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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 1 | JANUARY 4-8



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

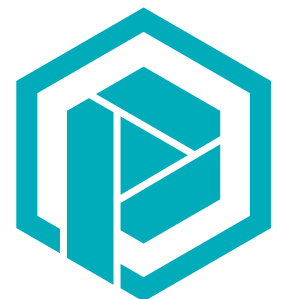
## Monday

Exodus 33:19; Psalm 34:8, 31:19, 107:1; Nahum 1:7

Understanding God's character is a fundamental step in understanding what we believe and why we believe it. One of the most foundational attributes is the goodness of our God. From the very beginning, God had a perfect plan for His people in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were able to live in perfect harmony with Him. They were given some form of authority on earth; they were given to each other for community and connection; and they were able to walk and talk with God in person. After the first instance of sin, this perfect relationship ended. However, God's goodness did not end. The entire Bible is filled with countless examples of God's goodness. From Abraham to Ruth to Paul, the Bible is filled with stories of a good God providing for and working through those who are faithful to Him.

**What is an example in the last year of how God has been good to you?**

**What about the last month? The last week?**



## Tuesday

Exodus 34:6–7; Matthew 9:36; Psalm 78:38–39

The most important thing to note about the compassion of God is that it goes far past just “feeling bad” for humanity. God is justified in His anger toward the sinful nature of His people, and He would be justified to strike down all sin in the world. Yet, He sent a Savior to allow a way to come back to the perfect relationship that we talked about in yesterday’s devotional. Jesus came to earth and was tempted and tested just as humans are. He ate in the company of sinners and those who were considered lower-class citizens. The idea that Jesus remained perfect through temptation and did not reject those who failed again and again is a testament to how compassionate God is. In the Old Testament, God provided for the daily needs of His people, and in the New Testament, God provided for the ultimate need of salvation.

**How can we be more like Christ in the way we show compassion to people around us?**



## Wednesday

### Psalm 145:9

One of the best examples of grace and mercy in the Bible is the story of Rahab and her family. Rahab lived in the city of Jericho, which was one of the cities that God had promised to His people. The reputation of the God Israel served was that He was incredibly powerful. Rahab, recognizing that truth, offered to help the Israelite spies and was, in turn, allowed to live in the Promised Land. It was merciful that Rahab was allowed to live when the rest of Jericho was destroyed. It was gracious that she was welcomed into the blessings the Israelites were enjoying from God. Mercy is God's withholding the judgment we deserve, while grace is God's granting us blessings we don't deserve. Both of these work together in salvation. When Jesus died on the Cross, we were saved from the death we deserve and granted access to a perfect relationship with God that we don't deserve.

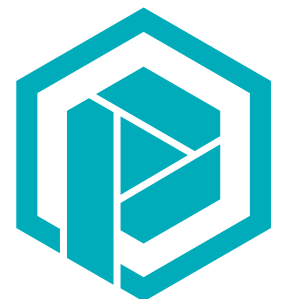


## Thursday

1 John 4:8, 16

One of the biggest things that makes our faith different is we serve a God who loves us. God is completely perfect in every way; therefore, to say He loves us is to say He loves us perfectly. As humans, the only love we are able to give is this flawed version of what God can provide us. However, being made in the image of God means we are able to be loved perfectly by God. Jesus furthers this idea of love by stating that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love people. Since God is the only source of perfect love, we must love Him first in order to love people. This is why John says that anyone who does not love does not know God, because God and love are completely inseparable.

**If we have to love God first to love people better, what are the implications of this in our lives?**

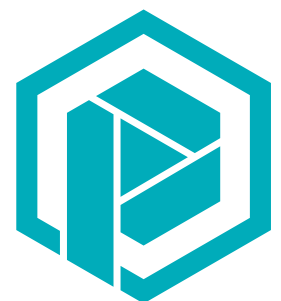


## Friday

Psalm 115:3; Jeremiah 32:17; Psalm 139; 147:5; 1 John 3:20

In Psalm 115, we understand that there is no limit to God's ability to do what He pleases and that He has all authority on earth and in heaven. In Psalm 139, we see that God knows every thought that passes through our mind and every aspect of us deeply and personally. In Psalm 147, we understand that God's power is limitless, and His understanding is immeasurable. God's attributes of being all-powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscient), and involved in everything that happens (omnipresent) combine into one overarching tenet that God is great. After establishing that God is good in everything that He does, it is equally important we recognize that God is powerful and limitless. It is essential that both of these ideas live in harmony with one another, as a God who is great but not good can become impersonal, and a God who is not great has no power to save us.

**Do you tend to focus more on the idea that God is good or the idea that God is great?**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 2 | JANUARY 11-15



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

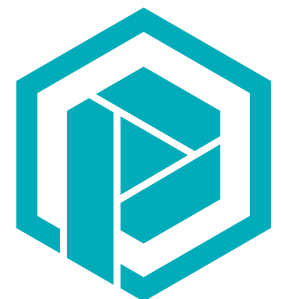
## Monday

1 Samuel 2:2; 1 Peter 1:15–16

What do you think of when you hear the word *holy*? Do you think of something sacred? Or something so special and private it needs to be hidden away and never seen? Is it something that you worship? Or is it something that you hide from?

God is described as “holy” throughout the Bible. “There is none holy like the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:2). *Holy* can be defined as “set apart,” “unique,” and “unlike anything else in Creation.” The main idea here is the idea of “apartness.” He is separate and different from His creation in that He is innately holy, and we are not. But, instead of staying apart from His creation, He calls us to be like Him in His apartness. “Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

**What does it look like for us to be holy as God is holy?**





## Tuesday

Psalm 11:7; Ephesians 4:22–24

The psalms are filled with David’s writing when he needed personal comfort and encouragement. In Psalm 11:7, he reminds himself that “the Lord is righteous, and He loves righteous deeds.” *Righteous* is defined as “morally correct or right.” God does not expect us to be perfect, or to be correct in everything we do. He does, however, uphold us to walk in righteousness and strive to be righteous in all that we do.

In Ephesians 4:22, we are called to “put off our old self,” sort of like changing our clothing. God gives us the choice but reminds us that this new life He has called us into is so much better than our old life of sin. As we “put on our new self” (v. 24), we become a new creation, made in the likeness of God, *righteous and holy*.

**What does it mean for you to be a new creation? How has God changed you?**



## Wednesday

Isaiah 40:28; Revelation 22:13; Psalm 90:2

In Isaiah 40, the people doubt that there is a God who created all. Isaiah asks them, “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God” (v. 28). He reminds the people that God is everlasting, the Creator of the ends of the earth. How have you not heard of this God that we know?

In Revelation 22:13, God reminds us that “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” God uses this terminology to remind us of who He is. Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. He also refers to Himself as the alpha and the omega in Revelation 1:8 and 21:6 to remind us again and again that He is eternal, never-ending. He wants us to know that He is the beginning, the middle and the end, and everything throughout.

Just as God is eternal, He was there even before the forming of the earth. In Psalm 90, it is written that “before the mountains were brought forth” (v. 2), God was there. He is everlasting to everlasting. Before anything ever existed, God was.

**How can you remind yourself of God’s eternal love for you today?**



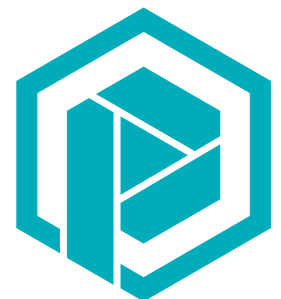
## Thursday

Isaiah 61:8; 30:18

In Isaiah 61:8, God reminds us that He loves justice. God is a God of love, and He is kind and full of grace, but we should not forget that He is also holy and just. These are equally important aspects of His character. He does not let evil go unanswered. We should praise Him for that! He is an awesome God. He also takes care of His people. God says that He will make an everlasting covenant with His people, and that promise foreshadows the coming of Christ, who would be the ultimate sacrifice, covering all of our sins forever.

God is a gracious God as we are reminded in Isaiah 30:18. He shows us mercy in all that we do but is still a God of justice. Mercy and justice seem to oppose each other, but God is so great that He is able to show both to us at the same time. On the Cross, Jesus took the punishment we deserved, and God's justice for our sins was satisfied. He shows us mercy by extending Christ's work on the Cross as a payment for our sins. Only God can find a balance in mercy and justice and show both to us through His love (Romans 3:26).

**How has God delivered you from justice through His mercy?**



## Friday

Romans 1:18; Nahum 1:2–6; Romans 5:9

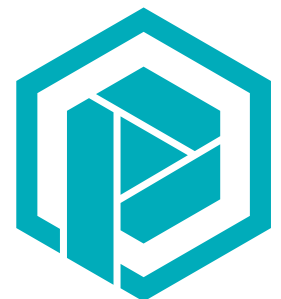
When you think of the word *wrath*, you most likely think of anger, right? God can sometimes be described as having “wrath” throughout the Bible, but aren’t we taught that anger is a sin? Anger is motivated by selfish, personal reasons or by a desire for revenge. God’s wrath, on the other hand, is completely righteous in character. His wrath is revealed from heaven (Romans 1:18), but only against those who are unholy or unrighteous.

We must also consider the character of the God, who brings judgment and wrath. In Nahum 1:2–5, He is described as a jealous God, One who takes vengeance against His adversaries, but is still slow to anger and great in power. His wrath does not come quickly or randomly but, when it does, His fury is poured out like fire.

This Scripture is not to make us terrified of God, but to remind us of His might and power. In Romans 5:9, we are reassured that, if we have been covered by the blood of Christ, we are then saved from the wrath of God. Just as the Israelites covered their doorways with lamb’s blood to be protected from the Angel of Death (Exodus 12:23), Christ’s blood covers and protects us.

**God is slow to anger, which means He is patient with our failures.**

**How has God been patient with you?**



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WEEK 3 | JANUARY 18-22



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

I think so often we forget that the Scripture is the living and active Word of God, not just a fictional book or old instruction manual that only applies to the older days. It is so encouraging to know that God's Word is constant, living and applicable all the time – and forever will be. Specifically, the latter half of 2 Timothy talks about how we are called to obey the teachings that God has given us. We've heard time and again that all Scripture is inspired by God, yet this truth is so easily taken lightly. Have you ever just paused during your time in the Word to think about the fact that you are reading the actual words of God? The same God who created everything and who loved you so much that He was willing to die so that you and I could live? As crazy as it is to try to wrap our minds around, it should also give us a sense of peace and comfort knowing that God is such a great and authoritative God that we, as human beings, aren't even capable of grasping a Savior that is perfect!

In the latter half of 2 Timothy 3, we learn that we should trust that what the Bible says is true because we trust God and who He is. His Word is our authority and therefore should rule over our lives in every aspect. As we are called to submit to the authority in our lives, we are ultimately called to submit to the highest authority of God and His Word.

**What do you think is the hardest part when it comes to submitting to the authority of others? Authority of God's Word?**



## Tuesday

Psalm 12:6; John 17:17; Proverbs 30:5

Right off the bat in Psalm 12:6, we learn that the Word of God proves completely inerrant. There we are given the imagery of silver being purified by fire seven times. That is such a beautiful visual as we see that the silver is put through the fire seven times until it is completely pure. Not one, but seven times. Just imagine that after we see silver refined once, it is already so pure, yet God's Word is said to be purified seven times more! God's perfection through His Son, Jesus, is often a very underrated attribute but when we stop to think about it, that is the one attribute that made possible His death on the Cross. Jesus, without flaws, died for us who are completely flawed and then raised from the dead three days later! He is a flawless God who loves us all so much despite the fact that we ourselves are flawed. We are reminded in Proverbs 30:5 that every word He has ever spoken is true and will always be true. He is a genuine and trustworthy God in that He will never say a word that does not have purpose. We often forget that we serve a God who is almighty and perfect in all of His ways, but it is such an encouragement knowing that despite the fact that we will constantly mess up, He never will; and He loves us through it all.

