



# JOURNEY

*a discipleship guide*

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BORDER CITY CHURCH

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## HOW TO USE YOUR DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with one-on-one or group discipleship. There are six entries per week. You will go through six entries in your daily private devotional time and then on the seventh day (whichever day of the week that happens to be) you will meet with your group for discussion (in the case of group discipleship) or with the individual who is discipling you (in the case of one-on-one discipleship).

Each entry is written in a conversational style with the author identified to make this a more personable experience. At the end of each entry there are "Related Scriptures." Look these up and prayerfully read them. They will give you further insight and understanding on the topic.

Use a journal to take notes or to write down questions you may have so that you can discuss these on the seventh day.

After you have completed this discipleship you will then have a tool in your hands to disciple others!

Jesus said:

*"...go and make disciples of all nations..."* Matthew 28:19

Enjoy the journey!

*Paul & Minda Nichols  
Border City Church*

## WEEK ONE

### Who is Jesus and Who am I in Him?

*Intro*

*Jesus is:*

- *the only way to God (John 14:6)*
- *the hope of mankind (Colossians 1:27)*
- *our Great Savior (John 4:42)*
- *the One Who bore the punishment for our sins on our behalf (I Peter 2:24)*
- *the Son of God (John 20:31)*
- *the highly exalted One, the One whose name is above all names (Philippians 2:9)*
- *the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18)*
- *the Messiah whom we follow (John 1:41)*
- *God incarnate (Colossians 2:9)*
- *the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords (I Timothy 6:15)*
- *Judge of the living and the dead (II Timothy 4:1)*
- *Coming again (Acts 1:9-11)*

#### DAY 1

2 Peter 1:11 *For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Jesus is identified with two titles in this verse. Titles are given to specify the authority of the one receiving the title, their function and role, as well as to indicate how one ought to relate to this person. If someone carries the title President, Manager, or CFO, for example, you have a clearer idea of the person's function, and how to relate to that person within that function.

Jesus became our Savior by dying on a cross, being punished on our behalf for every single sin which we have committed or ever will commit. His blood has paid the price in full! All who receive Jesus are completely forgiven, consciences cleared and have the ability to directly relate to God as a son or daughter, as if there were no reason for us to be rejected by a holy God! When we receive Jesus, He lives in us, and we are IN HIM, which means that when God looks at us He sees Jesus' righteousness and can accept us as if we were as righteous as Jesus. Jesus' atoning blood has completely removed our sin as the barrier between us and God.

We often seek to relate to Jesus only as our Savior, while the fact is, the very way that we receive His salvation is by receiving Him as Lord. His authority and rule (Lord) only and always brings about redemption and blessing (Savior). Today, do not merely call upon Jesus to be Savior. Yield to Him, worship Him, receive Him anew as Lord. Seek to know His will so that you might do it. This is the only true posture of a believer, and it is the only posture of those who find "entrance into His everlasting Kingdom."

Related Scriptures: I John 2:1-2; Romans 3:21-26; II Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; Acts 2:36;

*Paul*

## DAY 2

Revelation 3:19-21 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

Grace is biblically defined (in part) as merciful kindness, favor, divine influence (or enablement) and strength. God teaches us in the above verses that the way His GRACE finds entrance into the Church is through our fellowship with Him. In the preceding verses, Jesus had given an assessment report of sorts to the churches, and most of them weren't doing so well. The common mistake for most was that their works were not being powered by His grace. "*I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead*" (v1). "*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot*" (v15). Jesus gave it to them straight. He told them their condition was nauseating to him (v16)! This He said to a church that was busy – busy doing works that they thought were pleasing to God! But their works were dead works and their hearts were not engaged with God in their works. If we have been guilty of the same, let's correct it now and do what Jesus advised. He didn't leave them in their poor state, but in His love, offered them the way to His empowering grace in verses 19-21 above. He says the first step is to repent, which means simply to change the way you are doing something; change your mind about it and your direction. Jesus says in the verses above, "Let me in" and then reveals that it is through fellowship with Him that the exchange of grace will take place. Think of what happens over a meal (as Jesus suggests). A meal provides a space for open communication and a sharing of one another's lives. This is what Jesus longs for with us and it is the way the Father has designed for us to receive the grace we so need from His Son. In this divine exchange of our weakness for His grace, we become overcomers, divinely enabled to do the only type of works that please God, the works that are by His grace and through faith in Him!

This same grace also empowers us to overcome sin and patterns of behavior that are harmful to our lives. The way to grace is fellowship with Jesus.

Related Scriptures: James 4:7; Hebrews 4:16

*Minda*

## DAY 3

Revelation 1:10, 11, 12-17 *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last..." Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in*

*a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last."*

John was the disciple of Jesus who knew Him better than anyone else, yet when John saw the revelation of the exalted KING it was as though he had never seen Jesus before and he fell at His feet. How do we see Him? Friend, Shepherd, Servant, Lamb... YES, He is and will always wonderfully be all those things. But we MUST SEE Who He is today: Exalted, Glorified King, Lord, Lion. Without this view our Gospel is small and incomplete. When we see the King we are enlarged to live in the context of His Kingdom. May we always be captivated by fresh and wonderful revelations of Him and may we always be falling at His feet.

Related Scriptures: John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:17

*Minda*

#### DAY 4

*Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God made this same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

The words you just read were the conclusion to the very first presentation of the Gospel ever made by the church. Everything in the previous 21 verses before it all built up to that single statement, upon which all of Christ's church has been and always will be built. God has made Jesus to be Lord and Christ. Let us forever have this as our cornerstone, and only build our lives upon that truth. The Gospel message is not one of receiving a new moral code, organizational membership or particular way of life. As important as those things are, they are not the epicenter, or foundation. THE GOSPEL IS RECEIVING A PERSON, JESUS CHRIST. He, as evidenced by the supernatural signs of the Spirit in the moment those words were spoken, is not dead, but fully alive. Therefore, when we receive Jesus, it is with the full expectation that He will live in us, communicate to us and reveal to us what He wants so that we can obediently relate to Him as Who He is, "both Lord and Christ."

What does it mean that Jesus is Christ? It means that He is the One anointed with the Spirit of God to fully represent God, His will and to do His works. He furthermore is the One Who gives us this same Spirit so that we can also represent God and do His works.

What does it mean that Jesus is Lord? Jesus is not just our friend. Neither is He only our Savior. He is our Lord. To receive the Gospel is to receive Jesus as Lord, and to allow His Lordship touch and permeate into every fiber of our being and aspect of our lives. Today in heaven, all bend their knee to this King, and on earth, all who would truly receive the core of the Gospel message have made a decision to do the same. Sadly, many who call themselves Christians easily drift from this foundation, building their lives on other, lesser truths (if not un-truths!). Today, bring your soul into submission to this key, central truth of the Gospel and of Christ's Kingdom. Jesus is alive, speaking, living and receivable, and, once received one can only relate to Him based on Who He actually is: both Lord and Christ.

Related Scriptures: Luke 3:16, 6:46; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 2:19,20; Philippians 2:10;



Matthew 7: 21-27

*Paul*

#### DAY 5

*Psalm 3:4-8 But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah. I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me.*

*I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people.*

We can be absolutely certain of the salvation of our God! David was. David walked before us and his life was even a “type and shadow” of Jesus in the Old Testament. We can follow the example he set.

“My glory and the One who lifts up my head” is a reference to victory. Champions hold their heads up high. We can be sure that God wants to not only protect us but to bring us into triumph, no matter what our circumstance.

When the distractions of the day are over where do your thoughts settle? Are you finding sleep easily at night? David did. We need to allow the Lord to sustain us. Speak these scriptures over your sleep.

I love the picture painted in this Psalm of our enemy: toothless and pretty beat up. See your enemies that way today! (Remember, people are not our enemies. Our enemy is Satan, the obstacles he puts in our way and the attacks he sends against us.) DO NOT be intimidated by the enemy. That’s all he’s got to use against us, intimidation – but it’s an empty intimidation, it’s a LIE. Put your trust in the Lord and KNOW that His blessing is upon you, just as David knew it.

Related Scriptures: 1 John 3:8; John 16:33; Romans 8:37

*Minda*

#### DAY 6

*Romans 8:14-16 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.*

Here is one of the most powerful and liberating truths of the Gospel: in Christ you have been accepted as a son or daughter of God! Jesus is God’s Son, and when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior to God we become just as He is: sons of God! From this you can be assured of several things.

Firstly, you are not alone in life. Sounds simple, but this is so easily forgotten. You have RECEIVED the Spirit. He came to you! And, not just the Spirit, but the Spirit of ADOPTION. In every challenge, every moment of life you have the presence of a caring Father God who wants to lead you by His Spirit. Don’t approach your day, your decisions, your challenges and needs as if you were alone, or as if they were all up to you.

Secondly, as a son you have no need to fear. Let the truths that God loves you, is with you, is more than able to help you through anything to penetrate deep into your soul, establishing forever that you never have reason to fear. Trust and obey

your Father, as a good son or daughter, and be assured that, as you do, your Father will take good care of you. God's Spirit is not "out there," but is in you. Give place to that Spirit. Listen to the voice of God through that Spirit. Let that Spirit lead you, and you will walk into the inheritance and blessing that God desires to show you as His child.

Related Scriptures: John 1:12; Galatians 4: 4-7; Ephesians 1:5; II Timothy 1:7; Psalm 91, Philippians 4: 6-7

*Paul*

## WEEK TWO

### The Word

#### *Intro*

*God's Word is:*

- *Jesus*

*John 1:1,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

- *Scripture*

*2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

- *Revelation*

*2 Corinthians 3:14-16 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament... a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

#### DAY 1

**Matthew 7:24-27** *Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock. And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it did not fall, for it was founded on a rock. And everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them shall be compared to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the wind blew and beat on that house. And it fell, and great was its fall.*

Being a Christian through a new birth experience, going to church, serving in various ways...none of these things actually guarantee that you will do God's will for your life. Hearing God's word to your heart and then doing it...that is THE WILL of God and THE ONLY way to walk in God's will. When a believer walks in God's will by obeying God's Word, He walks in a place of power greater than anything in this earth. The devil can destroy us, but He cannot destroy Christ, and he therefore cannot destroy us, or what we are doing when we are abiding in Christ through His Word.

