display. It is a life **motivated** by the love of Christ: *For the love of Christ compels us* (2 Corinthians 5:14). It is a love that is **fervent** in its expression: *ferverly love one another from the heart* (1 Peter 1:23). It is an **abounding** love: *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more* (Philippians 1:9). The **quality** of the love increases as we grow together in Christian community: *For indeed you do practice it [love] toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia.*

*But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10). This love is noted for its **humility**: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor (Romans 12:10). Finally, this love is noted for its **unity**: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity (Psalms 133:1).*

When we wear the badge of Christian love, it is inevitable that doors will open with opportunities to share Christ's love with a world desperate for the real thing. Christian, don't be afraid to show your badge!

## DAY 33 (Feb 8)

# WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FACE REJECTION

### PSALM 62:1-12

David's life was no bed of roses. He faced an inordinate amount of adversity. He learned, however, to be still under stress—to rest in the Lord. His calm security and implacable stability came from God. He knew the Lord as his *Rock*, his *Salvation*, his impregnable *Fortress*. Therefore, he could not be moved or distracted by the taunts of the wicked. David's enemies saw him in a different light. To them he was weak and vulnerable: “a leaning wall or a tottering stone fence.” They shouted curses and lies; they were filled with hypocrisy. Their goal was to bring David down to their level, to topple him from his secure position.

What did David do first when the rejection came? He rested! He knew that unbelievable strength is drawn in rest—waiting on the Lord. In rest, strength is gained for battle. He learned to live above the pettiness of others. David's strength was based in God as his *hope*, his *rock*, his *stronghold*. As he poured out his heart to God, he found his refuge; he discovered he was unconquerable.

David had a proper view of life. It's “less than a vapor.” He would not set his mind or heart on things the world values (riches and fame), but on the Word of God and the Love of God. He would leave to the Lord any retribution of those who sought to harm him. He would present his faithfulness to the Lord for its own reward.

When we stand firm on our godly convictions and face the rejection of the world, we will do well to remember David's response. Rest in God. Seek Him for refuge. Let Him be our strength and our defender. Let Him balance the scales.

# DAY 34 (Feb 9)

## HOW TO REPRODUCE GODLINESS

### 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

It doesn't take much time in reading our Christian instruction manual to come to the conclusion that we have a responsibility to pass along our faith. There are two key components to passing on our faith. The first is evangelism: sharing the good news of God's life-changing message with those who do not know Christ as Savior. The second is discipleship: teaching the transformed the manner of life they are now called to live. Our focus today is on the second task—discipling others so that they might live God-honoring lives. The goal is to reproduce godly lives.

How do we best disciple others? Let's examine a Biblical model. *Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe* (1 Tim 4:12).

Notice that the instruction is not age dependent. Our physical age isn't to be a barrier to reproducing godliness in others. It's our manner of life that is on display. There is both an inner and outer component to godly lives.

Paul notes first our outward example: our speech and our conduct. The way we use our **tongue** reflects what's in our heart: *For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.* (Matthew 12:34- 37). We do well also to consider a few warnings from Proverbs (see 10:19, 13:3, 18:13 for example). Add to the control of our speech the **conduct** of our lives. *Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation* (1 Peter 2:12).

The outward expressions of our life noted above are the fruit of the inner life of godliness. That is a life of **faith** (faithfulness: unswerving commitment and loyalty to the Lord), and of **purity** (seeking the goodness of God and separating from the impurities of the world and the old nature).

Thegluethatholdstheinnerandoutercomponentsofthisgodlycharacter together is **love** (1 John 4:11-12).

Become a reproducer of godliness! Pour out your life in love toward other believers; model godly speech and conduct; demonstrate a life grounded in faith and purity.

# DAY 35 (Feb 10)

## CHURCH AND STATE

### 1 TIMOTHY 1:2

Christians should be loyal citizens, and they should be seen to be loyal by those in authority. At the same time, human authorities should know that Christians have a higher King who receives the devotion of their hearts and who has the first and final call on their loyalty.