**How does knowing that God is perfect encourage you in your relationship with Him? Who can you remind about this truth today?**

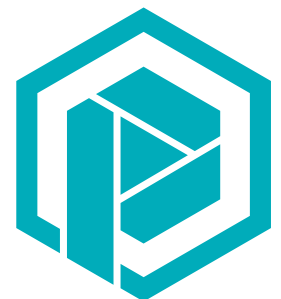


## Wednesday

Deuteronomy 6:6–7; Psalm 119:130

Have you ever had an experience where you went to a week-long event such as a camp or trip knowing absolutely no one; you made a friend and spent all of your time with that person, and by the end of the week, you felt as though you knew him or her better than anyone? That's exactly what our relationship with God is like. When we desire to dig intentionally into His Word, we are filled with the wisdom that comes from seeking God. Deuteronomy 6:6–7 talks about how we are commanded to ultimately love God, and from there, teach it to everyone and follow in obedience. God calls us to love Him with everything that we have – our heart, soul, mind and strength. Loving others should be the natural overflow that comes from a strong and faithful pursuit of Jesus. True clarity only comes from seeking God and desiring His will over our own. Psalm 119:130 reminds us that when we faithfully seek Him out, we will find true wisdom and understanding.

**How have you seen God give you clarity in your life?**





## Thursday

Romans 10:13–17; Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2

Romans 10:13–17 is such a beautiful description of the process in which we can begin our relationship with Jesus. This passage walks us through the process from when we first hear about Jesus, to how we begin our walk with Him, and then take it to others. Many of us can testify that God is truly the only reason we are living joyfully today. He is the sustainer of life, and He alone gives purpose to our lives. Without Him, we are nothing, and as Matthew 4:4 says, “A person lives not on bread alone, but by everything God says.” This verse means that we, as broken people, cannot live by the things of this world. We can’t count on material things or other people to keep us going. Though these things may seem as though they will give us what we are looking for, they never will be where we find our worth. God’s Word is where we find what sustains us. In Him alone is where our hope is found. First Peter 2:2 compares our desire for the Lord to a baby’s desiring its milk. Milk is essential for a newborn baby to live. Babies need it every single day of their lives just as we need Jesus every day of our lives.

**What are some ways you have tried to find fulfillment in the world? What are some ways you have seen God personally fill a hole in your life?**



## Friday

### 2 Timothy 3:15

It is encouraging to know that God's grace is not a one-time deal. It can be very easy to get wrapped up in the idea that we are too far gone for God to reach us anymore or that we have made so many mistakes that God cannot possibly still have enough love left for us. But those ideas are the furthest from the truth! In 2 Timothy 3:15, Timothy explains that he had begun his personal relationship with the Lord from a very young age and therefore, he had felt the presence of God's Word constantly with him. We are able to gain wisdom from God's truth as it always holds true no matter the situation. Be encouraged by the fact that we are never outside of God's grace, and He will always be sufficient for us time after time.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that tries to find peace and joy in other people or things. Sometimes it seems easier to trust in something tangible or maybe we want to be satisfied instantly. But over and over, God's constant love and grace have proved sufficient for His children, and even while waiting, we can trust Him, knowing that there is a purpose for what we are facing. God is a God of intentionality, and He does everything with love according to His will. Even though it may be difficult, He calls us to trust Him alone!

**What do you find yourself putting your trust in more: God's goodness or earthly things?**

**What are some ways that you can remind yourself that Jesus is better?**



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WEEK 4 | JANUARY 25–29



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

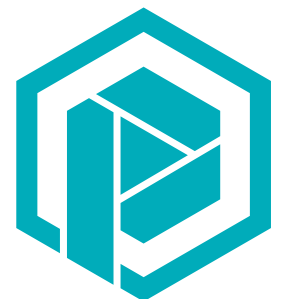
## Monday

John 6:37–40; 10:27–29

“Whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” We see here in John 6:37 that Jesus promises to receive everyone who comes to Him in faith, and that all who believe in Jesus will have eternal life. In John 10:28, we see that eternal life, by definition, can never be taken away since it is given by God, and it is His will that everyone would be saved (6:40). We can take comfort in knowing we did nothing to earn our salvation; therefore, we cannot lose our salvation.

**What barriers are keeping you from believing this truth?**

**Do you know the voice of the Good Shepherd?**



## Tuesday

Ephesians 1:13–14

Have your parents ever bought a car or a house? They likely had to put a down payment as a “guarantee” that they would pay the full amount for the purchase. In the same way, we see that the Holy Spirit is the “guarantee of our inheritance” (1:14). Our inheritance is our everlasting salvation (Hebrews 9:15), which was guaranteed by Jesus through His death, burial and Resurrection. Jesus already paid for our sins, so we do not have to. We can be strengthened in knowing our future is eternally secure.

**How does knowing our eternity is secure change the way we live right now?**

**Why is it important that our salvation is sealed?**



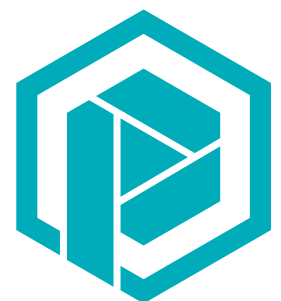
## Wednesday

Matthew 7:16–20; Galatians 5:22–23

In Matthew 6:17, we see that our fruit indicates our spiritual health. Fruit is a metaphor for what our words and actions produce. We are recognized by our fruit. In the same way we recognize an apple tree by the fruit it produces, we recognize fellow believers by the fruit they produce. Galatians 5:22–23 is our guide to the spiritual fruit we should be producing and what others should see in our lives. This fruit is typical of the Christian life. While our fruit/works do not save us (for that is by grace through faith - see Ephesians 2:8–9), they are evidence of the Holy Spirit's living inside of us and sealing us for eternity.

**Text your LifeGroup Leader and ask him or her what fruit he/she sees in your life.**

**What fruit was identified, and which fruit do you need to grow?**

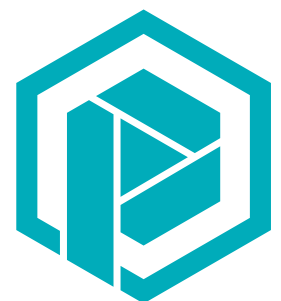


## Thursday

2 Peter 1:5–10

We see in verses 5–7 the qualities that should mark our lives as Christians. However, it is important to note, these are not a legalistic code, but rather desires of a transformed heart. We should “make every effort” to live a godly life. We are not meant to merely confess that we are believers, but we are to supplement our faith with godly qualities. These qualities should be increasing in our lives. It is a lifelong process in which we are continually growing in our faith until the day we are called home. These good works are evidence of our salvation and give us assurance.

**How can you be growing in the qualities listed in verses 6–7?**



## Friday

1 John 2:19; James 2:17–18; 1 John 3:17

Throughout the book of 1 John, we see that love is central to the Gospel (3:17) and that we can be assured of salvation (2:19). This whole week of devotionals has been about how we can be assured of our salvation. We learn in 1 John 2:19 that those who are truly saved will never abandon their faith, for they are sealed by the Holy Spirit. So we have a faith; now what? Well James 2:17–18 tells us that our faith is dead without works, and those works are evidenced in our fruit and our growth. The greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13), which brings us to today. We cannot be true followers of Christ if we do not help those in need. Jesus modeled it for us; therefore, we should love and help those in need.

**How have you helped someone in need today?**

**What is the most loving thing you can do for someone today?**





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WEEK 5 | FEBRUARY 1-5



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

2 Timothy 4:1–5

A lot changes over time. Fashion. Technology. Music. However, some things don't change. One constant is that people want to hear things that make them feel good or justify their behavior. If we're being honest, we're all prone to do it. This is why Paul challenges Timothy not to change the Gospel to make it more attractive, but to stick to the truth. Truth is not like milk that expires after a few weeks. Truth never changes. Paul makes the important point that truth must be applied to your life, and not just when it is difficult, but "in and out of season." The Scripture you're reading daily to grow in your walk, fight sin, and worship Jesus will all be used someday even if you can't see it now!

**In what areas of your life do you need to grow in your walk, fight sin, or worship God?**



## Tuesday

### Joshua 2

Life can come at you fast. When Rahab woke up that morning, there's no way she planned for this to happen! However, she had to make a decision in a moment's notice. You've likely not been in a situation like Rahab's, where you have to hide someone and even risk your own life. However, we've all been in a situation where life comes fast, and we have little time to react. This goes with sharing or defending our faith. If someone were to ask you a question or wanted to have a conversation about your faith, would you be up to it? These conversations and moments are usually not planned, which is why we must be prepared to act and not hesitate!

**Can you think of a situation this past week where you could have had a Gospel conversation but didn't?**

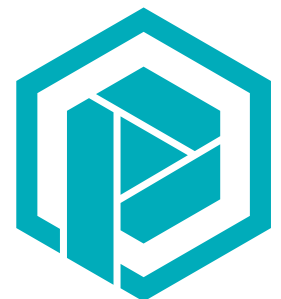


## Wednesday

Jonah 1–3

It's naturally much easier to be kind to those who are kind to you. However, it is *much* harder to be kind to those who are not kind to you. Why should we show love to them? Because God loves the people we can't stand. You know the people – the ones we avoid. The ones who always seem to irritate us. The ones who, for some reason, think it's their life's purpose to make fun of us. God loves them and wants them to have a relationship with Him. We were once enemies of God, too. As followers of God, we don't decide who gets to hear about God's love and who doesn't. We are simply called to share His love with everyone.

**Who in your life, whom you struggle to love, needs to hear about God's love today?**

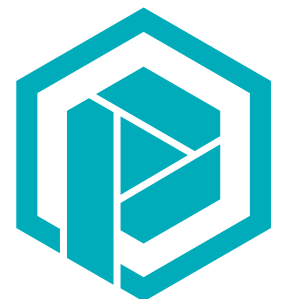


## Thursday

### Acts 4

Do you ever read Scripture and get blown away with the faith of those in the early church? Peter and John stood before a court and had to defend their faith. This had to seem terrifying! However, they stood firm in their faith and rested in the power of God. Today we serve the same Jesus they served and have the same Holy Spirit that empowered them. These men were not perfect either! It seems that Peter's mistakes are made known every few chapters. However, these men had faith in Jesus and were willing to trust that God would use them. Like them, we're not perfect, but God wants to use us. We just need to be ready to walk in obedience.

**Would you describe your witness as bold? How does your prayer life and view of God affect your witness?**

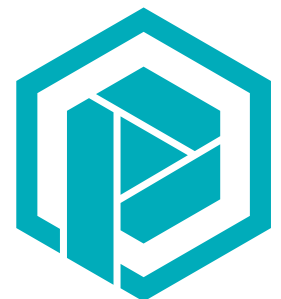


## Friday

Acts 8:26–40

Often, like Phillip, sharing the Gospel doesn't fit into your daily schedule. You don't plan ahead and say, "You know, I think I'll share the Gospel this coming Monday from 2:15 to 2:40 p.m." Sharing the Gospel is a lot like life - it happens when it does, and often doesn't go as planned. We interact with people every day in class, athletics, band, theatre, etc. The list goes on and on. Each day we have an opportunity to share a Gospel-centered conversation with a friend, classmate or even a family member. You may be thinking, "Am I prepared for that?" Yes, because God will equip you. The two requirements for sharing the Gospel are to be an imperfect person and have the Holy Spirit. If that describes you, then you're ready! At any opportunity that arises (there are more than you think), we need to be ready to share what Jesus has done.

**Whom has God placed in your life who needs to know about Jesus?**



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WEEK 6 | FEBRUARY 8-12



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

Isaiah 43:1–7

You've probably heard the phrase "we all worship something," which is true, but that phrase doesn't give insight into why we worship. See, every person everywhere worships, because worship is the fundamental drive of life. God created us with a drive, with a sense that there is something more to life than we've experienced on this earth. We weren't created to attain success or fame, instead our ultimate purpose in life is to know the God who made us; and out of that relationship, we should respond in worship. This response isn't bound by a song, though. We were created to worship God through all things and in all things. We were created to bring pleasure to God. We were created to worship the Lord.