God's Word is the only safe place. As we hear it in our spirits and then do it in our lives, we position ourselves to fulfill eternal purpose, to please God and abide in a place of rock-solid safety. What a treasure we have in God's Word. So, what should you do? As you turn your heart to God today, position yourself to yield to anything you know He has spoken to you. Commit your heart to also receive anything new He wants to show you. Ask Him for His Word to you, and diligently look for it through prayer and the scripture. Don't be afraid of obeying God's Word! Rather, be afraid of living in any place outside of obedience to His Word. God



loves you and wants to share with you a life through His Word where you walk in His victory over the Enemy and the things of this world.

Related Scriptures: Hebrews 12: 25-28; John 15: 1-10; Matthew 16: 16-18

*Paul*

## DAY 2

Luke 1:38 *Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

We sometimes fail to imagine what things must have really been like for Mary. An angel appeared to her to tell her she would miraculously conceive God's Son and that He would save the world. But this didn't just happen. She had to say "yes." She had to receive God's message to her and put her faith in it for this miracle conception to take place. Mary said, "according to your word." The Greek word for "word" there is "rhema," which means "that which is or has been uttered by the living voice." I love that! We need to be always listening for and saying "yes" to the living voice, God's voice. When we say, "yes" to what God has said, we too conceive! We conceive the plans that God has in store for our lives. And we, along with Mary are all called to the same plan: to reveal His Word, the Son of God in the earth! What has God said to you? What is He saying now? Say "yes!"

Related Scriptures: Genesis 12:1-4; Galatians 3:5-9

*Minda*

## DAY 3

James 1:21-25 *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.*

One very real aspect of God's Word in our lives is that it saves us. We are blessed and protected as we live by God's Word. What protected Noah when the floods came? Was it not that he had heard what God had said and obeyed it? The only thing that will prepare you for what is coming tomorrow is obedience to God's Word today. James instructs us to "receive with meekness" the Word. The Word is coming to us, to "implant" itself into our hearts like a seed, but we do have a role of receiving it, and to do so with meekness. This speaks of not being idle, but actively receiving it in, as you would a guest into your home. The attitude of meekness speaks of humility and submission. You aren't just receiving suggestions or options, but input from the King of the Universe on how to walk in His will, which is the very thing you live for as a disciple of Jesus.

As you receive His Word, do so with the intention of obeying. Be a doer. When we spectate at God's Word, being entertained, or merely gaining information from it, we actually deceive ourselves into thinking that because we know God's will we are doing well. Our mission is not merely to know God's will, but to do God's will, which starts with hearing, but is fulfilled through living. Take the posture of a

humble servant of Jesus, ready to listen to Him, ready to receive and do. As with Noah, obedience to His Words today will save you from calamity tomorrow and distinguish you as God's special, favored one. *Paul*

What a wonderful analogy to see God's Word as a mirror. When we hold the Word of God up to our lives and "look into" the Word, we see the true reflection and condition of our hearts. Our "self image" needs to be defined by the Word of God and not by opinions, whether our own or others'. The Word will encourage us of God's love for us and our value. It will also convict us and lead us to transformation. I must stay close to the "mirror" so that I don't forget to DO what I have seen!

The words "looks into" in verse 25 are translated from the Greek word "parakupto," which means, "to stoop and look into curiously." This is the same word used in Luke 12:24 when Peter ran to the tomb and "looked into" it to see if Jesus was there. We must approach God's Word this way. We need to stoop, humble ourselves and look into it, looking with the intention to find Jesus! *Minda*

Related Scriptures: Exodus 19:5; Genesis 6:22- 7:1; John 14:21; I Peter 1:23; Luke 12:24, 2 Corinthians 3:14-18; Romans 12:1-3

#### DAY 4

Proverbs 29:18 *Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.*

Another word for "revelation" is VISION. The meaning of vision in the Hebrew language is "the communication of God's will." How awesome is that?! Do you have vision for your life? Do you have vision for the future? Are you walking out God's vision – what He sees for you? Some translations say that without revelation the people "perish". This is because without revelation/vision we are cut off from the picture that God has for our lives. If the space ship isn't receiving the communication from the space station it's doomed! BUT happy (blessed) is he who keeps the law (God's Words, His direction and instruction). Today, choose to see the picture – see the vision that God has for you. It starts by becoming familiar with His Words. His Words uncover the canvas that He has painted on for us. This is revelation.

As you go through this discipleship journey get into the Word of God by looking up the related scriptures each day. Let it start the daily habit of receiving God's Word. It is your spiritual food and vital for spiritual growth and life.

Related Scriptures: Deuteronomy 30:14-16; Psalm 119:105

*Minda*

#### DAY 5

Exodus 19:5, 6 *And now if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all the nations; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

Walking into the amazing purposes God has for us first requires two essential things: obeying His voice and keeping His covenant. The Hebrew word God used for "obey...indeed" when telling us to "obey My voice indeed" means to posture yourself as a learner, decisively focused on practicing what you learn. Fulfilling divine purpose begins with this posture. The word translated as "my voice,"

actually refers to the actual sound of the voice, and elsewhere is translated as “noise,” and “thunder.” This speaks of not just “reading” words, but an intimate relationship where His words reverberate within your heart. Today, choose the posture that aligns yourself with God’s calling and purpose for you. Posture yourself to receive and obey whatever He says, and seek Him in such a way that you hear Him in your innermost being.

Related Scriptures: John 10:27, I Peter 2: 7-9, Isaiah 66:2

*Paul*

#### DAY 6

Romans 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

We can only have faith for what God has said. Faith is not just for our “wish lists” or a means to manipulate God. True faith only works for receiving what has been promised from God. If God has said it, we can “bank on it” and we can courageously exercise our faith to receive it. When we believe what God says we display this belief in our actions.

Related Scriptures: Luke 4:3,4; Luke 5:5; John 15:1-7; Psalm 1:1-3; John 14:23

*Minda*

## WEEK THREE

### The Spirit

#### Intro

#### The Holy Spirit:

- is God

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

- is our Helper, sent to us from Jesus after He was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

- gives us power to live the Christian life and to be witnesses of Jesus.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- fills us

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

- gives us gifts to flow through us for the good of the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

#### DAY 1

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Before anything else today you are destined to reveal God to others. Don't harden your heart when you read that. If you feel that is beyond your reach, your ability, you are right. But, it is His ability, which is why we so desperately need power from His Spirit. Anyone who has effectively "witnessed of Jesus" through their words and actions was no more special or able than you are. The secret lies not in you, but in being filled with His Spirit. When you are filled, you find it easy to be led by Him, to be used of Him, and to be conscious of His abiding presence with you. How can you be filled? Pray to Him and seek Him in such a way that you won't be satisfied with anything short of the real, tangible sense of His presence. Want Him bad enough that you are willing to place His will over your own. Hunger and thirst for Him and His presence. Without His presence you literally don't have life, and you lack the power to do what you were really created to do. Being filled is within your grasp, and once you are, so is being His witness.

You may have become born-again or baptized in water, but have you been baptized in the Spirit? The New Testament scriptures clearly show the baptism of the Spirit a separate experience in which the gifts of the Spirit begin to operate in and through you. Do you want that? Ask Him for it! Get others who have been baptized in the Spirit to pray with you to also receive this amazing gift.

Related Scriptures: Matthew 5:6; Ephesians 5:18-20; Psalm 16:11, 42: 1-2, 84:10

*Paul*

## Day 2

*Act 1:4,5 And having met with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to await the promise of the Father which you heard from Me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*

This week I noticed my phone wouldn't charge when I plugged it in, and later that our computer wasn't turning on. At first, I became worried, but then went to the switchboard and realized it was a simple issue of a flipped switch, due to our gardener plugging in a lawnmower from outside into an interior plug and overburdening the circuit. I turned the switch fully off, and back on. Then, both the computer and the phone charger worked again. At that moment, I realized what had happened was prophetic. The Church – that means you and me – at times find that our spiritual "power" is not working. We can become worried, but the solution, as with this switch, is actually not complicated, but very simple. We've lost our power from overburdening our spiritual lives with cares of this world "from the outside" (outside of our inner, secret place of devotion). Power comes from a place of deep, sincere "waiting" on the Lord. Jesus told His disciples to wait for the promised Holy Spirit, and they did so from a place of prayer before He was poured out on Pentecost. When the cares of this world steal that place of focused, spiritual devotion, we lose the power that we are meant to have. If we've found that we are trying to access His power, but it isn't coming, let us get back to the source. Let us re-programmed from the overburdening we have allowed in "from the outside," and return to a place of determined, expectant waiting and looking to Him to be baptized anew and afresh regularly.

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 40:31; Mark 4:18,19; Acts 2:1-4; Psalm 91:1; Luke 24:49

*Paul*

### DAY 3

II Corinthians 3:6 *who also has made us able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive.*

Though Christians have received a New Covenant with God through Jesus, we often, in our ignorance relapse into relating to God in the New Covenant through the nature of the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was “letter” and “law.” The New Covenant is Spirit and grace. We should not attempt to serve or please God by seeking to follow any system of “do’s” and “don’ts,” (law) even if we derive that system from scripture. We don’t live by the “letter” of scripture (written, natural part), but by the life-changing revelation the Spirit speaks to us through the words of scripture as we read it, seeking to be taught by Him. Though God does desire us to behave rightly, and it pleases Him to see us doing so, our behavior is to be changed “from the inside out,” by the Spirit of God within us, and not merely outward performance of works within our own power. The essence of the Gospel message is that we cannot live a life that pleases God, and so He has given to us His Spirit within to teach, lead and empower us in a life of faith that does please Him. A life void of dependence upon the indwelling Spirit is a life that misses the essence of the New Covenant entirely. Stop trying to perform for God! You’ll never succeed. Rather, channel that energy into a relationship with God’s Spirit where you daily seek to hear from Him, to be taught by Him, to fully yield to Him and be empowered by Him. This is the true faith that pleases God.