Christians are not to seek confrontation with authorities. Rather they pray that they will be able to live quietly and peacefully in godliness (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Believers recognize that all authority is from God, and therefore they submit “for the Lord’s sake to every human institution” (1 Peter 2:13). Yet times may come when obedience to a law established by human authority will require a Christian to disobey God. At this point the Christian must graciously and clearly obey God rather than men.

Jesus was not a political leader. He resisted that temptation, but He still insisted that we were to render to Caesar (the State) what is his due, remembering that we have to render to God what is His right (Luke 20:20- 26). Jesus did not directly challenge political powers, though He was ready to criticize evil, including the abuse of power, whether it was the Scribes, Pharisees, or those who sold goods in the temple (Matt. 16:5-12; Luke 19:45-48). Even when standing before Pilate and Herod, Jesus did not challenge their authority, but stressed the different nature of His kingdom and the ultimate source of all authority (John 18:28-40; Luke 23:1-25).

As earthly citizens, we have three responsibilities to the governing authorities. First, Christians are to **submit** to those in authority, not least because these authorities are themselves under God’s sovereign rule (1 Pet. 2:13-14). Second, Christians are to **pray** for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Third, Christians are to affect the governing realm as **salt and light**—influencing the community with the knowledge of the goodness of God’s will and law. As citizens of earth, as well as of heaven, we have a responsibility to



affirm and encourage women and men of integrity who support policies that restrain evil and reinforce goodness. When the authorities lack these qualities, we are still responsible to pray for them.

Pray for the decisions of our governing authorities to be wise—not worldly wise, but Godly-wise. Pray that God would move their hearts toward good. Pray for both those you agree with and those you disagree with!

# WEEK 6 - DAY 36 (Feb 11)

## GOSPEL OPPORTUNITIES

### MARK 16:15

Here is the stark reality of the church's obedience to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the most part, we have *received* the good news of the Gospel, but we're not actually *communicating* that good news.

Research shows that Protestant churchgoers in the United States are not telling the good news message. In a recent study, 3,000 protestant churchgoers were asked how many times they had personally shared with another person how to become a Christian. **61%** said that they had ***never*** shared their faith.

Evangelism has become an afterthought for many believers. We might invite our friends to church, but simply inviting friends to church is not evangelism. It can be a step in evangelism, but evangelism involves sharing a clear message of a bloody cross and an empty tomb. It involves us telling people about the good news of Jesus Christ.

### What are some excuses we give for not sharing the Gospel?

1. "I don't like the way evangelism is done in my church."

When someone complained about the way he did evangelism, D.L. Moody supposedly responded, "I like the way I do evangelism better than the way you don't do evangelism."

2. "Culture is too resistant. People don't want to hear the Gospel."

The reality is that people actually are open to hear. While there are some who will refuse to listen, the vast majority of people are open to engaging in spiritual conversation. Besides that, the state

of the culture is not to determine our obedience to the command to share.

3. "I don't have the gift of evangelism."

There's no **gift** of evangelism in the Bible! You don't have it – nobody has it. But all of us have the responsibility to share the Gospel. All of us have been called as Ambassadors for Christ and as ministers of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

We can always find a reason to not engage the lost, but at the end of the day, excuses don't win souls. Share the Gospel!

*And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15).*

# **DAY 37 (Feb 12)**

## **WHAT IS EVANGELISM**

**MATTHEW 28:18-20**

### **WHAT IS EVANGELISM?**

Evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade. It is a call to proclaim to the lost the good news of salvation in Christ, to call them to repentance, and to give God the glory for regeneration and conversion. Evangelism isn't converting people; it's telling them that they need to be converted and telling them how they can be.

### **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

The gospel is the joyful message from God that leads us into salvation. The gospel message answers four big questions: Who is God? Why are we in such a mess? What did Jesus Christ do? And how can we get back to God?