**In what areas of your life do you struggle to worship God?**





## Tuesday

Psalm 95:6; Chronicles 16:29

Understanding we are called and commanded to worship is vital in understanding why we worship. God is the one perfect being in the entire universe, completely worthy of worship and praise. Thus, He requests, seeks, and demands that His created beings honor Him. In Scripture we clearly see where we are commanded to worship God. Psalm 95:6 says, “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!” When God commands us to praise Him, He wants us to look at Him, through what He has revealed to us about Himself until we see some aspect of His glory. His glory then produces an awe, and, in that awe, we are filled with a joy we can’t help but express in praise.

**When is the last time you truly expressed your joy in Christ through worship?**



## Wednesday

Isaiah 55:9; Psalm 147:5; Nehemiah 9:5; 1 Chronicles 16:29; Hebrews 12:28

Why do you worship? This question is one we must ask ourselves every single day, because it reminds us of not just why we serve our God, but of who He is. That question can result in an infinite number of answers for every single person. God has shown a different side or part of who He is. In one season of life, He may be your provider while being someone else's peace. We could spend hours and maybe even days listing what God is to us, and that alone should push you to respond in worship. Who God is will never change, but worship gives us a way of connecting with Him so He can reveal more of who He is. Day to day, He reveals to you who He is, and who He is, is the reason we worship.

### Who is God to you?



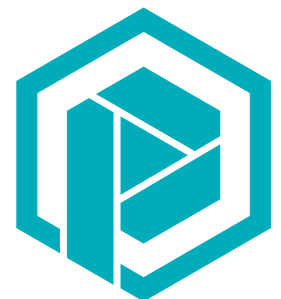
## Thursday

Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Isaiah 43:20–21

God has done a lot for you and me, and what He has done should provoke you to praise. Our God sent His Son to die a gruesome death on the Cross for our sins. In that death, He gave us grace and mercy of which we are so undeserving, and that alone is enough to praise. Individually God has done so much for each of us. Those stories are evidence of His work, and the greatest way to thank Him for His work in your life is to praise Him. Worship is a time for us to come with thankful hearts, rejoicing for what He has done in our lives.

**What has God done for you recently?**

**How can you use worship to thank God for all He has done?**

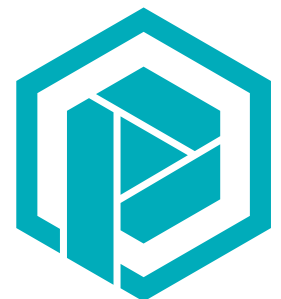


## Friday

Romans 10:17; Jeremiah 29:13

Worship is a time for us to receive. Maybe that statement sounds weird to say, but worship is a time for us to hear and learn from God. When we enter a time of worship, we are entering into an intimacy that can't be matched. Just like our friends, the more time you spend in conversation, the more you learn about them and who they really are. The same goes for our relationship with Jesus. We first must come ready and willing to give God praise because we are created and called to worship. We can also use these times to sit and hear His guiding voice over our lives. Worship can be a time to receive.

**Are you expectant to receive and why?**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 7 | FEBRUARY 15-19



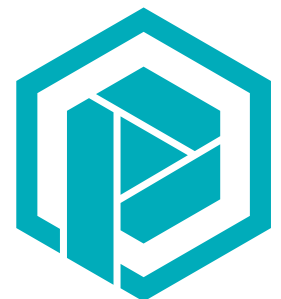
P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

### Psalm 150:1

In this Psalm, we see the psalmist begin every verse, except verse 6, with “Praise God” or “Praise him.” This is to emphasize that we should praise God for who He is and what He’s done. The word used for praise throughout this psalm is *Hallel*, which means “to boast, to rave, or to celebrate.” It is also the prefix of the Hebrew word *hallelujah*, or “praise Yahweh.” As creation, we were created to praise, to celebrate, to boast, or rave about the Creator. Praising, or boasting, about God goes beyond the songs we sing. It can, and should, happen in our everyday lives. We can praise God by thanking Him in prayer for all that He has done and will do, as well as telling people about Him.

**How are you going to boast or rave about the goodness of God today?**



## Tuesday

Psalm 67:3, 56:11–12

Praise is a response out of thankfulness to God. Since God freely and graciously offers salvation to us, as we see in Psalm 67, the believer's correct response should be to make His ways known, walk in His ways, and praise Him with thanksgiving, or *yadah*. Praise can also be a response for things that we haven't received yet, or *towdah*. In Psalm 56, David praises God for the deliverance from his enemies before he even experiences it. For us today, our response in all seasons of life, whether there is hardship, worry or trouble, should be to praise God with thankfulness for future deliverance. If you are in a time of ease, happiness or contentment, we should praise God with thankfulness for His grace and His mercy toward us.

**How can you praise God today with thankfulness for trials that lie ahead in your life?**



## Wednesday

Isaiah 55:9; Psalm 147:5; Nehemiah 9:5; 1 Chronicles 16:29; Hebrews 12:28

David stated the works of God would be declared, or praised, continuously from one generation to the next. The word for praise that David used here is the Hebrew *shabach*, which means “to shout, to triumph, or to address in a loud voice.” Proclaiming God’s greatness was not only going to be continuous, but it was meant to be loud as well. In our everyday lives, we should praise God for His greatness to others, as well as to remind ourselves of grandeur. Praising the Lord shouldn’t happen only when we go to church on a Sunday or Wednesday. It should also happen outside of the church building. Similarly to David, we should praise His name “forever and ever.”

**What keeps you from praising God continuously (day to day)?**





## Thursday

Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Isaiah 43:20–21

We have many different postures of praising God. We can praise God by boasting about Him; we can sing about His greatness; we can even lift our hands in thankfulness, trust and surrender to God. David used a word to describe a posture of praising the Lord that we don't see too often today. That posture is kneeling down, or *barak*. Kneeling is a humbling posture, and a rightful posture before the King of kings and the Lord of lords. This posture of praising God is an act of submitting ourselves to God, and to bless His name in adoration "at all times."

**When was the last time you fell on your knees in praise and humility to the Almighty God?**

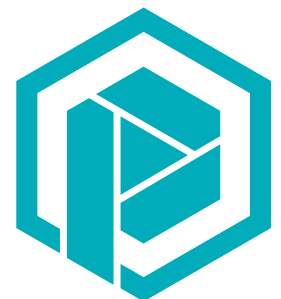


## Friday

Psalm 21:13; 22:3

In this psalm, we see that David rejoices in God because he has the victory and deliverance from his adversaries from the very start. The same is true for the people of God. We have the victory because God has already been victorious. David's response in praise, or *zamar*, means a celebration in song with musical instruments. David's response was, "we will sing and praise your power." Even during the times where things are going south for David, he is able to remember the praises, or *tehillah*, of Israel to God (Psalm 22). The charge to us today and every day is to remember we already have the victory over all evil. This is why we rejoice in song as David did. When life gets heavy and difficult, we must remember to praise God because this season is temporary.

**What are a couple of things that keep you from remembering that God has already won the victory?**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 8 | FEBRUARY 22-26



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

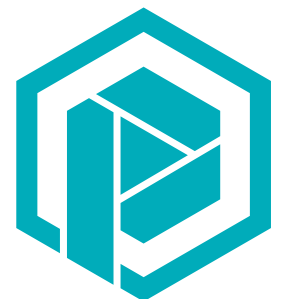
## Monday

Jonah 1:1-17

The word of the Lord had come to Jonah commanding him to go to Nineveh and preach a message. Yet, Jonah fled. In his disobedience, he found an open door as he ran from God. When he reached the dock, there was a ship leaving. He had the fare to purchase a passage heading miles away from Nineveh. Judging by his circumstances, perhaps he justified that God was providing a way out from the original call. Wasn't it providential that a ship was heading out and he had the financial ability to go?

Though fleeing was possible, these circumstances did not override the word of God to Jonah. God had told him to go to Nineveh, and no matter how many affordable rides were headed in the opposite direction, the circumstances did not change the call. Jonah took the opportunity to turn his back on God and His word, but God was not going to turn his back on Jonah.

**When your circumstances, advice from others, or your own feelings contradict God's Word, how do you come to a final decision?**



## Tuesday

Jonah 2:1-9

All the discipline that God had brought upon Jonah—the storm, being cast into the sea with anticipation of death, dark isolation inside the fish—brought about God’s intended work in Jonah. From the belly of the fish, Jonah cried out to his God and acknowledged that salvation belongs to Him. Hard-hearted and rebellious Jonah had been the recipient of great mercy and grace from the Lord. What better way to prepare the heart of a person to go and deliver God’s word to hard-hearted and rebellious people!

Before these events, Jonah refused to deliver a message to Nineveh because he judged them to be great sinners. But here, God reminded Jonah that he too was a sinner and he needed exactly what the Ninevites needed: the great mercy of God. A man who deserved to be dead at the bottom of the ocean for his disobedience instead received mercy. Consequently, Jonah opened his mouth in prayers of praise and thanksgiving to his God from inside a fish.

**What is a situation where God used His perfect and loving discipline to reveal sin that was in your heart?**



## Wednesday

Jonah 2:10-3:10

We can see now that Jonah's life would have gone so much better if he had just obeyed God in the first place. He had wasted money on a fare to Tarshish. He had wasted days traveling out to sea and then was transported by a fish. If he had immediately responded to the call, there would have been no storm, no drowning, and no fish. All of his efforts to derail God's will for him had been a waste. If you could talk to Jonah at this point of the story, you might ask him, "Jonah, is there anything you would do differently?" Surely he would scream, "Of course I would! I'd obey the first time!"

God has promised that He will patiently and lovingly work discipline into the lives of His people to bring about repentance and obedience. Disobedience is a waste of our time. God will continue to pursue us, sanctify us, and create in our hearts a greater desire for Him and His gospel. We will be brought to completion at the day of Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:6), so let us join God in this work that He is doing in us rather than fight against it.

**When was a time earlier in your life that you would tell yourself to obey immediately because you see now that it was a waste to do otherwise?**



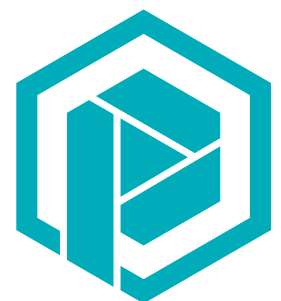
## Thursday

Jonah 4:1-11

Jonah's angry words were confirmations of God's character: (v. 2). These were things that Jonah knew in his head to be true. His theology of God was excellent. Yet, what he knew of God had not affected his heart; he did not love these things about God. This was at the root of Jonah's disobedience. What he knew and what he loved didn't match up.

Often, we don't sin because we have a theology problem. We know what God thinks about lies, gossip, lust, and greed. We aren't disobedient in these ways because we are unsure that they will displease God. Our heart simply does not love God and love the things that He loves to the degree we should. Jonah did not want God to save Nineveh because he didn't love sinners and desire their salvation the way that God did. Jonah and his will were at the center of his heart. God wanted to put Himself and His will at the center of Jonah's heart. To do so, He first had to show Jonah what was truly in his heart.

**Where in your life do you see a misalignment between your theology (what you know is true about God from his Word) and your heart (what you love)?**



## Friday

Matthew 12:38-42

Whereas Jonah said he'd rather die than go to sinners, Jesus said He would die so that He could save sinners. Whereas Jonah was thrown into the sea to appease God's wrath against him, Jesus was thrown into the sea of God's wrath to appease His anger against us. Jonah was in the belly of a fish for three days and nights and vomited out, but Jesus was in the belly of the grave for three days and nights and then "resurrected out."

Jonah preached a message and the people said, "Who knows? God may turn and relent; he may turn from his burning anger so that we will not perish" (Jonah 3:9). But Jesus preached the gospel of the cross, which promises us, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and clean us all of unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). God used Jonah to save one nation, but Jesus came to save people from every tongue, tribe, and nation. The people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but behold, something—or better yet, Someone—much greater than Jonah is here.