Related Scriptures: John 5:39; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 8:6-12, 11:6; I John 2:27

*Paul*

### Day 4

John 7:37-39 *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Jesus says in the passage above that if you need refreshing come to Him and drink. Drink what? Drink of Him! This means to receive Him. Then He said to believe in Him. To believe is not just to give mental assent to, but it is to put all your confidence in, and trust in Him. Now get this, Jesus promises that if we trust in Him we will find a refreshing – not just a refreshing that comes upon us but a refreshing that is inside us, moving and continually flowing like a river! And, not just any kind of water, it’s living water – which will not only be our source of refreshing but also power, strength and even enjoyment (in the Greek meaning of living water)! When Jesus said this He was looking forward to the moment that He would give His Holy Spirit to the Church, because to interact with God on this level requires that we have His Spirit on the inside of us. Friends, I believe it is upon us to grow our faith. It is time to interact with God on a deeper, more deliberate level. To experience refreshing you must come to Him and not just wait for someone else to facilitate an encounter with God’s presence for you. You must believe (put all your confidence and trust) in Him and your river will begin to flow. Interact with the Holy Spirit today. Perhaps spend a few minutes praying in the Spirit or meditating on Jesus – not just mentally but spirit to Spirit, opening your heart. Let

the river flow in this moment and it will keep flowing throughout your day.

Related Scriptures: John 4:23,24; Isaiah 41:17,18; Revelation 22:1

*Minda*

#### Day 5

1Cor 12:7-12 *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

The gifts of the Spirit are not optional. They are part of God's blueprint for the Church He is building. The Spirit of God is in each member of Christ's Body to provide ministry that profits the rest of the Body. This includes you. It is not about "you" supplying to the Body, which you cannot do anyways, but about being available to the Holy Spirit in you and allowing Him to build the Church through you. You need not wait to be mature enough, spiritual enough, learned enough to do this. You start right now, today. How? Earnestly desire the Holy Spirit to use you with His gifts. Ask Him to. Spend quality time in the presence of God, learning to recognize His voice. If you can, pray in tongues for several minutes, all the while engaging your heart and mind with God, thus developing your faith and spiritual sensitivity to His leading and voice. Make yourself available and whenever you feel leading, step out in it. Sure, you may not start immediately as powerful and effective as those more mature. But, even those people started somewhere. The Body needs you. God is in you and wants to get out. Make steps into this today, and watch as God increasingly ministers through you to others.

Related Scriptures: I Corinthians 12:31, 14:1, 12-15, 26, 31, 39; Jude 1:20; Ephesians 4:12-16

*Paul*

#### Day 6

Acts 5:32 *And we are His witnesses of these things. And so also is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.*

Our call as believers is to witness of Jesus. We are, in fact, the only witness of Jesus that exists on the earth, save the Holy Spirit, Who also witnesses of Jesus, but only through us. And it is ONLY by the Holy Spirit that we are able to represent anything of the reality of Jesus. So, the fulfillment of your purpose is utterly dependent upon the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit in your life. How do you ensure this presence and empowering? The Holy Spirit is given "to those who obey Him (God)." The enabling power of God's Spirit upon us is in direct proportion to the condition of our hearts. To the degree that we offer ourselves to God, to obey Him and fully trust in Him is the same degree that we will know the Spirit's empowering in our lives. You were created to not act as a



spiritual orphan, but to live WITH God, to know God's very real presence and help. Today, "let go." God is well worthy of being trusted. Just surrender your life, seek His will, seek the presence of His Spirit, and you will live the abundant life you were created to enjoy and give away.

Related Scriptures: Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49; James 4:8; John 10:10

*Paul*

## WEEK FOUR

### Prayer & Worship

*Intro*

*Prayer is communication with God.*

*Matthew 6:9 This, then, is how you should pray... (NIV)*

*John 16:23 ...Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. (NKJV)*

*I Thessalonians 5:17 pray continually (NIV)*

*Jude 1:20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. (NIV)*

*Worship is our expression to God, honoring Him as supreme and is communicated in the way we live as well as through prayer and participation in acts such as praising him through music, song and dance.*

*John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (NKJV)*

### PRAYER

#### DAY 1

*Romans 8:26 (ESV) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*

Being empowered by Christ for your daily life touches every aspect of your life, including prayer. The fact is, most of the time we don't even know what to pray. God's amazing solution for this is "praying in the Spirit," or praying "in other tongues," by which God's Spirit prays His perfect will through us. In addition to this obvious benefit the act of praying in the Spirit is such a practical tool in getting us into the groove of interacting and living in the Spirit, rather than as a natural person. Many Christians find that they are committed to certain disciplines, but when it comes to manifesting the life of God's Spirit they are like an unoiled, rusty engine that can't crank. Why? Sometimes it is failure to exercise this gift whereby we train ourselves to operate in and become familiar with the realm of God's Spirit. If you pray in tongues, spend a few minutes doing so, while also worshipfully engaging God in your heart. If you have never done this, sincerely ask God to baptize you with His Spirit and enable you to pray in His heavenly language. Give space to and yield to the Spirit, release in faith His heavenly prayer language, and pray that you might receive insight to God's perfect will as it is being prayed through you.

*Related Scriptures: I Corinthians 14:2,4,13-15, 39; Jude 1:20; Romans 8:26-27*

*Paul*

#### Day 2

*Matthew 6:9-13 "This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in*

*heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (NIV)*

*John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Jesus taught us to pray that the “Kingdom come” and God’s “will be done on earth as in heaven.” Now that we are born-again, we have the amazing gift of the Holy Spirit to enable us to “see the Kingdom of heaven.” Seeing the Kingdom is the first step towards activating and operating in the Kingdom of God “on earth as in heaven.” When you see the Kingdom, it is like an epiphany, or an “aha!” moment. “Oh, I see!” It’s as though a light goes on, and you “get it.” And, once you “see” something in an “aha” moment, you then become empowered to behave and function in what you’ve seen. This is how the Kingdom comes into the earth, through us seeing it and then doing it. Do not say to yourself that the Kingdom is for later, relegated to the afterlife. The Kingdom of God is within reach today, and it is already within you, wanting to get out. Seek the King (Jesus) today, and as you see and hear the King, you see His kingdom, thus becoming empowered to operate in it.

Related Scriptures: Luke 17:21; Matthew 4:17, 6:10; II Corinthians 3:18

*Paul*

### DAY 3

*Hosea 10:12 Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.*

The nation of Israel had become strong in their own eyes, reliant upon their own strength. They were living as though they didn’t have or need a King. In their success they had begun to worship what they had made. Have you ever been in this position? Maybe you haven’t uttered the words, “I don’t need You, God. I don’t need a King.” But maybe you have behaved that way? In these moments we are in need of mercy. God told Israel to start plowing. God says to us to break up the ground of our hardened hearts and to dig in with Him. He said to sow to themselves some righteousness – this means get your life in order, start doing right and relating rightly to God. He said it is time (this situation demands) to seek the Lord. To seek means, “resort to, frequent a place, tread a place.” When you go on vacation you might go to a resort. We need to frequently find our R&R in God! We need to do some treading out or walking out (putting some action and follow through to) our seeking of the Lord so that it becomes our habit or our learned way of life. The wonderful thing is that in exchange for our sorrow and our barren ground, when we seek Him the promise, the reward is the rain of God! I don’t know about you, but I am in need of God’s righteousness to fall like rain, refreshing my life! A rain of His justice, His deliverance, His victory, His salvation! It is time to seek the Lord.

Related Scriptures: Psalm 72:6; Proverbs 16:15

*Minda*

## WORSHIP

### DAY 4

Romans 12:1 (ESV) *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

What follows the above scripture is a small discourse on operating in Spirit-empowered ministry and fulfilling divine call. All of us want that, right? Interestingly, it is this verse that we just read about “spiritual worship” that precedes all of that. Walking in God’s divine call begins with our worship. This verse defines more specifically what our “spiritual worship” should be. It isn’t just singing or lifting our hands, but “presenting our bodies a living sacrifice.” This is the heartbeat of true worship, the kind of worship that creates the atmosphere in which we can be empowered to fulfill divine call. Notice Paul did not just say to present our hearts. True, worship is a thing of the heart, and it begins there, but if it is true and sincere, it will be reflected in actual obedient actions - our bodies. Our highest worship on this earth, whilst in these bodies is to live from a place where we give ourselves entirely to God. As you approach God today in prayer and worship, do so from this truth. Offer your entire self to God as a sacrifice. As you do so, you can be sure that you are on the path that leads to the fulfillment of His plans for you.

Related Scriptures: John 4: 21-24; Philippians 3:7-14; Romans 6: 11-14

*Paul*

### DAY 5

Ephesians 5:18-20 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Because the infilling of the Spirit is the only way in which believers are empowered to carry out God’s work, knowing how to be filled with the Spirit is of utmost importance. Today, do you want your witness of Jesus to look and feel like a rusty, unoiled machine, or like a smooth, well-oiled one? Being filled with the Spirit is what makes that difference, and worship and praise are essential keys to being filled. Possibly you are not comfortable with worship and praise. Let me offer some advice: get used to it, because you’re going to end up doing it for eternity! Seriously, this is a skill that we need to learn. If believers are called to bring God’s heavenly kingdom to earth, certainly that begins with the attitude of worship, since the bible suggests worship to be the primary activity of heaven. Sometimes we are at liberty to sing and express our worship with our bodies, whilst at other times we must “make melody in our heart,” as we carry out the day’s duties. Regardless of where you are, throughout the day, carry a posture of worship that exalts God and calls your soul to remember Who God is. Continuously stay in a posture of thanksgiving. Be cognizant of God. Don’t just sing religious songs...lavish upon Him the praise that God would be due. As you exalt Him and declare His greatness you enter into the territory of the Spirit, where the Spirit also will enter into yours by filling you afresh.