- God is our Creator (Col 1:16-17). He is loving (John 3:16), holy (Isa 6:1-3), and just (Rom 1:18). One day He will execute perfect justice against all sin.
- People are made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). We are beautiful and amazing creatures with dignity, worth, and value. But through our willful, sinful rebellion against God (Rom 3:9-12), we have turned from being His children to His enemies (Col 1:20-21). Still, all people have the capacity to be in a restored, loving relationship with the living God.
- Jesus Christ is the Son of God, whose sinless life gave Him the ability to become the perfect sacrifice to pay the penalty due for man's sin. Through His death on the cross, He ransomed sinful people (Rom 5:6-8). His death paid for the sins of those who come to Him in faith (Col 1:13-14). Christ's resurrection from the dead is the ultimate vindication of the truth of these claims (Rom 1:4; 5:10).
- The response God requires from us is to acknowledge our sin, repent, and believe in Christ (Rom 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; John 1:12; John 8:12). So we turn from sin, especially the

sin of unbelief, and turn to God in faith, with the understanding that we will follow Him the rest of our days.

*The above is an excerpt from “Evangelism,” by J. Mack Stiles*

As you can see, the content of evangelism is Christ, not our journey to faith. Our personal testimony may be included, but witnessing is more than reciting our spiritual autobiography. Specific truths about a specific person are the subject of our proclamation. A message has been committed to us—a word of reconciliation to the world (2 Cor 5:19).

***Pray for a passion to reach the lost in Garrard Co & beyond!***

# DAY 38 (Feb 13)

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVANGELISM

**MATTHEW 28:18-20**

*For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building (1 Cor 3:9).*

Personal evangelism is done one-on-one, by everyday, ordinary Christians. Look at what Professor Kenneth Latourette has to say: “The chief agents in the expression of Christianity appear not to have been those who made it a profession, but men and women who carried on their livelihood in some purely secular manner and spoke of their faith to those they met in this natural fashion.”

### **A few facts about every believer's responsibility for evangelism:**

1. Evangelism is the **command** given to every disciple. There are no waivers or exception clauses included in the passages above.
2. It is a **calling** for every believer (2 Cor 4:1).
3. Disciples of Jesus Christ are called to be **co-laborers** with Christ and other believers, not spectators simply watching others perform the work of sharing the gospel (2 Cor 6:1-2).
4. Every Christian is called to be an **ambassador** for Christ (2 Cor 5:20). An ambassador is a person sent from one realm or nation or person to another for a specific purpose. The Christian ambassador is sent from Christ to represent Him in the world. The ambassador's role is to state, explain, urge, and enforce the terms on which God is willing to be reconciled. He does not promote his own welfare, nor seek honor for himself. He promotes the gospel of life and the worth of Christ.

5. It is a matter of **availability**, not ability (1 Pet 2:15; 1 Cor 2:1-5).

Evangelism might be viewed much like “show and tell.” Inherent in every approach to evangelism is the need for personal encounter. People must speak with non-Christians in order to clarify what they have heard, and to urge them to believe. Think about it: aren’t you a believer because someone reached out to you personally? It is Joe and Jane Christian who are Christ’s ambassadors; they are the ones whom God appoints to tell the gospel. Open your mouth; God will fill it with His words!

***Ask the Father to raise up workers to reach out to our community!***

# DAY 39 (Feb 14)

## WHY DO EVANGELISM

### MATTHEW 28:18-20

Let start today with a bold statement: **evangelism** is not the priority of the church. Don't freak out! Reality is that **worship** is the priority of the church! So where does that put the role of evangelism in the life of the church? It is an essential and inevitable outflow of believers engaged in whole-hearted, devoted worship. Evangelism's goal is to persuade worshipers of false gods to become worshipers of the one true God (1 Thess 1:9)!

Let's consider some of the motivations true worshipers have for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Evangelism is motivated by our desire to **bring glory to God**.

*My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples (John 15:8).*

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matt 5:16).*

2. Evangelism is motivated by our desire to **be obedient** to Christ.

*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's*

*commandments and abide in His love (John 15:10).*

3. Evangelism is motivated by the **love of Christ**.

*For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died (2 Cor 5:14).* This is rightly viewed in two ways: the love of Christ for us, and our love for Christ. Our



love for Him flows naturally from His love for us. Without His love we would not know real love. His great love for us demands our life, our obedience, our holiness, our faithfulness, and our devotion to what He is devoted—the salvation of sinners.