**If an entire wicked city repented at the preaching of Jonah, what hope should we have that sinners might repent at our preaching of the gospel? Do you see this type of hope in your evangelism? Why or why not?**





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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 9 | MARCH 1-5



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

Hosea 1:1-11

More than any other part of His creation, God created humanity to behold, enjoy, and display His glory. The fall broke us entirely. We still long to worship, but rather than worship God, we bow down to anything and everything else. This was happening in Israel.

Out of all the nations of the world, God had revealed Himself in special ways to these people. He had given them His law, His covenants. He had shown them His character and placed His name upon them. Yet, with all of this, Israel was still seeking to bow her knees before false gods. Every human heart was made to worship, and the sinful tendencies of our hearts will always cause us to drift away from worshiping God to created things.

In His great love, God will not allow His people to continue in unfaithfulness. He will show His people the idols that they worship and how they fail. Hosea came to prophesy to Israel that her idols would fail her and only God could save and satisfy. God will do the same in our hearts: He will do all that is necessary—trials, suffering, failure—to expose what we are worshiping other than Him. And in His love, He will bring us back, helping us to see that every idol will fail.

**When was a time that God revealed to you that you were putting your hope in something other than Him to save and satisfy you?**



## Tuesday

Hosea 2:1-23

One of God's indictments against Israel is that the people had taken what He had given them—grain, oil, silver, and gold—and they offered these gifts up to false gods. Instead of acknowledging God as the giver of all good gifts and turning those gifts back into offerings of worship to Him, Israel used God's gifts to worship idols. It seems ridiculous to us as we read this that Israel would not know God had given them all these things, and we wonder how they could worship anyone but Him. Yet we do this all the time.

Everything we have belongs to the Lord—He is the giver. Our bodies, our time, our talents, our money, our thoughts, our efforts, our relationships, our homes, our food, our very breath. Every single thing we have is from the Lord. Yet we regularly take all of these gifts and spend them on our own pleasures instead of offering them to God in worship. Rather than being good and faithful stewards, we are thankless recipients who use all that we have to run away into idolatry.

But also like Israel, when we are unfaithful, God remains faithful. He pursues our hearts, and in His kindness, He draws us back to Him.

**When has God pursued you in kindness and enabled you to turn and offer something to Him in worship that you had previously used for selfish purposes?**



## Wednesday

Hosea 3:1-5

Gomer had left Hosea and run off to a lover. According to Hebrew law, Hosea could have had her stoned for infidelity (Deut. 22:13-21). He could have written her a certificate of divorce and married another more faithful woman (Deut. 24:1-4). But in the middle of Gomer's adultery, God commanded Hosea to go get her. It appeared that Gomer had even sunk so far as to be a slave because she had to be bought for fifteen shekels of silver. Nothing about Gomer and her situation deserved compassion.

Hosea would have been justified to be finished with Gomer, even to deal her harsh consequences. But through Hosea, God is showing His love for His people. We do not deserve God's compassion. By all rights, we deserve His wrath and to be completely cut off from Him forever. But in His great compassion and love, God bought us out of our slavery to sin. Though we continue in our adulterous ways and sin each day against Him, He continues to forgive, pursue, and restore us to Himself. Not because we are worthy, but because He is mighty in compassion and grace.

**Do you ever feel entitled to God's grace and forgiveness? Do you "sin" sometimes knowing that God will forgive you? How can we ensure that we don't trample upon God's grace in our lives?**



## Thursday

Hosea 4:1-14

Israel, of all nations, was called to know the Lord. Not just to know a list of facts about Him, but to know Him in a deep and intimate relationship. Israel's story was primarily one of God offering Himself to her. When they were miserable in their slavery to Egypt, He brought them out demonstrating His power and might. In the wilderness, He gave them His commands and showed them His holiness. He covenanted Himself to Israel and made great and lavish promises, through which He proved Himself time and again to be faithful. But Israel had forgotten.

The people had turned to any god whose name they knew, assuming that each was powerful and cared enough to rescue them. They put faith in nations with strong armies and chariots. God was a distant thought from their minds rather than the all-captivating love of their hearts. In the trials that He began to bring into their lives, He wanted them to come back—not just know about Him, but to be in an intimate, covenant relationship with Him.

**How would you describe your relationship with Jesus? Do you merely know many things about Jesus or do you know Him? What's the difference?**



## Friday

Hosea 14:1-9

God desired the repentance of Israel. He wanted them to fully confess that they had put their trust in things that were not Him and turn back to Him knowing that they will receive compassion. God's promises about how He would act toward Israel when she would repent are full of hope: He would heal, He would love, His anger would turn. The same is true of everyone who repents, turns away from idols, and comes to the cross. To do so is to acknowledge that salvation is found nowhere else.

But repentance isn't just a one-time experience when we first turn to Jesus. It's a daily action—a regular confessing of all the ways that we forsake God and trust in idols. And we, like Israel, can run to God expecting to receive forgiveness and compassion no matter how far we've strayed. The finished work of Christ on the cross has paid the full debt of our sins. Every day, we can confess our sin and run back to Jesus knowing that He will heal, He will love, and there is no anger left over for us. There is now no condemnation for those who put their trust in Jesus and turn from their sin to run to Him again and again (Rom. 8:1-4).

**When you are convicted of your sin and confess it to God, how do you think He receives you back? Do you primarily see a God with disappointment holding you at arm's length—or do you see him waiting with open arms of love?**



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SPRING 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 10 | MARCH 8-12



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

2 Kings 17:1-5

King Hoshea of Israel committed treachery against the king of Assyria. Though promising to bring him tribute, Hoshea instead turned to another nation and attempted salvation for Israel through Egypt's hand to be spared service to the Assyrian empire. The plan failed miserably and Israel found itself under siege from the powerful army of Assyria for three years—until the people were ultimately defeated and led away from their land into captivity.

Treason against the mighty Assyrian king was not tolerated and instead punished with severe consequences. Either bow down and serve faithfully or face the wrath of the king and his might. If this is true of an earthly king, why did the Israelites not fear the anger of their heavenly King? Each person in this world has committed treason against God, the King of all creation. He is the rightful ruler, but everyone has failed to faithfully serve Him and pay Him honor as due.

What consequences await such actions? An infinite and eternal wrath. No Egypt or Baal could protect anyone from such anger. Only God could protect us from Himself. And so He did. He poured out all of His anger on His Son for our treason against Him. God alone could save us from God.

**When you sin against someone, do you first and foremost see your sin as against that person or as against God?**





## Tuesday

2 Kings 17:6-12

It seems so illogical to us that Israel would ever follow after other gods. The Lord had delivered them out of Egypt with so many demonstrations of His great power! God had brought them into this promised land, which had even been inhabited by other nations, and He drove out these nations so that His people could settle. And after all of this, why would they turn and worship the false gods of these nations, idols of metal and stone?

The truth of sin is that it is always illogical; it is always deceitful. It always tempts us to think we are acting in wisdom when we are on the path of foolishness. For if Israel was wrong to turn their backs on a God who had done so much for them, what about us? We look back not at a deliverance from Egypt and Pharaoh but rescue from sin and death. We have not the miracles of a bloody Nile and swarms of locusts as acts of our salvation but the death and resurrection of the Son of God. When we sin, we too are illogically turning away from worshiping the God who has saved us and instead turning to idols that we have made. But the gospel is the good news that God rescues foolish sinners like us.

**When was a time that you were able to see your sin for what it was—  
foolish and illogical?**



## Wednesday

2 Kings 17:13-17

We will become like what we worship. God has made humanity in His image and desired that we would worship Him and be like Him. With the fall, we turned our worship away from Him to all manner of created things. As Israel pursued false gods and dead idols, the people became like what they worshiped. As these stone and metal idols were deaf and blind, the people followed suit and closed their ears and eyes to the glory of God. These so-called gods produced hearts that desired death and the people killed their children as sacrifices.

We, too, were worthless in our worship of worthless things. Jesus died and rose to secure our hearts for worship to God so that we could return to becoming like the One who made us. We have been instructed to fix our eyes on Jesus and to be transformed into His likeness from one degree of glory to the next. Each day of this life, we are being sanctified to become more like the God that we worship. In eternity, finally free from sin, we will be the perfect image-bearers that we were always meant to be.

**Looking back over the past year, what is one area that you have seen God conforming you more into the image of Christ?**



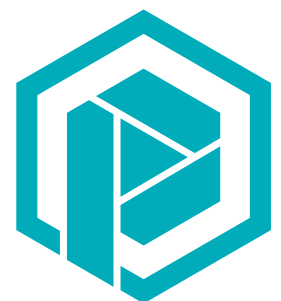
## Thursday

2 Kings 17:18-20

God handed His people over to plunderers. Assyria was waiting in the wings, ready to besiege Israel, but only by the sovereign hand of the Lord were they able to carry out their evil intentions. Assyria was always a tool in the hand of God. He had dealings with His sinful and idolatrous people, and though Assyria was only hungry for power, the king did not know that his heart was in the hand of the Lord, being turned whichever way he wished.

God has used and will use even the sinful intentions of men to carry out His will. When Jesus went to the cross, many wicked hearts led him there. Judas paved the way and the religious leaders and Roman soldiers joined in to indict, torture, and crucify Jesus (Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28). While Jesus died on the cross according to the will of God (Rom. 5:6), there were evil hearts and sinful choices on the part of sinful men that carried it out. Though sinful people consider themselves free to carry out the desires of their hearts, these desires can still serve the plan of God (Prov. 21:1).

**How comforting is it to know that God is in control even in people's sinful choices?**



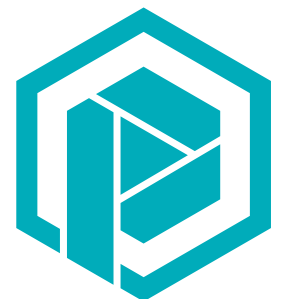
## Friday

2 Kings 17:21-40

The foreigners newly planted in Israel were unsure how to worship Yahweh, the God of the land, but the lion attacks brought an urgency to learn. With an Israelite priest leading the way, the foreigners grew in awareness of who God was and what He required. But this knowledge did not accomplish true worship. These new settlers believed that Yahweh was just like any other god. They were happy to add Him to their pile of idols and offer Him worship along with all the others. They weren't interested in a relationship with Him but simply wanted to avoid the consequences of His anger.

Many of us today try to tack on God to our worship. We bow down to money, we serve power, we strive for fame, and yes, we go to church and sing some songs to God as well. But the people of this story offer us insight that we need: half-hearted worship is no worship at all. Either we bow down solely to God or we are not really bowing down at all. If we have only turned to God out of fear of the consequences of His anger, not regarding Him as our greatest treasure, then is this really worship? True Christians are not ones who run to God merely to avoid hell but instead run to Him because we see He is the only God worthy of all worship.

**What difference do you see in your life when your obedience and worship flows out of a treasuring of God versus hoping to avoid consequences from Him?**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 11 | MARCH 15-19



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

Isaiah 49:1-26

To feel forgotten is a desolate feeling, even if you have a promise of a future hope.

Isaiah 49 walks the exiled people of God through how they will be saved—through a Servant. Then it points them to what is to come—the redemption of Zion. Although the Lord describes their victorious future, the exiles still cry out, “Forsaken!” (v. 14).

Waiting is an issue that all of humanity wrestles with, but when we run ahead of God, we are saying we know better than the Almighty. Forsaking the discipline of waiting on a micro scale can get us in trouble, but on a macro scale it is a test for our faith.

In Luke, we are introduced to Anna and Simeon, two people in a long line of descendants who waited for this highly anticipated Servant. Anna waited so eagerly that she never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying, prepared to meet the Messiah (Luke 2:36-37).

In the same way that Anna and Simeon looked to the future Messiah with eagerness. The promise is clear: Heaven will come to earth; Jesus will reign in victory. Until then, we wait in holy anticipation.