Related Scriptures: Psalm 100:4; Revelation 4:10-11; 5:11-14, 11: 16-17 *Paul*

## DAY 6

John 4:7-10 *When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* (NIV)

To drink means to "receive into the soul refreshing, strengthening and nourishing". Jesus was thirsty, but he knew that the woman he was talking to was spiritually thirsty. So, he said to her, "If you knew the gift of God..." or, in other words, If you knew who I am then you would be asking ME for a drink – not of natural water from the well, but living water for your soul. "Knew" or "know" in Greek means "to see", to "perceive by any of the senses". The woman hadn't accurately seen or perceived Jesus. She didn't know who He was. If anyone is going to drink the living water, we must "see" Jesus – in our spirits, we must have something of a revealed picture of Who He is: Son of God, Anointed One, Messiah, Savior, Lord. Then, we will be asking Him for a drink because we know what He has to offer and we SEE Him as our source. It gets better. After we have accurately perceived Him, "know" also means to "pay attention to", to "have regard for" and to "cherish". This is how we drink of Jesus! By looking for His presence and listening to His words, by honoring Him with our lives and our time, by being devoted to Him and worshiping Him. Could we see our worship of Jesus in the light of this verse? To worship Him is to see Him and when we see Him, we drink of Him. There is a Well in you! HE IS the LIVING WATER. Spend some moments worshipping Him, with the posture of your heart, with your words or with a song and drink in His life and presence.

Related Scriptures: Psalm 42

*Minda*

## WEEK FIVE

### Kingdom Come

#### *Intro*

*The word "kingdom" literally refers to the "king's domain." It is the realm in which the will of the King is done, the reign of Christ (Matthew 6:10). The kingdom of God was the core of Jesus' message, teaching that it is here and accessible (Matthew 4:17). Jesus has not only made the way for salvation in the afterlife. Through the new birth He has placed us into His kingdom now, so that His kingdom can come out from within us into this earth (John 3:3-5).*

#### DAY 1

Luke 11:2 *And He said to them, When you pray, say: Our Father, who is in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, as in Heaven, so also on the earth.*

These words were from the model prayer that Jesus spoke when His disciples asked Him how to pray. What we pray about represents the essence of our relationship with God. Ultimately, our petitions to God should be coming from our deepest yearnings, from the stuff of why we were born, from the purposes of God. So, having said that, what did Jesus teach His disciples to ask for in prayer? That the kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. Herein is the grand mission of Jesus: to overcome evil on earth by restoring the Kingdom of God to it. The Kingdom was what was lost at the fall. The kingdom is what Jesus restored to earth through His earthly ministry, death and resurrection. If you don't believe this, then try to figure out what else Jesus could have meant when He taught us to pray for God's "kingdom to come, (His) will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Is the kingdom not what Jesus demonstrated through His life? People being healed, truth being proclaimed, love demonstrated...a direct flow of what was in heaven coming into the earth through Jesus. Then, when Jesus left He told His followers that they would receive the Holy Spirit to be empowered to do the same thing. *God's will for His Church is that we be, as with Jesus, the vehicle through which the "kingdom come, His will be done on earth as in heaven."*

Your purpose in life is to partner with God to see His will being done on earth. This must increasingly be our orientation. His will includes our provisions, so rather than seeking our own provisions, we should first seek His will! Lift your eyes, son and daughter of God! You are called of God as a royal heir with an inheritance in this life. He has called you to know Him and to know His will, and to be one through which His will could be done in the earth. He is with you to empower you by His grace and Spirit to do His will. As you go out into the earth with this mandate – just as Jesus did - no power of earth or hell can stop you because you are going in His authority, which is the highest there is!

Matthew 4:17, 6:31-33, 16:18, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; John 16:33; I Peter 2:9

*Paul*

## DAY 2

Matthew 5:14 *You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*

Jesus calls His Church to be a light to the world and a “city that is set upon a hill.” Both of these pictures express the idea of being placed in the world, yet operating by a different life force as a witness to the world. Our witness mustn’t only be words, but a lifestyle. Neither must it merely be our own individual lives, but our communal life – as a “city.” Within the city of Detroit God would have His church to be a bright, visible “city” within the city, living according to the ways of the Kingdom of God, and living in daily obedience to the King of that Kingdom. As that happens, our lives and general church culture look more and more like the Kingdom of God. The world longs to see a church that would manifest the life and character of God. According to Jesus, this is who we are called to be!

Jesus declared this amazing statement to His disciples just after teaching them the “Beatitudes,” or the fundamental ways of the kingdom in His message commonly known as the “sermon on the Mount.” The idea was that as His disciples learned and applied these kingdom ways – directly opposing the ways of this world – His disciples would be able to become a light in a dark world, and a city set upon a hill. We aren’t called to only go to weekly church services, pay tithes, be friendly and occasionally pray and read the bible. As great as those things are, ultimately Jesus’ church is called to manifest before the world what the King and Kingdom look like! This is how God has planned for the “kingdom come,” “His will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” – through us, His Church!

Related scriptures: Isaiah 2:2-3, 60:1-3; Micah 4:1-2; Matthew 5:1-14; Romans 8:19; Ephesians 5:8-17

*Paul*

## DAY 3

Matthew 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent! For the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*

To say that the Kingdom of God is “at hand,” is to say that it is within reach and accessible. Jesus gives us a very simple truth on how to grab or access this Kingdom: repentance. We tend to think of repentance as an ugly term, one that suggests we are miserable and worthless and should feel bad about ourselves. But actually, biblical repentance is a gift from God that causes us to hate things that are holding us down so that we can displace those things with His kingdom! In other words, repentance is the doorway to our advancement and to His kingdom being established in our lives.

What is repentance? The Greek word in the original text of this scripture actually means to “change the mind.” The kingdom operates on earth through our faith – what we believe. If we are to see His kingdom established in our lives we must believe the truth of that kingdom, and displace the worldly beliefs in our minds with the truth. For example, sexual lust is overcome by a righteous, godly understanding of sex, and not just suppression of impulses. Fear is overcome by trusting in God and believing the truth about His faithfulness. But, to overcome we must make the radical choice of saying “no” to our wrong beliefs and have them displaced with truth given to us by the Spirit and Word of God.



Repentance is also the choice to end a behavior, attitude or belief. Often we don't know how we're going to stop them, but victory begins simply with the decision to stop by God's grace. Repentance is the death blow to the kingdom of darkness in our lives. It is the way we are practically able to bring all aspects of our lives under the "king's domain."

Deal that death blow to your enemies – your sins, your unrighteous beliefs and attitudes - today. Don't coddle them. Don't justify them. They aren't your friend and mean you no good. Make them subject to Jesus. You have the authority as a child of God to do so. Trust Jesus to show you His truth that displaces the lies, and to empower you to overcome the lies. If you mess up, repent again. It's ok. You are in a war, and you will win as long as you don't give up in your faith. Jesus has already won the war, and now you get to enforce His victory and inherit the Kingdom!

Related scriptures: John 8:44; Acts 11:18; Romans 12: 1-2; II Corinthians 7:10-11; I John 5:4

*Paul*

#### DAY 4

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

To have the kingdom of God established in and through our lives we must first see it. For example, how should we repent – change our minds – if we do not see a new belief from heaven to displace our worldly one? Jesus' words teach us that by being born again we are able to see the Kingdom of God! Fallen humanity are spiritually blind, unable to see God's kingdom. It is when one places their faith in Jesus through the Gospel that God's Spirit comes to dwell within them, enabling them see God's kingdom. The Spirit of God dwells fully in heaven, yet fully inside of us simultaneously. He, therefore, is the essential link between heaven and earth, and the means by which we are able to see into and engage in the things of God's kingdom while living on earth. Through the Spirit we receive revelation, fellowship intimately with Jesus, receive and operate in the gifts of the Spirit to bless others, and are led through life by God. The kingdom comes through the faith of the believer, and faith is born in our hearts through revelation from God's Spirit. So, what must you do?

*But their thoughts were blinded; for until the present the same veil remains on the reading of the old covenant, not taken away.) But this veil has been done away in Christ. But until this day, when Moses is read, the veil is on their heart. But whenever it turns to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away (II Corinthians 3:14-16).*

As simple as it sounds, the key to receiving revelation is turning your heart to the Lord. Face Him. Receive Him. Bring your life to Him and yield it. Come out of hiding. Remove the veils that your carnal nature uses to "protect" itself from God. By authentically turning your heart to Jesus you create the spiritual atmosphere of humility that releases the Holy Spirit to reveal the King and His Kingdom to you. As you see the kingdom, you begin to be transformed into its reality – with the end result that a darkened, lost world sees the light of the glorious Kingdom through you.

Related scriptures: Ephesians 1:17-18; John 14:26; Matthew 16:15-18;

## II Corinthians 3:13-18

*Paul*

### DAY 5

I Corinthians 4:20 *For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*

When Jesus walked the earth and demonstrated the Kingdom of God it was undeniably with power. So, too, should it be with us who have His Spirit dwelling in us.

Mark 16:17-18 *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

How do we walk in kingdom power? According to Jesus, it is by believing. Truly believing in Jesus is to place all of your faith and trust into Him. Doing this is functional and practical. Somehow we've made it theoretical, as if we can "believe" in Jesus, and yet still live a life that does not require Him. The call to "believe" in Jesus is one of discipleship, and it is the same call He made to His disciples when He told them to "follow Me." Following someone involves more than believing things about them; it involves steady pursuit, action and personal connection. *The kingdom of God comes through a people who are earnestly following the King.*

And so, Jesus identifies in this verse the characteristics of those who are truly following Him; they demonstrate His power. We cannot manufacture His power to prove that we are following Him. However, as we make our priority following Him (seeking Him, hearing Him and then obeying Him) the natural by-product is living a life that depends on His power instead of our own, and therefore manifests His power instead of our own. It is by THIS – truly "believing" – that our lives witness to the world of Jesus!