4. Evangelism is motivated by our ***love for the lost***.

*We have the love of God poured out within our hearts* (Rom 5:5). This should cause us to love God intensely, and to love and labor for the salvation of all men. Christ poured out His life in love for all men. We are compelled (motivated) to pour out our life in love as well. It is a firm conviction that should drive our life of service to, and love for, others.

***Pray for Bruce & Tammy Jeffries in El Salvador!***

# DAY 40 (Feb 15)

## WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME FOR EVANGELISM

### MATTHEW 28:18-20

Unfortunately, many believers think that the task of evangelism is more of a program to be followed than a life to be lived. They won't do the work unless they have been "trained," and often even then find excuses not to go. There is nothing wrong with biblically-based evangelism programs and training. But those are simply tools to assist believers in sharing the gospel as a normal everyday part of life.

1. Evangelism is a matter of **everyday expression**.

*Go therefore (Matt 28:19) literally says, as you are going. During the course of everyday life, we are to be aware of the opportunities we have to share the gospel. That includes the expression of life in our conduct as "salt and light," as well as the essential verbal communication of the gospel.*

*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Peter 2:11-12).*

2. Evangelism is a matter of **any moment preparedness**.  
*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who*

*asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15).*

3. Evangelism is **not** a matter of a **convenient time**.  
*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.  
Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all*

*longsuffering and teaching (2 Tim 4:2).*

We share the gospel when times are good and when times are bad. Often it's in the most difficult circumstances of life that a believer has the greatest opportunity to share the joy of knowing Christ (1 Pet 4:12-19).

4. Evangelism is a matter of **now!**

*We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, **now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation** (2 Cor 6:1-2).*

***Pray for the our IMB missionaries seeking to get the gospel to 1000's of unreached people groups across the world right now!***

# DAY 41 (Feb 16)

## WHERE IS THE RIGHT PLACE FOR EVANGELISM?

### MATTHEW 28:18-20

If we wait for just the right time and just the right place, usually meaning the most comfortable of circumstances, we will miss out on many opportunities to share the gospel. As we saw yesterday, the “right time” is **now**. So, the logical follow-up would be that the right **place** is wherever you are!

1. Evangelism is a **worldwide** matter (Acts 1:8).

We can and should engage others with the gospel in the routine of daily life in our local community—our *Jerusalem*; yet we should always be prepared to take the gospel *to all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth*.

2. Evangelism is a **crisis point** matter (Jude 22-23; Acts 16:25-30).

There are times when people are at the point of desperation, lacking purpose, seeking answers, and without hope. That’s when they might be the most open to hearing the words of life a believer can offer. Implied in that is the reality that the believer has to know the person and their plight. That’s when the time spent in building relationships with non-believers may open wide the doors of opportunity to share. It’s when the consistent, godly lifestyle of the believer gives credence to the words of hope in the gospel.

3. Evangelism is a **home** matter (Acts 16:30-34).

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live*

*long on the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4).*

*These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).*

4. Evangelism is a **work** matter (Deut 6:6-9).

*Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free (Ephesians 6:5-8).*

**Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare hearts to receive the Gospel.**

# DAY 42 (PART 1) (Feb 17)

## HOW DO WE DO EVANGELISM?

### MATTHEW 28:18-20

Over the past five days we have seen the *What, Why, Who, When, and Where* of evangelism. Putting it all together helps us arrive at the **How** in going about the task. Let's boil it down to seven points.

#### **Pray expectantly**

Pray consistently for opportunities to share the gospel. Pray that God would work in you a heart of compassion for the lost. Pray for an openness to go wherever He might lead you so that you may share the love of Christ and the gospel.

#### **Live righteously**

The Christian who lives in obedience to the Lord's command will live a pattern of a holy life. That life gives testimony to the world that you are different, provides opportunities for you to share why you are different (Christ in you), and then gives credibility to the words of the life-changing gospel you share with them.

#### **Look intently**

Keep your eyes open for occasions to share the message of reconciliation. Maintain a keen awareness of the lives of the people God has put around you. Be ready to invest the time to build relationships that may lead to opportunities to share.

#### **Listen carefully**

Before you know what it is that others need to hear, you need to hear from them. Most people love to talk about themselves! So, listen carefully to find out their desires, struggles, and needs.