**How do you find yourself struggling to wait in faithfulness and with patience for heaven to come to earth?**



## Tuesday

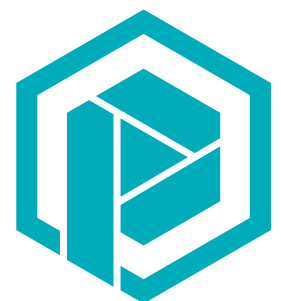
Isaiah 50:1-51:23

The Servant has been nothing but obedient. He has spoken what He was asked to speak (50:4-5), and because of His words, He was beaten (50:6). With Jesus, the Servant, as our example, we will also face persecution. Right after the fall of humanity, Cain killed his brother, Abel (Gen. 4). Later, Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers (Gen. 37:18-28). In another example, the Israelites wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb, but God intervened (Num. 14:5-10).

Jesus instructs His followers that they are blessed when persecuted because of Him (Matt. 5:11).

Suffering and persecution are part of our story, but the weight of glory should outweigh our earthly woes. Though Jesus asked for His cup of suffering on the cross to pass by Him, He still endured it because He fully understood what was before Him.

**What makes you most excited about heaven? How can you keep a heavenly viewpoint in the midst of suffering?**



## Wednesday

Isaiah 52:1-53:3

In this passage, Jerusalem is asked to dress up and take a seat in honor (52:1-2), opposite of Babylon who was told to go sit in the dust in rags (47:1). Similarly, God has a glorious position prepared for His people in Christ, but we must first understand how enslaved we are to our own sins, from which we need to be freed (52:2). People must know they are lost before they can know they can be saved.

When believers live as if they are captive to sin, what we are saying to a dying world is that God can't save us from it.

Like it or not, we have been called to carry a divine reputation. We will only be able to do this through the power of the Holy Spirit. What a privilege and honor it is to be the feet that bring good news, but we can only swiftly carry that news if chains have been broken.

**How is repentance for sin revealed in your life, both privately and in public?**





## Thursday

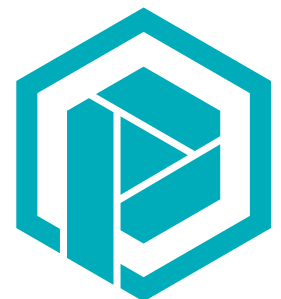
Isaiah 53:4-12

The Servant was like a lamb led to the slaughter. Jesus begged the Father for the cup to pass Him by (Matt. 26:39), but He endured the cross and was cut off from the land of the living. Jesus' story is tragic, but it is primarily one of exaltation.

Some people debate when Jesus' life went from one of humiliation to exaltation. But one could argue it was immediately after His crucifixion. Fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy, Jesus was assigned a grave with the rich (Isa. 53:9). Joseph of Arimathea convinced Pilate to let Jesus be buried in his wealthy family's tomb (Matt. 27:57-60).

Humiliation to exaltation started at the tomb and burst forth in glory in three days at His resurrection. And since then, He has been seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, interceding on our behalf (Heb. 7:25). Jesus gave of Himself once and for all, and God immediately exalted Him so that many could be exalted through Him.

**How does God's ability to turn humiliation into exaltation encourage you to live in faithfulness to God's calling and mission?**



## Friday

Isaiah 54:1-55:13

The Lord does the impossible. He redeems the widow and the childless. He builds her gates of sparkling jewels and gives her walls of precious stones. It's a real-life Cinderella story. What was needed to satisfy the righteous anger of God has been done, and there are no more barriers to Him.

In fact, He has set a table before us and has extended us the invitation to come join Him at the feast. The readers of this message are faced with a choice: to stay where they were in unbelief or accept the invitation.

Faith always involves letting go of security and control to do things God's way. Remember when Peter walked on water? He had to get out of the boat. God is calling us from hunger to feast, but in answering this call, we are to leave our worldly ways of comfort and launch out into the adventures God has designed for His people. His ways are higher; will you believe and obey?

**What is a specific area you feel God calling you to step out in faith? Pray for God to help your unbelief, and then take your next step.**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 12 | MARCH 22–26



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

### 2 Chronicles 29:1-36

Hezekiah seems like the kind of person people were drawn to, a magnet for the people of Israel. Although his father, Ahaz, didn't do what was right in the eyes of the Lord, Hezekiah did. In the first month of his first year, he swung open the doors of the temple and decided to restore it.

Hezekiah employed and encouraged the people, as any good leader does, and spoke of the covenant he longed to make with God on their behalf (2 Chron. 29:10-11). In a mere sixteen days, the Levites cleansed and consecrated the temple and walked into the newly renovated building, where they slaughtered animals to make atonement for all of Judah.

Hezekiah may have had a blueprint for restoring the temple, but he had no clue how his restoration pointed to a far greater temple—Jesus. Under the new covenant inaugurated with Jesus' blood, God doesn't dwell in a building—He dwells in His people. Since this is our wondrous reality, we must take measures as Hezekiah did to swing open our lives and make reforms. This looks like confession, and we can go directly to the source and ask that He cleanse us, and He is faithful to do so every time (Heb. 4:16; 1 John 1:9).

### What do you need to confess today?



## Tuesday

2 Chronicles 34:1-7

We live in a postmodern culture. A quick summary of “postmodern” versus “modern” is that our society values feelings over facts. This leads people to the terrifying conclusion of rejecting absolute truth because it doesn’t sit right with them.

Christians know that sin is real (Rom. 3:23). Because our culture believes everyone is innately good, sin isn’t a term we use frequently. Instead, we talk about our feelings and how we are “struggling” with something rather than the fact that we have a sin we must confess. If we aren’t vigilant, this line of thinking can slip into our churches. Perhaps it already has.

Between Hezekiah’s reign to Josiah’s, there were only two bad kings, Manasseh and Amon. Sin crept in, and the good work Hezekiah had done on the temple and to purify the land was destroyed. So Josiah traveled throughout the land to tear down altars, remove false gods, and destroy the wickedness.

Sin can easily creep in and pollute us both individually and corporately if we aren’t constantly returning to God.

**How can you as an individual keep sin from creeping in?**



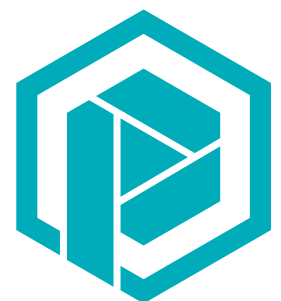
## Wednesday

2 Chronicles 34:8-13

Josiah clearly recognized his call in filling his sphere of influence with the truth of God, but it went beyond that. He called others into the adventure: the Levites, doorkeepers, carpenters, and builders. He allowed others to realize their dynamic role in God's kingdom (1 Cor. 12).

This hasn't changed. Every believer has been placed in his or her church, neighborhood, and community to influence it with the love of God.

**How are you loving and serving alongside the body of Christ for its growth? How are you pursuing the Great Commission as a part of your church body?**



## Thursday

2 Chronicles 34:14-33

Like finding hidden treasure, the Book of the Law was discovered. Oddly enough, the high priest, Hilkiah, didn't stumble and trip over himself racing to get the book to King Josiah; instead, he handed this gold mine to Shaphan, who eventually told King Josiah about the book. Talk about a delayed climax to finding an incredibly pertinent piece of information!

The book was read to King Josiah. He tore his clothes as he realized not only had he sinned in the eyes of God but so had all of his people. His reaction, though, is fitting only if God is real and holy.

What we begin to realize in 2 Chronicles is that repentance does not necessarily suspend the earthly consequences of personal and corporate sin. The kingdom of Judah would eventually be destroyed, and the people would be exiled to Babylon even though Josiah had turned his face to God.

We must never see God's grace as cheap. Instead, it's a call for us to come and die to ourselves. Even then, often there will be earthly consequences for our sinful choices, rippling out and affecting the multitudes. So let us be wise, loving, and obedient.

**What is a specific example in your life of sin having earthly consequences?  
How were these circumstances reconciled by grace?**



## Friday

2 Chronicles 35:1-27

When one dives deeply into the holiness of God, repents, and is made new, celebration is in order. Not just one day, but day after day we get out the confetti because our lives have been ransomed by one life, that of Jesus Christ. Because Josiah understood the gift he had been given, he celebrated the Passover.

There is a pattern in Josiah's life that must be noted. He tore his robes upon hearing God's word. He repented profusely over his people's disobedience. But then he rose to his feet, gathered the people, and celebrated profoundly.

Such is the pattern for the believer. It should never be rushed and never be forced. Rather, when our eyes are unveiled to our wickedness and when we drink deeply of a grace that stretches as far as the east is from the west, our bodies can't help but stand up straighter and our lips can't help but have an upward turn. Praise the Lord!

**Are you known more as a person who is sad or joyful? How can you more fully cultivate in your life the pattern of mourning that turns into joy?**





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SPRING 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 13 | MARCH 29–APRIL 2



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

Jeremiah 31:1-14

Hollywood has made billions of dollars off of good love stories. They've learned the way to our pockets is through our emotions. Journalists have also discovered we love pouring over every detail of someone else's engagement and gorgeous wedding. Love captures us like no other emotion or feeling, but with love comes the potential for betrayal. Deep joy can cause gut-wrenching pain.

In these verses we read of God's faithful love; we listen as He calls His people to singing and dancing. But previously we are confronted with God's disappointment in His people (2:13). Israel abandoned and betrayed God (3:20). Recognizing the pain of such abandonment makes chapter 31 demonstrate God's faithfulness all the more richly.

God reminds His people that He has loved them with an everlasting love—despite betrayal. He calls them to sing, shout, proclaim, praise, and say the greatness of His love. The greatest love story of all has been written by God, and His faithfulness is without end.

**In what specific ways are you proclaiming God's faithfulness?**



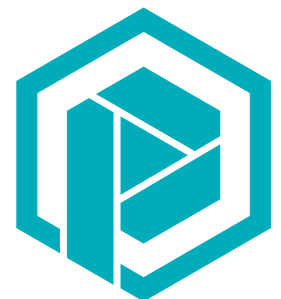
## Tuesday

Jeremiah 31:15-30

Like a prodigal son, Israel will return home. In this passage, Ephraim represented the ten northern tribes of Israel. Because God is a good Father, He will have compassion on His children despite their direct disobedience. God still yearns for His people to return because they are like precious sons and daughters in His sight. It's this kind of love that makes a home inviting. It's this warmth that binds our hearts to God.

It must be noted that in the midst of their wandering, God disciplined His people like any good father would do (v. 18). A father who doesn't discipline isn't a father at all; he is a father of chaos. God longs for His people to live good and satisfying lives that reflect His glory; therefore, He gives them boundaries. Psalm 18:19 reads, "He brought me out to a spacious place; He rescued me because He delighted in me." God gives us boundaries out of love, and because He knows what is best for human flourishing, He will gently correct us when we've veered off the path.

**Our culture tends to see God's boundaries as rules or limitations against what makes us "feel good." Why are God's boundaries actually the markers of a good life?**



## Wednesday

Jeremiah 31:31-33

We live in an age when we are bombarded with messages of “You can!” “Your destiny is yours!” “You are in charge of this day.” And certainly you are. No one is coaxing you out of bed besides the persistent pleas of your parents. But this message can subtly turn into a false gospel of “me.”

Throughout the early church, we see a movement of God, one that has allowed us to have the Bible in our hands today. Men and women believed so deeply in the Messiah Jesus and His death and resurrection that many were killed as they carried the message into our generation.

This certainly was not the case because they mustered up an “I will” mentality. It was because they depended deeply on the movement of the Holy Spirit to flatten mountains and make paths through jungles. We must start first in prayer and follow up with dependency. God will fulfill His promises, and we will follow in obedience.