Related scriptures: Luke 9:23; John 12:26, 14:12; Acts 1:8; James 2:17-19

*Paul*

### DAY 6

Revelation 1:13 *And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven lampstands I saw One like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and tied around the breast with a golden band.*

Revelation 19:11 *And I saw Heaven opened. And behold, a white horse! And He sitting on him was called Faithful and True. And in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

Revelation 21:1-2 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea no longer is. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband.*

The Book of Revelation can simply be boiled down to three stages: 1) Jesus reigning over His Church (chapters 1-5), 2) the tribulation and wrath of God upon the earth, culminating with Jesus setting up His reign over the earth (chapters 6-19), and 3) Jesus' reign being finally and fully set up over a new heaven and new earth (chapters 20-22).

History is just that – His story. As we see, His story is ultimately all about the reign of Christ. It is what was lost at the fall, what was made available through the cross, the goal of the Church and the ultimate end of the story. Our calling and inheritance is to be a part of His story. We therefore must make His story our story. In other words, the reign of Christ must become our high pursuit. The closer we grow towards Jesus the more we yearn for His kingdom to come in and through us. Our home is the center of His will. Our identity is His will. Our spirits dwell fully with Christ in His kingdom, and our purpose is to let that kingdom infiltrate our hearts, transform our lives and be released through our lives into this earth.

Don't meander through life, eking out an existence along with the rest of this fallen world. This world will pass away. Rise up into your inheritance. Find the will of the King and live in it! You aren't good enough? Exactly! That's why we need Jesus. The Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom is that the King died for us to restore us to God, where we would be empowered by Him to do His will, and ultimately get rewarded for it as if we had anything to do with it! You're not good enough or powerful enough – but this isn't about you! – it's about the greatness of this awesome King. As you draw close to Him, listen to Him and obey Him you take part in the great unfolding of His eternal plan.

Related scriptures: Colossians 1:13-23; Matthew 6:33; Luke 17:21; Ephesians 1:4-14

*Paul*

## WEEK SIX

### The Church

#### *Intro*

*The Church is the collection of all people who have placed their faith in Jesus and have been regenerated through spiritual rebirth in Him (I Corinthians 1:2). The Church is the Body of Christ, the vehicle on earth through which Jesus continues to carry out His earthly mission (I Corinthians 12:27). The Church is the family of God (Ephesians 3:5), His special people amongst all the peoples of the earth, called to shine the light of His kingdom into a dark, fallen world (I Peter 2:9).*

#### DAY 1

Psalm 92:13-14 *Those who are planted in the house of the Lord Shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing,*

Have you ever heard the expression, “Bloom where you are planted?” It is so important to be planted and stay planted in order for a plant to experience growth. If you want to find out what is in a seed is you plant it. It doesn’t grow and increase until it is planted. What does this mean? To become submerged in the soil. When you plant a seed in a flower pot, it doesn’t walk about and only “visit” the flower pot once a week to be watered. It gets totally covered up. You can’t even see it at first. The soil provides the perfect environment for what is inside the seed to grow up and push through and become beautiful.

In this analogy, the soil is the Church and your life is the seed. The House of God creates a context for our lives. It is a large, spacious, place to grow into. It is so important that we plant ourselves in the local church body God has led us to. Don’t jump out of the “pot” and don’t only “visit” the pot to be watered. Let your roots go deep into the relationships in the church. Let your roots go deep into the vision of the house. Identify with Jesus’ Church! He loves His Church (also called His Bride) and we should too.

To flourish means to bud, sprout, shoot, bloom, blossom. If we are planted in God’s House, then the fruit of our lives will be lasting and still fresh and flourishing in old age. Choose that for your life by planting your life in Jesus and in His Church!

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 61:3; Psalm 84:10; Psalm 23:6

*Minda*

#### DAY 2

Ephesians 2:21-22 *In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

In this verse Paul reveals the true calling of the Church, that it is to be the dwelling place of God on the earth. It is vitally important to know one’s calling if one is ever going to fulfill it. Many people view church as a “spiritual social club” with a Sunday meeting and perhaps a mid-week home group meeting. If this is what the

church sees herself as being, then this will be what the church becomes! Please, spare me from being a part of a mere “spiritual social club!” All activity in the church must point to and lead to our ultimate calling: being God’s dwelling place in the earth. We must know who and what God has called His Church (us) to be if we will ever become it!

What does it mean to be the “dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit?” It means that we collectively are to be what Jesus was as an individual man. God lived in Jesus and manifested His life and nature through Jesus’ body. As the “Body of Christ,” the Church is now called to manifest the life and nature of Jesus through our collective being. Let this identity sink into your heart of what you became a part of when you gave your life to Jesus.

What are some of the critical components to becoming a church that is a “dwelling place of God through the Spirit?”

- 1) Every member has an authentic spiritual relationship with Jesus (John 17:3)
- 2) Have a person/people “disciple” you to help you grow up in Christ (Matthew 28:18-20)
- 3) Get active in “discipling” others to help them grow (this is Jesus’ mandate to all believers, Matthew 28:18-20)
- 4) Discover what “body part” God has made you to be and function in that to build His church (I Corinthians 12: 1-12; Ephesians 4: 7-12; Romans 12:4-8)

Related Scriptures: see references in 1-4 above, also Colossians 1:27; Romans 8:18-19

*Paul*

### DAY 3

*Ephesians 4: 7, 15-16 But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ...But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitted together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of each part, producing the growth of the body to the edifying of itself in love.*

The Body of Christ is growing up into a full, mature representation of Christ, and as with a natural body that growth happens by each member increasingly doing its part. As you bring your heart to God today remember this reality: Jesus lives inside of you in order to minister through you. But, what if you don’t feel mature enough for this to happen? What if you don’t know the scriptures well, yet? What if you have not done all things right this week? These things are almost immaterial; the gift is in you BY GRACE. Jesus is building His Church, and the way He has designed it to be built is for each member – the mature and immature, experienced and inexperienced - to give supply and work effectually. What do you have faith for? What ministry desires has God given to you? Who does God want you to touch this week or today? As you are faithful to give what God puts in your heart, not only do you cause the Body to which you supply grow, but you, yourself grow through the exercising of your gift. Exercise is the only way you grow. Begin exercising your gift today by stepping by faith into using it, regardless how small (or big) you feel what you have to give is. Do you want to know God’s plan and purposes for your life? Building His Church IS His plan and purpose, and using us is how He does it.

It is important to recognize that you do not look to yourself to fulfill this mission. The same Holy Spirit that was in Jesus is in you, and has placed particular spiritual gifts (transcending human ability & power) inside of you.

1 Corinthians 12:31 *But zealously strive after the better gifts...*

Spiritual gifts operate best when you don't just passively believe in them, but zealously strive for them, wanting God to use you. Do you have a passion and zeal for that? What is behind such a passion? It is a passion for Jesus! When we love Jesus passionately, we begin to love what He loves, and He LOVES His Church, His Bride. Spiritual gifts are primarily for building up this Bride, an extension of the Lord to love, encourage, speak to and heal His Church. Today, as His Bride, passionately set your love upon Jesus, and in zeal for Him desire and ask for Him to use you to build up others in His Church through His gifts. It's simply about loving Him and through that love giving away what He gives you from the Spirit. We can all do that!

Related Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 14:1,12; Romans 12:4-6; Hebrews 5:13, 14; Mark 16: 17-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Paul*

#### DAY 4

Matthew 16:16-18 *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades (hell) will not overcome it.*

Jesus actually only referenced the Church twice in the entirety of all four Gospels, whereas He referenced the Kingdom of God 82 times! Our focus should also be 41 times more on the Kingdom of God – the realm of the King's domain, than on the Church. The Church exists for the Kingdom. The role of the Church is simply to be the gateway of the Kingdom of God into the earth. In the above passage Jesus gives us invaluable insight into how such a church could exist.

Jesus said that "the gates of hell wouldn't prevail" against the Church that He would build. That's a strong statement, and one worth considering. Haven't we all seen churches and believers who seemed defeated, who seemed "prevailed against?" How could Jesus have said this, then? Any part of the Church operating in carnal, fallen nature does not actually have power over hell, but that which is built "upon this rock" cannot be overcome by the powers of hell! Any part of my life that is "upon this rock" is an undefeatable force, carrying the authority of Christ, Himself. Knowing this, it is imperative that we understand what "rock" Jesus was talking about.

There are two parts to this. Firstly, Jesus was referring to revelation. Peter had just confessed information about Jesus, which Jesus said had been supernaturally revealed to Peter. Revelation is the phenomenon of the Holy Spirit causing our spiritual eyes to be opened to see spiritual truth. When we see spiritual revelation and then live in it, we live in a power that hell cannot touch. Whatever power of hell operates in your life or in the church (e.g., poverty, sickness, depression, dysfunctional families, etc.) are to be displaced and overcome by a revelation of truth. Secondly, Jesus was referring to the revelation of Who He is. This text actually came from Jesus asking His disciples Who they thought He was. Peter

confessed that Jesus was the “Messiah, the Son of God.” That same Peter preached the first presentation of the Gospel after Jesus’ ascension into heaven, and culminated his message with the point that Jesus is “both Lord and Christ.” Seeing Jesus for Who He is and relating to Him accordingly is the doorway to His Kingdom coming on earth as it is in heaven. He is King of the Kingdom, and when we on earth relate to Him as our King – following and obeying the King – His kingdom will come through us. This is how the Church becomes the gateway through which the Kingdom comes into the earth.