Active listening tells them that you are genuinely interested in them. The more you listen, the greater the openness they will show for listening to you.

### **Speak clearly**

Remember that as you share the gospel, the emphasis is not on you, it is on their state of “lostness” and God’s work of redemption on their behalf. Be careful not to dilute the gospel for fear of offending them. Use God’s words as much as possible!

### **Implore earnestly**

Don’t try to manipulate or browbeat the listener. But do show your passion for the message you have shared, and its importance in their life.

### **Wait patiently**

It is not your job (or ability) to save anyone! Only the Lord can do that. You have been obedient to share, now let the Holy Spirit do the work of conviction that leads to repentance and faith.

***Pray that when the Lord asks “Whom shall I send,” you might readily respond, “Here I am, send me.”***

# DAY 42 (PART 2) (Feb 17)

## PRAY FOR AN EVANGELISTIC HARVEST

### MATTHEW 28:18-20

We saw earlier this week that what God seeks first and foremost are worshippers. True worshippers become strong evangelists! A church full of evangelists (every believer obedient to the task of sharing the gospel) will impact homes, workplaces, schools, the local community, and the world. Believers living as “salt and light” will have influence and make a mark wherever they go. Though some will reject the believer’s lifestyle and the message they share, many will be drawn to it. As we are faithful to live godly lives and consistently share the message of reconciliation, God will change hearts and bring people into His kingdom and into His church.

Consider John 4:7-42. The woman at the well had a life-transforming encounter with the Messiah (vv 7-26). She took the message of her life-change to her community (vv 28-29, 39). Because of her testimony, others were open to an encounter with Christ (v 30, 39-42). One sinful, but transformed, woman’s testimony led to one community where **many more believed** (v42)!

Look at what happened on the first day of the church’s existence in response to Peter’s proclamation of the gospel: *So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were **added about three thousand souls*** (Acts 2:41). Over the following days, through the testimony of those who had just been added to the church (Acts 2: 41-47a) we find that: *the Lord was **adding to their number day by day those who were being saved*** (Acts 2:47).

The church at Thessalonica saw the rapid expansion of the heavenly kingdom not just in their church, but in churches



throughout the region as they were faithful to share the gospel (1 Thess 1:8-9).

The testimony of the early church didn't just influence the culture, it transformed it! Though often resisted, even violently (martyrdom being a common fate of Christians), believers did not waver in their testimony and commitment to spread the gospel of Christ.

Today, the population of the world increases at a faster rate than the population of the church. Our opportunities to share the gospel have not decreased, but multiplied. The culture resists, often violently. Are we ready to give our lives for the spread of the gospel as did many in the early days of the church? Or have we given up, thinking the cause is lost? I am reminded of the question, "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer is "one bite at a time." The task before us is not to be overwhelmed by the vastness of the harvest field we see, but to be consumed with the opportunity to share in just one small area of that field—the place where He has put us today. It is to take it one person at a time. One person today, another tomorrow. It may not change the world, but it might change a life!

# WEEK 7 - DAY 43 (Feb 18)

## PREREQUISITES TO HEARING FROM GOD

### PSALM 25:1-15

It's not unusual for church members to ask, "How do I know the will of God in this situation or under these circumstances?" Usually they state that they have prayed about it, but either aren't sure that God has heard their prayer, or that they have clearly understood His answer. All believers have been given spiritual eyes and ears in order to experience God's presence and activity in all of life. The Holy Spirit helps these senses develop as we mature in our walk with Him.

How might we best insure that the communication lines with God are open and clear? An answer is provided in Psalm 25, where we find David seeking the Lord's guidance. Let's see what we can learn from David's experience.

**1-2:** David put his entire trust in God alone; he knew that God cared for him. **3, 5:** He knew the value of patience and that God would answer in His time.

**4-5:** David was open to learn whatever the Lord had to teach him. He was willing to set aside his own agenda and preconceived notions as to how God should act. He would let God speak.

**6, 7, 11:** David had a penitent heart. He was a confessor who knew the mercies of God. He did not diminish his sin before God.