**In what ways is God calling you to be obedient today?**



## Thursday

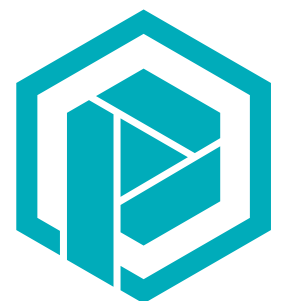
Jeremiah 31:34a

Have you ever gone to a restaurant only to eat the most incredible dessert? You savor each bite and almost let it melt in your mouth, aware that this marvelous treat is something far too good to be eaten quickly. You quickly ask your server to give your compliments to the chef and timidly ask for the recipe. The chef walks out to graciously say thank you but then proceeds to share that she only shares her recipe with her exclusive guest list (a list you will never get on because you don't have any of the credentials).

Although this example pales in comparison with God's declaration of the new covenant, it is one for us to take in bite size (pun intended).

Unless you are a believing ethnic Jew, you have been grafted by faith into the body of chosen ones through the priceless blood of Jesus. You have been invited into all the insight God has revealed to His people Israel. The recipe is yours.

**What measures can you take today to get to know God better and experience His presence?**



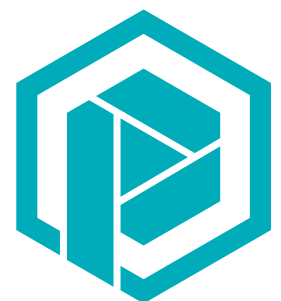
## Friday

Jeremiah 31:34b-40

Jeremiah recounted words of assurance. Only God can measure the heavens. Only God can know the inner heat of the earth. As sure as the sun rises and sets, the survival of Israel, God's people, is as certain as the laws of nature that God has ordained. And this is not by their doing but a free gift handed to them.

The expression "because of all they have done" refers to Israel's evil deeds. Even their righteous acts are like filthy rags before the Lord (Isa. 64:6). In spite of them, God's love is assured. Israel is still His people and always will be. God's new creation, "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), has now been brought into existence through the miraculous birth, sinless life, and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. This will always be the way to salvation—through the matchless love of Christ. It was nothing of our own doing. Instead, we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8), and this leads us to bow in humility before God the Father, who seals our inheritance in Him forevermore.

**God's kindness leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). In what ways does God's kindness through His Son, Jesus, lead you to repentance today?**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 14 | APRIL 5-9



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

We never move past the Gospel. Ever. Paul was so certain of this fact that he took a moment to clarify the Gospel for the believers reading his letter: According to the Scriptures, Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. Our salvation rests in that this central event in history really happened. Believers have received this good news by faith, but they also currently stand on it in faith and know by faith that they are being saved and will be saved by it. We can never move past the gospel; we only grow deeper in it.

Paul's concern here should impact the way we interact with and encourage one another in the faith. To this point, he has spent fourteen chapters telling the Corinthian believers how they should live obediently in the church and in their surrounding community, but he returns to the Gospel and Resurrection because apart from them, all of our "good works" are just window dressing. Likewise, our encouragement to one another to live by faith can address specifics and offer sound, reasonable, biblical counsel, but we must always build one another up in the truth of the Gospel. Jesus is our Savior; we cannot leave Him behind.

**How can you encourage a believer with the truth of the Gospel today?**





## Tuesday

### 1 Corinthians 15:9-11

The appearance of the risen Christ to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) was the turning point in Saul's life. Put yourself in Saul's shoes: Imagine the object of your frustration and hatred showing Himself to be real and divine before your freshly blinded eyes. Immediately, you would cower. Immediately, you would want to beg for your life. After all, you have been about the business of trying to stamp out what you now know is the work of God. But then you hear Jesus' words of grace: Get up and go, and you will be told what to do (Acts 9:6).

Paul never got over the grace that was shown to him, and Paul never forgot that God's grace was constantly with him to show him what to do and to empower him for the task. Grace is not merely for our forgiveness from sin; grace is our drive and strength for the gospel work. Now it is time to get up and go and do what God tells you to do in His grace.

**How is God calling you to act in faith, in grace, and in obedience?**



## Wednesday

### 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

The resurrection of Jesus is one of those things about what the Christian faith rises or falls. We can debate ministry method, song selection, end-times schemes, and a host of other practical and theological ideas, but if we don't get this one right—Jesus died and rose again—then this is all for nothing. Even the Bible and the Daily Discipleship Guide in front of you are pointless if Jesus has not been raised from the dead.

If there were no resurrection for Jesus, then there would be no resurrection for us. Furthermore, there would be no salvation from sin and no hope for any future. Jesus' disciples would all be liars, as would Jesus Himself be, since He proclaimed that He would rise again on the third day (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). And no liar can die for the sins of sinners.

The real, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus must be true or we should all just walk away now. But it is true! Jesus lives, people saw Him alive, and people still come to Him with the eyes of faith.

**How is your belief in Jesus' resurrection challenged and/or affirmed by Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15?**



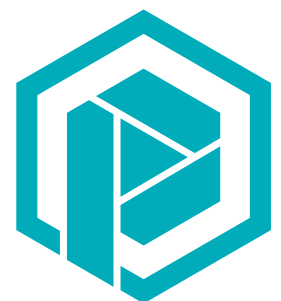
## Thursday

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Jesus, the obedient, righteous, perfect Son of God, currently rules over this world and all of creation. Having been raised from the dead by God the Father, He has been vindicated. Jesus is not a liar, a blasphemer, or a criminal—Jesus is who He says He is and accomplished what He said He would accomplish, namely, our salvation. He was raised from the dead and raised to His throne in heaven at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32-36). Everything has been put under His feet!

We don't feel that now, at least not all of it. Death still holds sway over humanity. But Jesus dealt death its final blow in His crucifixion and resurrection, and the end of the reign of sin and death will come at Jesus' second coming. So for now, we believe what God has revealed about Jesus—He is King, He is kind, and He is coming—and we proclaim this good news to the world.

**What are some ways your future resurrection in Christ needs to change your priorities and concerns now?**



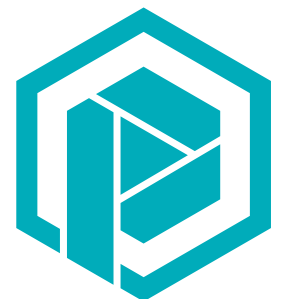
## Friday

1 Corinthians 15:29-58

Scripture teaches that we are inheritors of an “Adam,” either the first Adam or the last Adam. We take on a lot from our parents: facial expressions, sayings and phrases, mannerisms, an outlook on life, a perspective of the world, and more. We may even share in the blessings or consequences of their life choices. But when it comes to the first Adam and the last Adam, we take on something much deeper. From the first Adam we receive a sinful nature, the guilt of being sinners, and the consequence of death for sin. Along with Adam, we have been cursed to return to the dust in death. But from the last Adam—Jesus Christ—we receive a new spiritual nature, complete forgiveness from sin, and the blessing of eternal life with Him.

We are all born into the family of the first Adam. We all stand condemned in sin before the holy God and Creator of all. But that same God sent the last Adam to die in our place so we could be adopted into His family, where every believer stands free from sin and in loving relationship with our heavenly Father.

**What differences would you expect from those born into the first Adam and those born again into the last Adam by faith?**



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SPRING 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 15 | APRIL 12-16



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

### Habakkuk 1:1-11

Life isn't fair. Clean water is scarce. Diseases steal loved ones away too soon. Innocent people are wrongly accused. Jobs are lost in the name of downsizing. Christians are persecuted for their faith. We see heartache all around and it leads us to ask difficult questions: Where is the justice? Why is God silent? Does God even hear me?

In Habakkuk 1:1-4, we encounter a bewildered prophet asking God hard questions. Habakkuk responded to his circumstances by crying out, "How long, O Lord? How long before You hear my cry? How long before You fix what is wrong in this world You created?" The Lord wasn't enraged by Habakkuk's questions but instead gave an answer of hope. He told Habakkuk that He was doing something so amazing that he wouldn't even believe it.

When confusing circumstances cause us to question God's presence, timing, or interest, we can rest assured knowing these statements are true: God is good. God does care about us. God is doing something so amazing that we wouldn't believe it.

**What is one truth about God or promise from God that you need to be reminded of today in your circumstances?**



## Tuesday

Habakkuk 1:12-2:5

It's true that waiting can be excruciating, especially if the news greatly impacts your life. Think of a time when you waited on something with great anticipation. Maybe you were waiting to hear of your latest test scores. Or maybe you are waiting to see if you are accepted into the college of your dreams. Maybe you've had to wait on some really bad news that you knew would change your life forever.

In Habakkuk 1:12-17, we encounter a troubled prophet asking God pointed questions about Judah's impending judgment. Chapter 2 then opens with Habakkuk quietly and patiently waiting for God's response. How long Habakkuk waited on God's response is uncertain, but it must have been agonizing.

When waiting on God to respond, our sinful inclinations can lead us to become angry or even disinterested. Instead of waiting, we may want to act impulsively, taking matters into our own hands. Waiting is hard, but what makes it easier is knowing God hears every prayer and answers them in the best way possible.

**Why do we find it so hard to wait patiently on the Lord (Isa. 30:18)?**



## Wednesday

Habakkuk 2:6-20

Falling into the trap of just going through the motions is easy, whether at school or in the home or on the basketball court. The grind of life has a way of subduing us. Without realizing it, we are lulled into living lives that feel uninspired. These feelings flow into our spiritual lives as well. Fill in this statement: “The last time I was in awe of God was...” Your response may reveal a lack of spiritual vitality.

In verses 6-20, God declared five woes against the Chaldeans, reassuring Habakkuk of His promise to deal justly with their sin. Yet in the midst of these woes, God described a time when the entire earth will awake to the awesomeness of His glory (2:14). One day everyone, both friend and foe alike, will know that the Lord alone is God.

Some things have not changed since Habakkuk’s ancient prophecy. God’s people still slip into spiritual slumber, demanding a flesh awaking to God’s glory. Pray today that you would experience a renewed awareness of God’s awesome presence.

**How can you infuse energy and vitality into your spiritual life so you will praise God’s glory even now?**





## Thursday

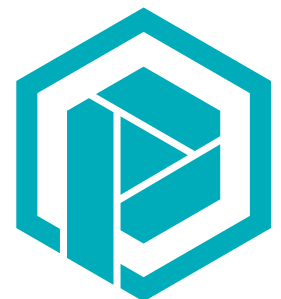
### Habakkuk 3:1-15

Worship, by definition, must have an object. It must be directed toward someone or something. Habakkuk 2:18-19 tells us that the Chaldeans directed their worship to wood and stone idols, reflections of themselves (1:11). Habakkuk, in contrast, directed his worship to Yahweh.

Habakkuk 3 is a prayerful song of exaltation. As an act of worship, the prophet penned this song to praise the Lord's magnificence, His sovereign control over nature, His judgment against His enemies, and His salvation for His people. It should not be lost on us that this confused and tired prophet turned to worship to restore his weary soul.

Life has a way of beating us down, and in our weariness, we may not want to turn our hearts to the Lord in worship. Yet in God's goodness, He has imparted a restorative element to worship. The physical act of singing of God's character and authority restores our soul so we might approach God with a right attitude. For those physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted, worship is the best remedy for renewing one's faith and joy in the Lord.

**What God-honoring song could you sing right now to renew your soul?**



## Friday

### Habakkuk 3:16-19

Living a life of faith in Christ does not insulate us from the pains of this world. In fact, in some ways life is harder for believers because we engage in spiritual warfare as our light encounters the darkness of this present world.

Habakkuk knew firsthand the pains of this world as his people faced imminent destruction by God for their sin. Habakkuk may have been tempted to be upset with God in his weaker moments, but instead he displayed for us what it looks like to allow God to sanctify us through our personal heartache and disappointment.

Despite doubts and questions, Habakkuk acknowledged God's righteousness and faithfulness. He told God that no matter how dire the circumstances, he would still find his joy in the Lord. What we glean from Habakkuk is that remembering God's faithfulness in the past can help us walk by faith in the present and into the future.