Jesus said that the “gates of hell” would not prevail against a Church built on “this rock.” Have you ever seen gates prevail? No. Gates are not offensive, but defensive. The picture Jesus is painting is one of the church rather being on the offensive, and the gates of hell – that which tries to hold the Kingdom back from entering the earth – unable to resist this Church as it is on the offensive, obediently doing the will of its King. How should the church be on the offensive? By fulfilling her mandate of spreading the Kingdom by preaching and making disciples. This is how the reign of Christ is spread in the earth.

A church that is seeing and receiving Jesus as Who He is, seeing and walking in revelation and on mission to spread what they have into others will be unstoppable.

Related Scriptures: Matthew 7:24-25; John 3:3; Acts 2:36; Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20

*Paul*

## DAY 5

John 17:21 *that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

The goal of Jesus in the Gospel is “oneness.” What was He sent to do? He was sent to restore oneness between humans and the Father.

The Church is called to be one as a family. Jesus the Son and God the Father reveal themselves in family terms. They are family, and their family unit is on mission to bring back lost members into that family so that they all may be one once again.

Related to this, here are a couple of thoughts to consider:

- The church’s being on mission must never conflict with the goal of oneness, nor our being a family. As soon as we are only focused on “bringing people in,” but bringing them into a church that is not growing in oneness we have lost the plot. We are to grow in our oneness with Him, with each other, and as we do, seek to bring others from the outside into the oneness of our glorious family;
- We must make oneness with God and church family our pursuit, and simultaneously make everything that separates us our enemy. Sin is bad, not because it is a failure of spiritual performance, but simply because it obstructs one’s relationship with either God, man or both. Unforgiveness, gossip amongst the church, or harboring any kind of bitterness in our hearts towards people is most damaging to the true purpose of God. We must give no place to these things.
- There are simple things we can adopt to promote oneness. How we talk to each other is critical. Prefer each other in the way we talk. Don’t speak



harshly. Consider how to say what we need to say in a way that will be best received. Be slow towards anger, and always err on the side of giving others the benefit of the doubt before we get angry. Smile. Take interest in other people's lives.

- As in any family or army, both of which the church are, there is an authority structure that holds unity and purpose intact. Learning to follow, to be yielding, but simultaneously confident, contributing family members is essential for oneness in a church context. Learn to follow God-appointed spiritual leadership in the church, and while you do, seek to have your gifts flourish and grow within the context that God is leading His church through that leadership.

Related Scriptures: II Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 4:2-6; Matthew 5:22-24; Philippians 2:1-8; James 1:19; Hebrews 13:17

*Paul*

## DAY 6

*Psalms 133 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment on the head that ran down on the beard, Aaron's beard, that went down to the mouth of his garments; like the dew of Hermon that came down on the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, life forevermore.*

Hopefully by now you perceive that the scriptures actually reveal a far grander purpose for the Church than "church as we've known it." As we see the greatness of *what* God's call for us is, we must give great attention to *how* He has planned for us to walk it out. Unity is one of the essential "hows" to seizing this inheritance. In fact, the Lord says He will "command the blessing" where we are unified.

Among the illustrations in the New Testament that describe what the Church is are family, army and body. These give us familiar mental images to us to help us comprehend God's intention for the Church. In any of these illustrations, unity of members is essential for proper operation and there is governance put in place to facilitate this cooperation. In the family, God has instituted the father as head of the household and to lead the family in partnership with the mother. When parents abdicate or abuse, or children disobey the family becomes dysfunctional. An army is led by a series of commanders, captains, sergeants, and so forth. If soldiers are to break rank, disaster follows. The body is governed by a brain. When body parts lose sync with the brain it malfunctions. Likewise, in the Church there is governance put in place to lead the Body into a glorious inheritance.

In the above passage of scripture, the Lord shows the picture of "precious ointment," which in scripture represents the anointing of the Holy Spirit, running down the 1) Head (Jesus), 2) the beard, Aaron's beard (eldership) and 3) down upon the garments (the Body, the Church). There is an order of the roles and functions within the Body of Christ. As we all understand these roles and relate accordingly, we enter into a place where God's blessing is "commanded." When God commands something, you can be sure it will happen!

What are the roles? First, Jesus is the Head. He is the One we all are following, and apart from His leadership we are simply no longer functioning. Everything comes from the Head. To administrate His will through the Church He appoints leadership into it. The scriptures refer to these as "elders." Their leadership is to

serve the Body, not dominate. These must be amongst the more spiritually developed in the local church, have their calling formally recognized by other ordained leaders, and demonstrate Christ's heart towards the church. Elders make up a team who the Lord uses to lead the Church into her high calling. Therefore, the scriptures urge us to follow and submit ourselves to their leadership.

The Head and eldership ultimately exist for the Body. It is the body that ultimately carries out the vision. The anointing that comes down upon Jesus, then eldership ultimately is to come upon the body, releasing the life and power of God through the lives of believers, like you!

Unity begins with unity with Jesus, the Head. But, it doesn't stop there. We must also be able to follow Jesus through His human, ordained local church eldership. Neither does it end there. As we unite with Jesus, receive and follow His delegated eldering authorities, we must walk into our calling united together with our fellow believers. As in any relationship, this often isn't easy. We need to communicate, forgive, cleanse our hearts, and allow our weaknesses to be challenged through relationship. But, if we will walk in unity at each level, God assures us that He will command the blessing upon us and we will be empowered by the precious anointing of His Holy Spirit to do His will on the earth!

Related Scriptures: Ephesians 3:15; 6:11; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 13:17; Ephesians 6:1-3; I Timothy 5:17;

*Paul*

## WEEK SEVEN

### Stewardship & Marketplace Mandate

#### *Intro*

*All that we have in this earth, our time, treasures and talents, as well as our relationships are given to us as a gift from God. They are not actually ours, but His, and we are to steward them. The idea of stewardship is using what is entrusted to us by the Owner to bring about His purpose. Everything in life then, our jobs, families, finances, relationships - ALL OF IT - is ministry to the King. The key to stewardship is faithfulness with what you have been given. We have a mandate to carry out, not only in the Church, but through all of our lives as we use what we have for His glory.*

#### DAY 1

Luke 2:49 *And He said to them, Why did you look for Me? Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business?*

Jesus spoke these words at the age of 12 to His parents who had lost Him and found Him in the Jerusalem Temple, engaging with the religious leaders there. At this age, He would have been just about to begin his carpentry apprenticeship with his earthly father Joseph, with the idea of inheriting that business. But, He said these words to show that he already understood that He was the Son of God, and as such would inherit His Heavenly Father's business. That business would not be fully conferred upon and entrusted to Jesus until after He fulfilled all of what God had Him to do, concluding with the cross. Anyone who is in Christ now also has God as their Father, and as such also has an inheritance to receive through Jesus. Everything in life is to prepare for that inheritance. Only by following Jesus, completing what He gives you to do you become prepared for your eternal inheritance. Don't lose your eternal inheritance for the pursuit of temporal things that you will not take with you into eternity. Trust God for what you need in this world, but make your true pursuit the will of God, obedience to which reaps massive reward, both in this world and the one to come!

Related Scriptures: Luke 6: 22-35, 12:31, 18:29-30; Colossians 3:23-24; Ephesians 1:11-18

*Paul*

#### Day 2

Philippians 3:4-9 *...though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ*

*and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.*

We think of Paul as being an evil man before he encountered Christ. But we see above that he was seen as the best of the best in his day, “a Hebrew of Hebrews”. He was from the right family, he had followed the expected traditional path, he was well educated, he knew the scriptures, he was blameless, he was zealous. And in the eyes of the Pharisees (who up to this point had been the keepers of truth and righteousness) he was a hero for killing Christians who were seen as a threat to the faith!

What are the things in your life that by the world’s standards set you apart as qualified, as significant? Are you deriving your confidence from the flesh? When Paul’s heart was captivated by Jesus he counted the bad AND the good of his past as rubbish! He was willing to walk away from it all in exchange for having Christ! Ultimately, God used the good and the bad in Paul’s past for His purposes and He will use yours too. But, let’s not build our lives on any confidence in our achievements, our experiences, our ‘goodness’. Let’s build on “*the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*”!

Related Scriptures: John 15:4-5; Daniel 11:32

*Minda*

The material for days 3 - 6 are excerpts from  
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*There are no daily related scripture readings for the rest of this week, but the daily entries are longer.*

### **DAY 3 – Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure**

#### *Meaning of Stewardship*

The New Testament word for stewardship is oikonomia, from which we derive the word economy. This word means “management of a household,” and it refers to the responsibility that is entrusted to a manager. A steward acts as an administrator of the affairs and possessions of another. He is fully accountable to his master and may act justly as did Joseph who became Potiphar’s steward (**Genesis 39:4-6**), or unjustly as in Christ’s parable of the steward who squandered his master’s possessions (**Luke 16:1-13**). As Christians, we have been entrusted with a stewardship; the things we call our own are not really ours, but God’s.

We have no possessions, and we do not even own ourselves.

**“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

#### *Responsibility of Stewardship*

God is our Master, and we are responsible to manage His affairs and possessions. Because we are His servants, all that we have is His. This explodes the popular

misconception that we give God His percentage and the rest is ours. According to Scripture, we are accountable to God for everything. Whether we have much or little, our key responsibility as His stewards remains the same: faithfulness. In the parable of the talents (**Matthew 25:14-30**), the amounts differed, but each slave was entrusted with something. The rewards were not based on how much they were given, but on what they did with what they were given. All of us have been given something, and only one thing is important to God-- faithfulness to what He has given us and called us to do.

### *Scope of Stewardship*

When the topic of stewardship comes up, most people think of only one area ... money. But from a biblical point of view, stewardship is all-inclusive. It touches every area of life, including our time and talent as well as our treasure. Stewardship is faithfully using whatever God gives us for His glory (opportunities, interests, skills, employment, family, talents, spiritual gifts, land, money, etc.)