**9:** Though he was a king with great authority, and had the power of life and death over others, David was a man of great humility. He knew his place; he was God's man, subject to God's lead.

**10:** David was an obedient man, a covenant keeper. He had experienced the silence of God when he strayed from His path. If he wanted to hear from God, it would be as he applied himself to God's path.

**12, 14:** David had a healthy fear of God. To fear God is reflected in an attitude of worship—giving God the reverence, respect, and “awe” for which He alone is worthy.

**15:** David kept his focus on God, and was not easily distracted. Though he was aware of his adversaries and the obstacles, he remembered, and was trusting in, the God he knew was greater than anything he faced.

Are you really interested in God’s guidance for your life? If yes, then look through the list above and align your life in order to hear from Him!

# DAY 44 (Feb 19)

## MORE ON KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

### EPHESIANS 5:17

We saw yesterday the importance of our life being rightly aligned in order to hear from God and discern His will. Today, we will look at some specifics of God's will.

Many times we make discerning the will of God to be much more complicated than it really is. We neglect the clear passages of Scripture that simply state, "This is God's will." If we align ourselves with the Word of God, we will discover God's will for almost any situation we face. Let's examine some of the explicit statements of the will of God.

God's will is that we are:

**Saved** – *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires [wills] all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3-4*

**Spirit-filled** – *So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:17-18*

**Sanctified** – *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality. 1 Thessalonians 4:3*

**Submissive** – *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 1 Peter 2:13-15*

**Suffer for His sake:** *For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. 1 Peter 3:17*

**Say thanks** – *In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Now, you have considered the above and say, “But that doesn’t say explicitly that I should do this or that.” And you are still uncertain as to God’s will. The reality is that if you are *saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive, suffering, and saying thanks*, you are “in the will of God!” Now you have freedom to do whatever you want! That’s what the Psalmist meant when he said, *Delight yourself in the Lord; and **He will give you the desires of your heart.*** (Ps 37:4) He not only fulfills your desires, He puts them in your heart! If you live a godly life, He will give you the right desires.

Give God thanks for revealing His will so that you might live wisely and not foolishly (Eph 5:17-18).

# DAY 45 (Feb 20)

## A COVENANT OF RESPECT

### ROMANS 12:9-16

As Forks Church members, we have joined together for a common cause—to express and expand the Kingdom of God for the glory of God. God takes a diverse group of individuals with their own unique backgrounds, personalities, goals, preferences, and desires, and molds them into an effective force that pursues His direction for the church. Unfortunately, it's easy for the one or more of the members of the church to disrupt the direction of the whole. How might we best overcome the individual idiosyncrasies that become a barrier to the church's mission? We can learn to **RESPECT** one another. Are you willing to commit to the covenant statements below?

**R - Remember** those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Hebrews 13:7

We join in this covenant remembering that God has placed each elder/pastor in a position of leadership and will recognize and appropriately respond to his directives.

**E - Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.**  
*Philippians 2:3*

We join in this covenant having a giving and sacrificial spirit, ministering together without selfish motive or ambition. We will set aside personal preferences for the sake of the whole body (Romans 12:10).

**S - Submitting to one another in the fear of God.** *Ephesians 5:21*

We join in this covenant willing to submit to one another, not letting personal preferences cause division among the members. We will be willing to yield, recognizing that the fruit of harmony is the seed of righteousness (James 3:17-18).

**P** - And **pray** for one another. James 5:16

We join in this covenant committing to faithfully pray for one another. Prayer will be our first line of defense against the tactics of the enemy, who seeks to divide and devour the church.

**E** - Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may **edify** another. Romans 14:9

We join in this covenant seeking to encourage and to edify our fellow laborers as they serve Christ and this church.

**C** - All of you be of one mind, having **compassion** for one another. 1 Peter 3:8

We join in this covenant committing to show genuine concern for every member of the body. That concern will show in our living out the many New testament "one anothers" that fulfill the Lord's command given in John 15:12, "Love One another."

**T** - Therefore, putting away lying, "let each one of you speak **truth** with his neighbor," for we are members of one another, speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 25)

We join in this covenant committing not to be involved in backbiting or gossip but rather to "speak the truth in love" directly to the person who has offended us. We will not speak in half truths, or in a manipulative or deceitful manner about, or to, others.