**How should God's past faithfulness and unchanging goodness help you face your present doubts?**



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SPRING 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 16 | APRIL 19–23



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

2 Chronicles 36:1-14

King Zedekiah tried to outrun the consequences of sin. He was a proud man who refused to humble himself before the Lord. When the consequences of Zedekiah's sin finally arrived at Jerusalem's gates in the form of Babylonian soldiers, he fled with his family. The Babylonians, however, intercepted them in the plains of Jericho. Nebuchadnezzar deported Zedekiah to Babylon, but first, he left the deposed king with one last tormenting memory by executing his sons before his eyes, which were then gouged out (2 Kings 25:4-7). This fulfilled Ezekiel's prophecy that the king would not see the city of Babylon (Ezek. 12:1-13).

Zedekiah's prideful solution for absolution from God's judgment was to run from it. The Bible's solution for absolution, however, is found in running to the foot of the cross. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

**What sinful behavior do you need to repent of and run to Christ for forgiveness?**



## Tuesday

2 Chronicles 36:15-16a

The Book of 2 Chronicles closes out with God flexing His divine muscle against Judah. God's wrath was stirred up, and with righteous indignation, He judicially directed His fury against the people of God. Knowing our own propensity toward sin, it's hard to imagine being filled with anger without losing some measure of self-control. Yet God's wrath is never less than perfect. Revealed to us in 2 Chronicles 36:15 is the posture of God's heart toward sinners—it's a posture marked by compassion and patience.

Despite habitual rebellion by Judah, God still longed for her to repent and gave her many opportunities to do so. Examining God's response, we learn something about how we are to engage unsaved people in our lives. It is easy for us to lose compassion and patience with individuals who have rejected the gospel time and time again. Maybe you have someone in your life whom you've labeled "hopeless" after years of rejecting your invitations to church and your reminders of God's love for them. If you've fallen into this snare, take a minute and remember God's compassionate response to His wayward people.

**In what ways should your attitude toward people change based on God's compassionate and patient attitude toward Judah?**



## Wednesday

### 2 Chronicles 36:16b-23

The sad truth is that life, for almost all of history, has been unfair. This is simply a reality of living in a world corrupted by sin. It's also a reality experienced firsthand by a remnant of godly people living in Judah at the time of Jerusalem's fall. 2 Chronicles 36:17-21 records the destruction of the city. We are told by prophets like Habakkuk that a contingency of faithful followers still resided in Judah at the time. Unfortunately, the righteous would suffer along with the unrighteous. Despite the unfairness of the situation, the godly remnant was encouraged to live by faith with joy in the midst of suffering.

The Bible is clear that believers will face suffering (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-14). The question then becomes for us, "How will we respond to suffering?" Our sinful nature desires to respond with anger, bitterness, and cynicism. But in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are given strength to respond with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

**When life deals you an unfair hand, how can you continue walking by faith with joy in the midst of suffering?**



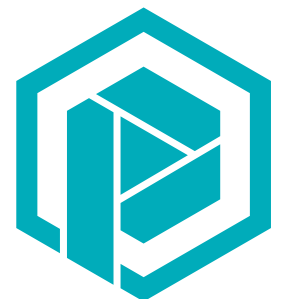
## Thursday

### Lamentations 1:1-2:22

Grief is a universal human experience. The Bible tells us that grief exists because something is wrong. While there is good in the world, brokenness pervades it all. The Book of Lamentations is a collection of five sorrowful poems lamenting the fall of Judah. Seeping from these poems are the raw emotions of a confused and hurting people processing their circumstances and attempting to express the inexpressible.

Grief was a part of life for the Judeans, and it's a part of our lives today. Fortunately, God's Word gives us instruction on how we should face grief. First, we don't grieve alone because we have a Savior who is "acquainted with grief" and understands our own grief (Isa. 53:3). Second, we grieve knowing it is a natural response to injustice. Sometimes in our grief we cry out like the psalmist, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps. 22:1). Other times we respond like Job and sit in silence (Job 2:13). Third, we grieve believing in a future hope (Job 19:25-26). These truths help us in our grief and remind us that a day is coming when our temporary afflictions will be replaced with an eternal glory.

**How are you challenged in your grief by these instructions from Scripture?**



## Friday

### Lamentations 3:1-5:22

In the midst of darkest despair, a break in the black clouds hovering over Lamentations opens up and the brightest of lights shines down. Following sixty-five verses of gloom and doom over Jerusalem's fall, the author turns the script toward God's mercy: "Because of the Lord's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!" (Lam. 3:22-23).

God appoints every aspect of every day. He appoints the day's troubles. He appoints the day's mercies. Sometimes we wonder if we will be able to withstand the troubles of our day. But we can rest assured knowing every morning God's mercy will be there waiting for us. We might be tempted to store up God's mercy for a rainy day, but like Israel with the manna in the wilderness, there is no storing up. Instead, we are called to the daily exercise of declaring our dependency upon God and His mercy.

**What practical steps can you take to remind yourself that God's mercies are new every morning?**



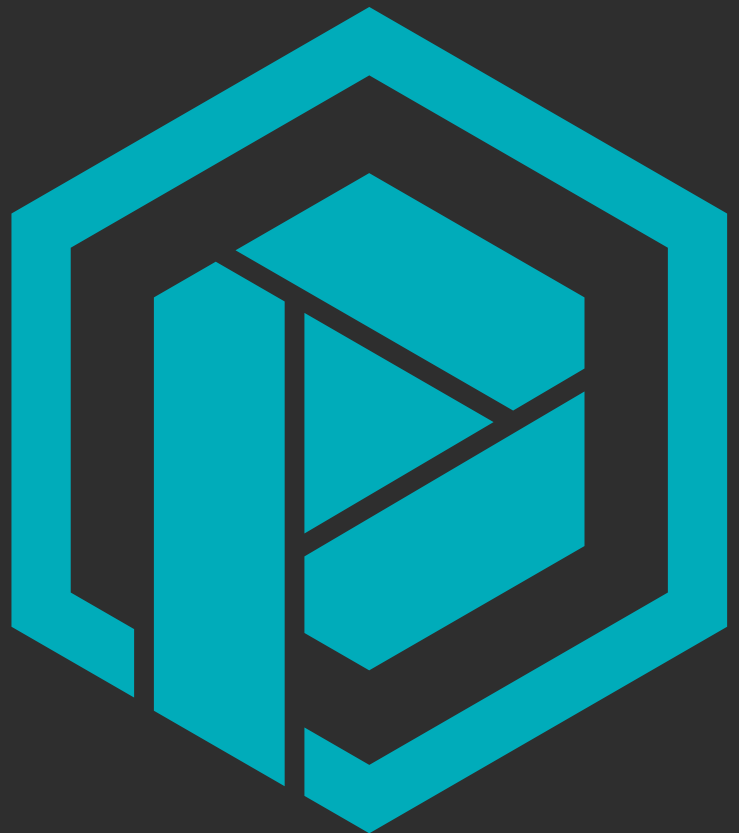


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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 17 | APRIL 26-30



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

Ezekiel 36:1-15

God's capacity to forgive is astonishing as we read of His plan in Ezekiel 36 to restore Israel from Babylon and all the nations to the promised land. God's relationship with His people lay in ruin because of their rebellion, yet He extended His hand of mercy even though they were undeserving. Part of the plan to restore Israel involved the fruitfulness of the land.

Verses 8-15 lay out four promises the Lord makes to Israel. First, the land will again be fruitful (vv. 8-9). Second, the people will return and multiply in the land (vv. 10-11). Third, their return to the land will be permanent (vv. 12-14). Fourth, God's people will never again be insulted by foreign nations (v. 15). In short, God poured out His merciful love on a people who did not deserve it.

**What does God's example of forgiveness teach us about how we should forgive others?**



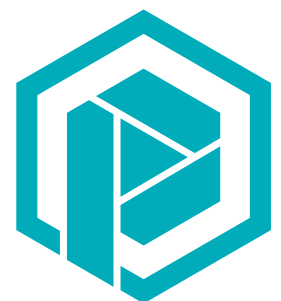
## Tuesday

Ezekiel 36:16-38

God wants us to have a “heart of flesh” that is pliable and responsive to Him. Much like a lump of clay in a potter’s hand, a tender heart is more easily shaped by God’s character and desires. The problem, if you have not noticed, is that our hearts are inherently rigid. To remove this rigidity, we read in the New Testament that God sent His Holy Spirit to indwell each believer in order to soften and sensitize hearts to His leading.

Ezekiel prophesied of the day when the Spirit would indwell the heart of every believer, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances” (vv. 26-27). When we submit to the Lord, He imparts great wisdom to our soft hearts. We are then more ready to deal with sin in our lives and return to a place of obedience and blessing.

**What are warning signs that your heart’s spiritual health is not what it ought to be?**



## Wednesday

Ezekiel 37:1-14

In reading the prophecy of the valley of dry bones, we are reminded that it was never within Israel's power to save themselves. No matter how hard they might try, their devotion to the Old Testament law could never save them from their sin. Their spiritual restoration lay solely in the power of God.

One way we see God's active role in saving Israel is by reading verses 1-14 and underlining every time God uses the pronoun "I" in describing His role in bringing Israel back to life. Today we are still entirely dependent on the Spirit of God to stir our affections and to breathe life into our dry bones.

**Why is it encouraging to know that we worship a God who offers mercy to people who are undeserving and may not even ask for it?**



## Thursday

Ezekiel 37:15-22

Satan hates God, and consequently, Satan hates the people of God—the church. Satan does all he can to stir up disunity among God’s people, going to great lengths to create division and strife (1 Pet. 5:8). On the other hand, God loves when unity exists among His children. Ezekiel 37:17 paints a visual picture of God’s desire to restore unity between Judah and Israel. Illustrating this desire, God told Ezekiel to join together the ends of two sticks in order to create one unified stick.

The point is we worship a God who values unity, so we should as well. So how does valuing unity manifest itself in our daily lives? Valuing unity means we pray for unity. It means we judge ourselves before we judge others. It means we count the cost of disunity and seek reconciliation when we can. It also means pursuing humility, which acts as an antidote to selfishness.

**How can you seek reconciliation and ensure unity with others in the body of Christ, the church?**



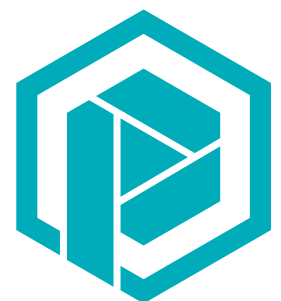
## Friday

Ezekiel 37:23-28

This passage tells us of God’s plan to restore a united Israel to the promised land. The Lord committed not only to bring them back home but to set over them one king who would act as a servant-leader—“my servant David” (v. 24). God’s plan to appoint a servant king over Israel was ironic in light of the historical events surrounding the original division between Israel and Judah. The split of the kingdoms was essentially the result of King Rehoboam’s unwillingness to serve the people of God as his elder counselors advised.

Ezekiel’s prophecy, of course, pointed to the messianic King—Jesus Christ. Jesus embodied for us what servant leadership looks like. Examining Jesus’ life, we see that servant leaders seek the glory of God (Mark 10:42; John 7:18) while not being preoccupied with their own (Mark 10:43-45). They forgo their own rights for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:15-19) and understand the joy in serving others (Mark 9:35). Jesus’ life was marked by service and our lives should be as well.

**How are you embodying servant-leadership in your life for the sake of the gospel?**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 18 | MAY 3-7



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

2 Corinthians 5:14

As we go over the disciplines of a good leader, it's important to first establish what should motivate us as godly leaders. Sometimes we can picture leadership as telling others what to do or being "the boss," however, Jesus painted a completely different picture of leadership because He came to serve us out of His love for us. In response to that, we serve others out of our love for Him. Paul says in this verse that "the love of Christ *compels* us," meaning that the reason he was doing what he was doing was because He loved Christ. He was not motivated by checklists or productivity charts, but simply out of his desire to serve Jesus.