### *Lifestyle of Stewardship*

If biblical stewardship involves every facet of life, it requires a basic commitment on our part: we must present ourselves to God as His servants, with no conditions attached. The real issue of stewardship is whether we are administering our affairs and possessions as though they are ours or as though they are God's. This is the difference between the great 'I WILL' and the great 'THY WILL' :

- I WILL ... **Isaiah 14:13-14** "You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."
- THY WILL ... **Matthew 6:10** "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

True stewardship reflects this exchange in a lifestyle ordered by the Lordship of Christ over all things. We are free to give without expecting anything in return because our needs are fully met in Christ.

### *TIME*

The Scriptures exhort us to invest our time wisely, reminding us that God determines the length of our stay on earth. "**Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil**" (**Ephesians 5:15-16**). God wants us to be faithful stewards, not squanderers of the time He has given us. Time is our most valuable asset, but without a proper perspective, we will spend it foolishly.

A biblical perspective on time involves several things:

- Life is brief, and we cannot be presumptuous about the future
- The eternal gives meaning to the temporal
- Like other assets, our time is owned by God

Most time is wasted not in hours, but in minutes.

### *TALENT*

God has entrusted us with aptitudes and abilities, and as good stewards, we must use them for His glory and not our own. This is true not only of musical, artistic, athletic, academic, business, and persuasive talents, but also of the spiritual gifts

we have received. Faithful stewardship of natural talents and spiritual gifts requires that we use them to glorify God and edify others. The purpose of our talents is not to please ourselves, but to serve others. Each of us has an arena of influence, whether large or small, and a specific ministry that the Lord has placed in our care. Regardless of what we have been given, every stewardship is tested by the same standard: faithfulness.

### *TREASURE*

When it comes to governing our financial affairs, we must choose between two radically different approaches: the values of our society, or the values of the Bible. The first alternative tells us to find happiness and peace through money; the second tells us to find the desire of our hearts in the Lord and to be content with what He gives us. Money is a good servant but a bad master—if we follow the world’s wisdom, money will dominate us, but if we submit to ‘wisdom from above’, money will serve us as we use it to serve God and others.

### **DAY 4 - Seek First His Kingdom**

If we allow anything that we desire or possess to rival our love for God, it will turn our hearts away from Him. We cannot combine devotion to earthly goods with loyalty to Christ. It is only when we learn to trust God for all our needs that we will overcome the anxiety that assails us.

**Matthew 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”**

So much of our time is occupied in earning a living that it is difficult to keep our priorities straight. Pursue the things that last! Material wealth is transitory. Biblical wisdom tells us to use our earthly time to build heavenly treasure. **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”**

**Matthew 6:19-21**

In seeking first His Kingdom, we must choose where our ultimate loyalty will lie. Jesus’ contrast between earthly and heavenly treasures and masters is too sharp to allow compromise. **“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Luke 16:13**

Our wealth depends not so much on what we have, but on what we can do without. We can cling so hard to possessions that they won’t let us go. God wants us to love people and use things. Too often we use people and love things. We do not own the things we cannot give away. They own us. So how do I start moving towards a lifestyle of ‘seeking first His Kingdom’? CONTENTMENT is really the key! According to Scripture, true wealth is not a matter of money, but of contentment with God’s provision for our needs. **2 Timothy 6:6** says, **“But**

godliness with contentment is of great gain.” Philippians 4:19 gives a promise that Christians can count on, “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Our security is in Him, not in money. The problem is that we often confuse our needs with our wants. This leads to the “if only” trap: “If only I had \_\_\_\_\_,” (e.g., a new car, a bigger house, a better job, etc.) “then I would be content.” This is the seed of coveting, and coveting is the opposite of contentment. God does not promise to fulfill our wants, and if we insist on them, we will never be satisfied with what we have; things will become necessary to our happiness. Instead of setting our hearts on wealth, we must learn the secret of being thankful in the state we are in. “Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:11-13

## DAY 5 – Financial Faithfulness

The broadest responsibility of a steward who manages another person’s possessions is faithfulness. God tests our faithfulness in little things before He places us in charge of larger things. Our faithfulness in managing what God has entrusted to us is a determinative factor in the responsibilities and rewards of our earthly and heavenly lives. Each steward should desire their actions to illicit the response of the master described in Matthew 25:21 ...“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”

### *Keys to creating an environment to allow for financial faithfulness*

- Integrity - As Christians, our work and financial dealings must be examples of integrity and honesty. Biblical ethics are absolute, not relative, and we must resist the temptation to act dishonestly just because others are doing it. Dishonesty reveals a lack of real dependence on God’s ability to provide for our needs and displays an attitude that God will not find out or discipline us. **Proverbs 20:17** “Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel”
- Diligence - **Proverbs 10:4** says, “A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of diligence makes rich.” God requires us to work for our living so that we will be able to provide for our own and share with others. **Ephesians 4:28** “Let the thief no longer steal, but let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.”
- Wisdom - Believers are responsible to share generously with those in need and to support the ministry of the Word, however, so often people are enslaved to debt and are not able to live freely in this regard. Financial wisdom is often evidenced in practical behavior such as using a budget, controlled spending, prudent saving and generous giving.

*WHO should give?*



God is love and He displays His love by giving. He gave us the best that He had in His Son Jesus, and expects us to display our love for others by giving of our best. This is not an optional matter for Christians -- the New Testament frequently stresses generous giving and hospitality. While some have the spiritual gift of giving (see **Romans 12:8**), God expects all believers to participate in the privilege and responsibility of sharing their resources as Paul says in **Acts 20:35**, “**In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’**”.

#### *WHY give?*

Contrary to some popular teaching, we should not give to get. Giving is clouded by greed and selfishness when it is done in order to become more materially prosperous. Faithfulness in giving leads to spiritual blessing, but it is not a guarantee of material blessing. Biblical giving should be:

- sacrificial, so that we will always trust God to provide for our needs
- motivated by love, according to what we have purposed in our heart to give
- unto the Lord, never because of what others will think but because it honors the Lord.

#### *WHAT to give?*

Tithing, which literally means “a tenth,” is one of the forms of giving. It was first mentioned in the Bible when Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek in **Genesis 14:20**. After his dream, Jacob also vowed to give a tenth to God in **Genesis 28:20-22**. While we are no longer bound by the law, the principle of tithing is still an important one for Christians today. When looking at both Abraham’s and Jacob’s tithe (which were before the law) we see the giving representing a heart of gratitude and a physical declaration of God’s provision and, it was never done out of obligation.

In addition to this, the New Testament provides two guidelines about giving:

- Each believer should give proportionately ‘as he may prosper’ (see **1 Corinthians 16:2**). The tithe, or 10% of one’s income was the least God ever asked anyone to give, and we may be wise to regard it as a minimum amount. We are the most prosperous people who have ever lived, and our giving should reflect this. If God blesses us with material prosperity, He may want us to give more rather than buy more.
- Believers should give sacrificially. Christ is the supreme example of sacrificial giving, and Paul uses this in 2 Corinthians 8-9 as a model for us to follow. “**For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord.**” (2 Corinthians 8:3).

### **DAY 6 – Our Marketplace Mandate**

We have already discussed that the New Testament word for ‘stewardship’ comes from *oikonomia*, from which we derive economy. This is so appropriate because when we think of stewardship in the context of the marketplace there are two definite economic systems: the economic system of this world and the economic

system of the Kingdom. Stewardship, like an economy requires us to 'engage in business.' Either we are minding our own business, or we are doing God's business.

*Are we meant to be in business?*

Luke 19:12-15 says, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. 13 Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.'" This text explains a parable that Jesus told about Him leaving this world to ascend to heaven, but saying that He will return ... BUT in the meantime we should 'trade, do business, and get involved in the marketplace' using the resources that he has given us. You see, we are meant

- to be involved with business
- to submit to our King's rule in the marketplace
- to gain!

*How do I make a difference in the marketplace?*

Too often people get confused and try to compartmentalize 'church things' and 'business things' as two different aspects of their lives. To be honest, if we understand God's Kingdom and stewardship, everything that we do is a 'ministry' to King Jesus when we are submitting to His reign in whatever area of our life we are functioning. We need to start tearing down the wall between 'sacred' church activities and 'secular' business activities and start seeing our jobs and businesses as vehicles to reach people with the message of hope and purpose in Jesus. One of the key ways of making a difference in marketplace is to actually understand where your area of influence lies. We would like to suggest three broad areas of influence in the marketplace, and while these are general, by understanding where your area of influence lies you can be more intentional about trusting the Lord for solutions to problems in your area of influence and in so doing expand it.

## GOVERNANCE

Decision-making positions in multi-national corporations & other large organizations that are recognized as thought leaders, exert significant influence and define norms for their industries. See the examples of men and women in the bible like Joseph, Daniel, Esther and Nehemiah who had significant influence in the greatest nations of their time.

## ENTREPRENEUR

New business enterprises that result from market penetration, innovation, and risk-taking involving new initiatives. See the example of Priscilla and Aquila in Acts. This couple were entrepreneurs and used their business to help Paul plant churches in three key cities in their day (Corinth, Rome, Ephesus).

## INTRAPRENEUR

Employees within various organizations that operate as internal stewards, and as catalysts of change and business growth. See the example of Jacob in **Genesis 30**. He was working for a dishonest boss and yet, against all odds, God gave Jacob supernatural strategy to breed flocks of sheep and goats. God's wisdom

saw him become even more blessed than the man for whom he worked.

God wants us to be the solution to the world's problems. A great example of people being used of God in the marketplace to solve problems is that of the Quakers. In 18th and 19th century England, the Quakers were only 0.2% of the population and yet they had a great influence on the developing economy, out of all proportion to their numbers. Many household brand names of our day started as solutions to needs that the Quakers saw in their areas of influence. Examples of companies started and run by Quakers were Cadbury, Rowntree, Lloyds of London, Barclays Bank and many more. The Quakers were instrumental in the abolition of slavery. The initial drive from 1787 onwards was propelled by Quakers. It was William Wilberforce who campaigned in parliament but he had an official team behind him. Seventy percent of this team were Quakers! What an amazing testimony. Only 0.2% of English society were Quakers and yet their legacy is still felt in today's economy. They were persecuted for their beliefs, but their trust was in God and He blessed them.