**Will you join in the Covenant of RESPECT?**

# DAY 46 (Feb 21)

## PRAY FOR THE PASTORS

### HEBREWS 13:17

In yesterday's devotion we saw a covenant of RESPECT that should guide church members in their relationships. Today, let's consider a covenant agreement of **GRACE** that the elders of the church make before the church. As you consider this covenant, pray for each elder. Pray for his protection, for his family, for his reputation, and for his physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

**G Genuine Accountability** — As elders, we enter into covenant agreement with the Lord and the church to hold ourselves, individually and corporately, accountable to God, to one another, to our families, and to the church. We will live in a manner becoming the calling we have to shepherd the church of God.

**R Right Relationships** — As elders, we enter into covenant agreement with the Lord and the church to maintain integrity in all of our relationships, as Paul said in 1 Thess 2:5-10, *not using flattering words nor a cloak for covetousness...not seeking glory from men...behaving ourselves devoutly and justly and blamelessly among those who believe.*

**A Servant Heart** — As elders, we enter into covenant agreement with the Lord and the church to live out the example Christ gave when He took the towel and washed the disciples' feet (John 14:14-17), and as further seen in Peter's instructions to *Shepherd the flock of God among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:2-3*



**C Constant Safeguards** — As elders, we enter into covenant agreement with the Lord and the church to be vigilant (1 Peter 5:8), and to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10) in order to escape the onslaughts of Satan. Recognizing the weapon of the Sword (Eph 6:17), we will continue to grow in the Word, not neglecting the need for continuing personal spiritual growth. In the midst of the warfare, we will not neglect the second weapon God has given—prayer (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

**E Embrace God Intimately** — As elders, we enter into covenant agreement with the Lord and the church to live in growing intimacy with Christ, drawing near to God as He draws near to us (James 4:8). We will follow Paul's instruction given in 1 Timothy 4:12-15: *Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.*

As you pray for the pastors of the church, consider these words: *And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. **Be at peace among yourselves.** 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*

# DAY 47 (Feb 22)

## DISCERNING DIRECTION

### ACTS 2:41-47

Over these last 47 days, we have asked each church member to consider and to pray for one another, the leaders of the church, for discernment of the will of God, for personal growth, for the ministries of the body, and for the outreach of the church. Many have shared testimony of how God has worked through their lives, and others have expressed a sense of how God might be directing Forks. Throughout this time of shared prayer and fasting, the elders of the church have been intensely focused on discerning God's continued leadership in, and direction for, Forks. For the next three days, we will turn our focus to the future of Forks Church. Today we will consider the process of discerning God's vision for Forks Church. Saturday and Sunday, we will see the call of the whole church to participate in the fulfillment of the vision and the call to a spirit of unity as we do Kingdom work..

As we seek to more clearly discern God's direction for Forks, let us join in praying for the following four things.

**Vibrant Leadership.** Pray that the elders and other church leaders will show a passion for God, His mission, and the transforming power of the gospel in people's lives, both the saved and the lost. Pray that each leader will demonstrate a worthy life that is a model of Christ-likeness.

**Relational Intentionality.** The church has been designed by Christ as a collection of people participating in one another's lives. May our church become one where every believer finds ways to deliberately connect with others, where accountability and encouragement are a normal course of life, and where long-term relationships are held in high regard.

**Faithful Stewardship.** Jesus laid it out for us in Luke 12:48, *For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.* May we be known as a generous people who recognize God as the owner of everything. He has entrusted us with much, and we will be held accountable as to the management of that trust. He has made available every resource needed to accomplish whatever tasks He guides us to. Each believer is a channel God uses for dispensing those resources. May every member of Forks be a smooth-flowing channel and not a dam that unnecessarily stores resources for some unknown contingency.

**Prayerful Dependence.** May the natural disposition of our church be expressed in constant communication with God, recognizing our utter dependence on Him for our life and our hope. May every member, and leader, understand that connection with God in prayer is more motivated by our mission rather than our selfish needs. May we be known as a people of prayer.