Today our call is to take ownership in the marketplace for Jesus. We need to see business people working hand in hand with apostolic teams and local elders to take the Gospel to the nations. God is calling an army together who are fully determined to spread the reign of Christ. Will you volunteer? Your time? Your talent? Your business? Stand up and make a decision today!

## WEEK EIGHT

### Making Disciples

#### *Intro*

*Disciple-making is the primary task that Jesus was about and the primary task that He has given all who follow Him to do. Discipleship is the vehicle through which the reign of Christ (His Kingdom) is spread from person to person. Making disciples is simply imparting whatever Jesus has given you into others (Matthew 28:18-20).*

#### DAY 1

Matthew 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Making disciples is the task that Jesus was given from His Father to carry out in His earthly ministry, and it is the task He has commissioned all of us with. Do you want to know your divine calling? Ultimately, it is to make disciples. Let's look at this over the next couple of days so that we can walk into this great calling.

Firstly, let's identify what we're talking about. What is a disciple? A disciple is simply 1) one who is following, and 2) one who is learning and adopting a belief and lifestyle. We became disciples of Jesus the moment we gave Him our lives.

Interestingly, Jesus chooses His disciples to make disciples. In making disciples we are not getting people to follow us, per se, but rather Jesus. We are able to give to others whatever we have of Jesus. So, the moment you first received Jesus you became qualified to make disciples...you have at least received Jesus, which is something that millions in the earth do not yet have! As you grow in Christ, you simply have more and more to give away to others, but you should start giving away from the start.

Regarding being qualified, it is important to note that the commission begins with Jesus' authority. On the outset it may seem like two unrelated concepts; His authority and our making disciples. However, we must realize that we do not make disciples because we are so qualified, but because our King has commanded us to do it! In other words, we are qualified because the One with all authority has told us to do it. Once we understand this, our perspective should become, "what gives me the authority to not make disciples?!" The commission begins with Jesus' authority and ends with the reminder that He is with us – in all authority – as we go. Making disciples is His work, and we step into His authority as we obediently do it.

Furthermore, the fact that Jesus points to His authority at the onset of the commission is significant. As you know by now, the Church's call is to spread the reign of Christ and His kingdom into the earth. Making disciples is the vehicle through which this happens. We mustn't take making disciples lightly. It is at the core of Christ's will. More about this as we continue tomorrow...

Related Scriptures: Mark 16:15-20; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 6:15; Isaiah 61:1-4

*Paul*

## DAY 2

Matthew 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

So, we're ready to make disciples. But how do we do it? Jesus gives us a clear outline. Let's learn and practice it!

Firstly, before Jesus says to make disciples, He says, "go." That is significant. It is so easy to wait, to stay, to try to mature first, get our life ready first...anything to suppose ourselves disqualified from becoming active in the mission. The church was framed by Jesus' command to go! Before we even make disciples we need to embrace that our identity is *going* – mobility, action, intentionality. It has become commonplace in the church for people to attend meeting after meeting, but never "go," never enter "the game." Don't be one of those! Go!

Now that we're ready to go, we need to know what we're doing. We are to go "and make disciples." Here are two simple parts to doing that. Learn them! They are the essence of how you will walk out the calling.

First, we baptize. Making disciples begins with leading people to place their absolute faith in Christ. Once a person does so, they are to get baptized – fully immersed – in water. The radical act of this public declaration is incredibly helpful in sealing the deal, creating a before-and-after moment as they acknowledge being fully cleansed from their sins, dying to their old lives, and rising to a new life in Christ. Powerful! Those we reach need to be baptized. (By the way, have you been baptized since you put your faith in Jesus? If not, talk to whomever you are going through this journey with and arrange to do it ASAP!)

However, we aren't called to merely make converts, but disciples. So, once their conversion is sealed through baptism we must take them under our wing and give them anything that we've received from Jesus. Jesus says to teach "them to observe everything I have commanded you." This is where it really gets fun. It is amazing to see the Lord use you to change lives as you share how He has changed yours! What have you learned from Jesus? What has brought you freedom? Have you learned to pray, to worship? Have you learned to hear His voice? Have you gained freedom from besetting sins through His Word? All of these blessings are given you so that you will be a blessing to others!

Who do you know who needs what Jesus has given you? Family, friends, work colleagues, etc. You are commanded to "go." If you're not sure how to reach them, consider this: the One with all authority is with you, and can lead you. Remember, this all operates through His power and authority! Start talking to Him about it, and prepare yourself to take action!

Related Scriptures: Genesis 12:2; Psalm 2:7-8; Luke 4:16-21

*Paul*

## DAY 3

Isaiah 61:1-4 *The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is on Me; because Jehovah has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to*

*those who are bound; to preach the acceptable year of Jehovah and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to appoint to those who mourn in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the mantle of praise for the spirit of heaviness; so that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that He might be glorified. And they will build the old wastes, they will raise up the ruins of former times. And they will repair the waste cities, the ruins of many generations.*

This passage is of particular importance to me and to Border City Church. It was the passage of scripture the Lord spoke to me when he told me to move my family to South Africa and then, 8 years later, to Detroit. It has been a particularly significant passage in the founding of Border City Church. In many ways it speaks of God's vision for us.

This scripture starts with saying that we are anointed to preach the "Gospel to the poor." The Hebrew word for "poor" used here refers to the economically disenfranchised, as well as the depraved and destitute of spirit. Jesus says that it is the "poor in spirit" who have the Kingdom of God. Poverty of spirit (the opposite of pride) is the essential ingredient for the Kingdom being received and spread into human hearts. In Detroit, there are people who are "poor in spirit," and who are ready to receive the Gospel. We are anointed to share it with them. In Detroit there are those who are also economically disenfranchised. We are also anointed to take the Gospel to them. The poor, in whichever dimension, are the fertile soil for the Kingdom to take root and spread. That is what we want to see, and these are the ones through whom we shall see it.

What is the vision behind taking the Gospel to them? This passage reveals the amazing plan of having the poor – regardless of which type of poor – being healed, freed, restored and strengthened through being discipled so that they can become the ones who transform their environment. There are men and women whom we will disciple and raise up, who will go into their neighborhoods and "restore the places long devastated." There are men and women of Metro Detroit, broken by this world, who will also be discipled and become ones who can "renew the ruined cities."

Our call is to the "poor in spirit." They are the ones who will receive the things of the Kingdom and "bear fruit" with it. Pour yourself into them. Give them whatever Jesus has given you. Help them break off shackles of sin. Help lift their gaze to the Saviour. As they gain freedom and victory, they can be "appointed" (vs. 3) into their own place in the work of God. They then become the ones who "build the old wastes, raise up the ruins of former times...and repair the waste cities, the ruins of many generations" (vs. 4). The reign of Christ must spread and much of that will be done through the poor and the "poor in spirit" around us after we give them what we have!

Related Scriptures: Matthew 5:3; Luke 7:22; 10:1-11; II Timothy 2:2

*Paul*

#### DAY 4

What can we learn from the disciples and Jesus on how to be fishers of men?

John 1:35-37,40-46 *The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.*

*... Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah". And he brought him to Jesus.*

*The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.*

First, the disciples:

John told Andrew. Andrew told Simon Peter. Philip told Nathanael. In all three instances these men brought their first point of relational contact to Jesus. Have you?

In all three accounts, how did they do it? They used their own personal testimony: *"We have found Him."*

Now, let's see how Jesus was effective in making disciples:

*John 1:38,42,47-49 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him.*

*...Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).*

*When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."*

Jesus 1) invited them into His life so they could spend time with Him, and 2) allowed spiritual gifts to flow through Him when he prophesied to Simon Peter and had a word of knowledge which spoke to Nathanael's gifting.

Let's employ these practices, which are useful in reaching those around us!

Related Scriptures: Matthew 4:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15

*Minda*

## DAY 5

*Isaiah 54:2,3 Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.*

In this passage, God is speaking with the "stretch" or scope of our lives. Developing in your relationship with the Lord is not only for your own benefit. God wants to "enlarge your tent". There are others He wants to bring under the covering of your life. There are those that God wants to bring to you to walk with, to care for, to nurture, to lead, but you have to make your tent larger first. If you're going to increase the size of a tent, you have to lengthen the cords and if the cords are going to be longer and the tent larger, then the stakes are going to have to be stronger. Put your "stake" in the ground and let it be grounded deeply and firmly in

your relationship with God and His Word, His Spirit and His Church so that you can then be stretched and enlarged to possess all that God has intended for your life.

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 61:1-4; Isaiah 54; Ephesians 3:16-20; Genesis 22:18

*Minda*

## DAY 6

*Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Well done! You've made it to the last day of this 8-week journey. We hope that you've grown closer to Jesus, grown stronger in your faith and have begun meaningful friendships in His Church.

We conclude with this passage, which was also Jesus' concluding comment to His disciples: that the commission begins at home and expands outward to the nations of the earth. We have seen that we need to enlarge our own heart's capacities to carry others whom we can disciple. In the same way the local church needs to enlarge its capacity to carry other unreached peoples in its heart...and go to them with the Gospel! There is a world that needs Jesus and His kingdom. If we don't go, who will? If unreached people groups are to receive the Gospel it will ultimately only be because someone went. To fulfill our international mandate we must enlarge our capacity to carry not only our own families, church and city, but also the nations of the earth. I encourage you to take the nations upon your heart and help do something to spread the reign of Christ into them. Help people who are going into the nations. Pray for them, and the people they're going to. Invest financially into their work. Go with them when opportunity arises. Reaching the nations will take a team. Some praying, some preaching, some financing, some organizing, some assisting, etc. Be on that team!

God saw a world dying in sin and sent His Son. His Son took upon Himself that same heart and now sends us. His love compels us to go, and to not stop until all the world has heard.

Related Scriptures: Matthew 24:14; Genesis 12:1-4; Psalm 2:7-8

*Paul*