You will notice in the above that the vision is not stated. We don't know what it is right now! But we do know this, that the statements above are a vital component of not just our discerning the vision, but will be necessary for the church to fulfill any vision that God will give us.

# DAY 48 (Feb 23)

## PARTICIPANTS IN A GREAT ADVENTURE

### EPHESIANS 4:12-16

Do you want the church to be all it's called to be? Do you want to be a part of something significant as God works through His church to accomplish His plans for us? Are you ready for a great adventure? We are continuing our prayer for the discernment of God's direction for Forks Church. As that direction becomes clear, each one of us will be faced with determining our level of participation in fulfilling God's call to the church. Let's be clear, every member (true believer) has been called to participate actively in the life of the church (1 Cor 12). Each one has been given a gift of the Spirit for ministry in the church (1 Cor 12:7, 11). What are you going to do with your gift? Your gift is important! It does make a difference. Without you exercising your Spirit-given gift in the life of the church, the church will suffer and struggle to fulfill the vision God gives.

In Ephesians 4, we see the church—every member—at work. Every member of the body has something to contribute to the well-being of the whole. Every part does its share, and as it does, fosters growth and edification of the body.

When the church members function according to their gifts we find that:

**12a:** The work of the ministry is done the way it should be. It's not done by a few paid professionals, but by every member, equipped and trained for the work. Think of the satisfaction that comes when you accomplish just what you have been called to do!

**12b:** The body of Christ is edified (built up) to be all it should be. The church truly becomes a “city on a hill,” shining a light that pierces the darkness, and rubbing salt on the world.

**13a:** Our faith, and the gospel, is expressed in the unity of believers who have joined with God and one another on His mission.

**13b:** Believers journey to maturity, to the full stature of the call of Christ, *so that [every follower] of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).*

**15:** Love is fully expressed as it is spoken and lived in accordance with truth.

**15-17:** And Christ is magnified as the head of the church, the One who supplies its nourishment and sustenance, and sees to its reproduction.

**God is giving us a vision, a new adventure! Are you ready to take part?**

# DAY 49 (Feb 24)

## CHURCH UNITY

### PSALM 133:1-3

**Unity.** Behold how good it is! When originally written the statement above was addressed to the people of Israel, God's chosen. Things haven't changed. It is as true to day as it was centuries ago. We should expect brothers and sisters (God's chosen) to dwell together in unity. We share the same nature; we share the same parentage; we share the same table; we share the same citizenship.

Unity is not uniformity. We each have our distinctive personalities, personal goals, backgrounds, life circumstances, etc. Unity comes from within and is a spiritual grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from the outside. We are individuals, and God isn't looking for uniformity of individuals. He is looking for unity of purpose, centered on our common life in Christ.

The psalmist gives us two descriptions of unity. "It is **like the precious oil** upon the head..." Aaron wore a breastplate over his chest that had 12 stones—one for each of the tribes of Israel. The oil bathed all those stones, and they all became one in that anointing oil. That's a picture of the Holy Spirit, who baptizes us into the Body of Christ and gives us spiritual unity (Eph 4:3). Note that unity is not something we create; it is something that God gives us.

Spiritual unity is also fruitful **like dew**. With the fruit of unity comes God's blessing! Is it any wonder that so many people, even churches, seem to be absent the blessings of God? Maybe that's simply the result of a missing unity of heart.

We are to strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit. Our unity requires diligence (Eph 4:3). Let's work on it and work on it now! We need full dedication. It starts in the heart, with a spirit of

humility, and a fervent desire to put the needs of the other first (Rom 12:9-16).

The world is full of discord, animosity, bitterness, and resentment. If in the midst of the world there is an oasis of unity and harmony, people will wonder what we have. Then we have opportunity to say, "This is what Christ can do." The world needs to see that the church is not just another social club, but an institution of God, supernaturally born, supernaturally sustained, with a supernatural destiny.

Pray for the fragrant oil and the fruitful dew of spiritual unity in the church today. As we discern and then follow His vision and direction for Forks Church, we know that spiritual unity is a vital component that will dictate the level of our "success." Decide right now: are you going to be a divider or a uniter?