**As you seek to be a leader, do you lead out of your desire to serve Jesus or out of something else? Ask God to search your heart and motives behind leadership.**





## Tuesday

Acts 20:19

Without humility, it is impossible to be a godly leader. Paul knew that in order to rise to the high calling of spiritual leadership, he had to humble himself. Although the Church today sees Paul as a “shining star” of the Christian faith, Paul was not always seen this way during his time on earth. He was persecuted, imprisoned, even stoned to the point where people believed he was dead. His life was anything but a glamorous life that one might look on and envy. However, because Paul humbled himself, God was able to accomplish glorious things through his obedience. As we seek to be leaders, it is crucial to remember to walk in humility.

**Why is humility a unique quality of Christian leadership?**

**How can you choose to humble yourself on an everyday basis?**



## Wednesday

1 Timothy 3:2

While your goal might not be to be a church bishop, Paul is identifying the character traits that all godly leaders should have. Any follower of Christ should be easily described by these character traits that prove one is a believer. God is not interested in someone's earthly qualifications in order to be a leader, only that their conduct reflects someone who is walking with Jesus. It is only through godly character that others will be able to trust and follow your example. This is why Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." As we lead lives of holiness, other people will be able to follow in our example.

**In what ways does your character give others proof that you know Jesus?**



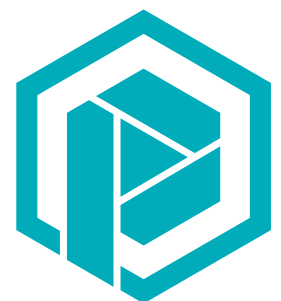
## Thursday

John 13:35

If you have a teacher who is extremely strict and angry all the time, and another teacher who is kind and does his or her best to help you learn, which teacher are you going to respect and want to obey more? Most likely, all of us would answer the second teacher. Christian or non-Christian, people desire love. God wired us that way! In verse 34, Jesus says that He is giving us a new command: love one another! Love is so important to Jesus that it is not something He suggests, but something He commands. He then goes on to say that people will recognize Christians by our love for each other. As godly leaders, love should be evident as we lead, so much so that people will know we're Christians just because we are full of love!

**We throw around the word “love” a lot (“I love that shirt”; “I love my dog,” etc.). What does the Bible reveal to us about what it really means to love others?**

**If non-believers looked at your life, what evidence of love would they find to show that you are a Christian?**

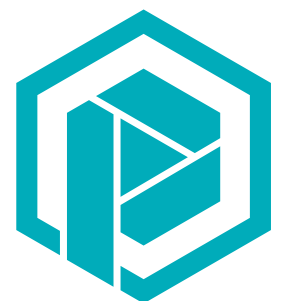


## Friday

Colossians 3:12

This verse is a great reminder of what Christians should look like! If you have younger siblings, have ever led a group project, etc., you know that being a leader in any setting requires an enormous amount of patience. Patience is one the main distinguishers between a good leader and a poor leader. In this verse, Paul not only tells us to have patience, he tells us to *clothe* ourselves in it. Wrap yourself up in patience! Let it be the thing that people always see on you.

**When do you find it most difficult to be patient? How can you grow in patience?**



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SPRING 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 19 | MAY 10-14



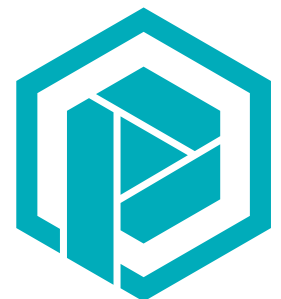
P R E S T O N W O O D   S T U D E N T S

## Monday

Matthew 25:21

The definition of *dependable* is “trustworthy or reliable.” We *depend* on our teammates to work together. We *depend* on people in group projects to pull their weight (we all know how that goes). We depend on our parents to provide a ride to and from events and food for us to eat. Throughout our daily lives, we depend on many things, but the question to ask this morning is this: “Am I a dependable person?” Being dependable is one of the primary characteristics of being a true leader. This verse encourages us to be dependable with a little, to be faithful with a little. The faithful servants – the dependable servants – used their gifts and resources responsibly and were generously rewarded.

**What can I be faithful with today that will honor the Lord and allow me to be dependable?**



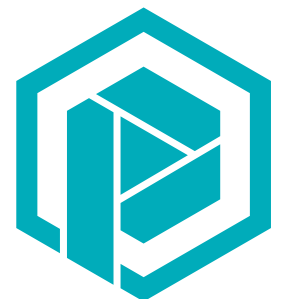
## Tuesday

Ephesians 4:29

Studies show that if you talk to your plants in an encouraging way, they tend to grow more quickly. (It's weird, right?) Look it up if you don't believe it. Think about this: If plants tend to grow more when people speak positive words over them, how much more would the people around us grow if we spoke words of encouragement and kindness over them? That is why Paul says in Ephesians that we need to use our words to build up one another. What you say - the words you choose to use - can change the attitude, mindset and the entire day of someone else either for good or for bad, just as other people's words can change your attitude, your mindset and your entire day. In order to have words of encouragement to share, we need to spend time in prayer with the Lord, time in His presence being filled with His love.

### Here's a challenge today:

- 1. Pray and ask for the Lord to speak through you today in *all* you say.**
- 2. Send an encouraging text to a friend you haven't talked to in a while and tell your parent or guardian how much they mean to you.**

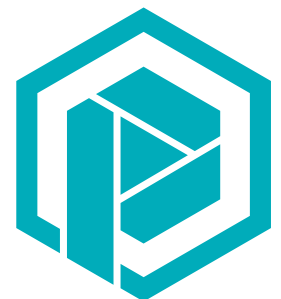


## Wednesday

Romans 12:9

When was the last time you prayed to love and see people as the Lord sees them? Have you been kind to others only because you have to, or is your kindness genuine and true? As Christians, we need to be sure that our love for others is authentic. People can see through love that is not real. Let's be honest - it is *really* hard to love people sometimes when they do not like the same things we like, when they do not think the same way we do, or even if they do not necessarily look the way we do. This is where we can allow the Lord to work in our hearts - for our love for others to be sincere, for people to see Jesus when they interact with us as believers.

**Who can you love well today?**





## Thursday

### John 13

Wow. Just wow. If you have not read the Scripture for today yet, go read it then hop right back in. Jesus was the *best* servant. He humbled Himself to become man, to come to serve, heal and restore our souls. Matthew 20:28 says, *“Just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* As a believer in Christ, we are called to live as Christ lived, meaning being a servant. Sometimes being a servant means doing things we may not necessarily want to do, serving people who may or may not show us love in return. Our calling as believers is to seek the Lord, and as we talked about earlier this week, let the Lord fill our hearts by spending time with Him and let that be an overflow of our hearts.



## Friday

1 Corinthians 10:31

We are all leaders in some capacity whether we think so or not. We all have friends that we influence, some of us have younger siblings, and some are a part of a team/squad. We are *all* leaders. Setting an example cannot revolve around us. We must set an example that follows what we find in Scripture today. Throughout this past week, we have discussed different characteristics of a leader – dependable, encourager, love for others and servant-minded.

Today, let's be open to what the Lord would have us do, and let's set an example by following these characteristics of a leader and praying that the Lord would use each of us to glorify Him in all we do.



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SPRING 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 20 | MAY 17-21



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

### Daniel 1:1-21

The opening verses of Daniel set the stage for the theme of God's sovereignty throughout the book. While we are prone to doubt the goodness of God when our circumstances take a turn for the worst, the mundane weariness of a fallen world can also take a toll on our faith. When the Lord dramatically intervenes in our lives, as is often the case in the book of Daniel, it is easy to acknowledge His control over our circumstances. Navigating sustained difficulties or hardships, however, might leave us wondering if God is involved in our day-to-day lives. That is why the first chapter of Daniel is so encouraging.

During the traumatic exile of God's people into Babylonian captivity, we see God protecting His people, honoring their obedience, and giving them favor with a pagan king. By refusing to eat the food given to them, Daniel and his friends took a great risk. Yet, the Lord blessed their righteousness and took care of them in a hostile situation. Long before three of these young Jews faced a fiery furnace, they watched God piece the small details of their lives together for good. Their willingness to trust Him when the pressure was on was largely a result of their faith through the ordinary happenings of their routine.

**How can you better rest in God's sovereignty over the daily frustrations you face?**



## Tuesday

### Daniel 2:1-49

The prophetic impact of Daniel 2 is just as significant today as it was originally because we are still looking for the final kingdom revealed—the messianic kingdom. With Babylon (head of gold), Medo-Persia (chest/arms of silver), Greece (legs of bronze), and Rome (feet of iron and clay) in our rearview mirror, we long for the coming of a new heaven and earth where our Savior King will reign forever and ever. Until then, Daniel modeled how we should live in a fallen world.

With his life in jeopardy due to the king's decree, Daniel sought the Lord faithfully in order to report and interpret the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Ultimately, his ability to do so was the direct result of God's mercy and goodness toward him and his friends (Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah). Realizing this, Daniel refused to boast or promote himself while speaking God's words. In fact, he celebrated God's power and glory so much that the king also declared that Daniel's God was God of gods and Lord of kings (2:46). The faith of a faithful prophet revealed the glory of Lord over all.

**How can you better reveal God's glory with the gifts He has given to you?**



## Wednesday

Daniel 3:1-18

Despite witnessing the glory of Daniel's God firsthand, wicked Nebuchadnezzar chose to build a monument made of gold and commanded his people to bow and worship it. Though we cannot be sure whether the statue represented the king or one of his gods, it does seem clear that Nebuchadnezzar was declaring, contrary to his dream, that his kingdom would never end. Despite the submission of those around them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to insult the true God by kneeling before the idol. The logic behind their counter-cultural stand is still instructive today. These committed Hebrews were content to let God choose the course of their lives, knowing that He is good and trustworthy.

Why is it so difficult for us to do the same? Though God is able to prevent all things in our lives, we must learn to trust Him even if He chooses not to. Harsh circumstances should not limit our willingness to obey the Lord. If He, for reasons we cannot understand, allows our worst-case scenario to unfold, we must continue to believe that He is working for our ultimate good and for His divine glory.

**What are some personal hardships you have seen or are seeing God work through?**



## Thursday

Daniel 3:19-27

God is always present with His people. The incredible deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego illustrates this encouraging truth as vividly as any biblical passage. Through the worst possible reality, the Lord Himself walked around in a fire with three of His devoted servants. The comprehensive protection of God not only prevented their clothes from burning, but also prevented the stench of smoke from following them out of the furnace.

Even when our outcomes are not so favorable, the abiding presence of God is just as certain. God is with us in the fire even if He does not allow us to come out. He comforts and cares for us when nothing about our lives makes sense. He will not forsake us even though the world does. He is there even though we cannot always see or even feel His presence. We look forward to the day when God makes all things new and wipes away every tear from our eyes (Rev. 21:4). But, until then, He remains faithfully by our side.

**Why should you be confident of God's presence in your life when you face great difficulties?**



## Friday

Daniel 3:28-30

For the second time, we observe Nebuchadnezzar exalting the God of Israel with elaborate praise. Through the lips of unbelievers, exclusive declarations magnified Yahweh as the only God worthy of worship. What caused these remarkable confessions? In a word, faith. Because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego displayed faith under pressure, God's beauty and majesty was clear to all. In addition, their salvation from the fire made His strength and power undebatable.

Our lives have the same potential. Remaining faithful while suffering will inspire others to follow our God. And oftentimes, the miraculous intervention of God in our lives while we hurt compels others to praise Him. Likewise, the transforming effect of salvation magnifies the reality that God has rescued us from the flames of hell. When it is obvious that God is at work, His name will be exalted among believers and unbelievers alike.

**In what ways can your life compel unbelievers to see God's worth and glory?**





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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 21 | MAY 24-28



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

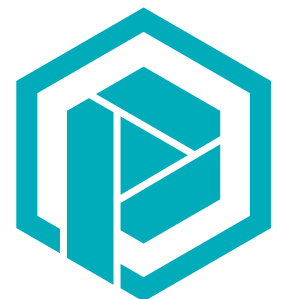
## Monday

Daniel 4:1-27

Despite his observation of God's repeated glory and power, Nebuchadnezzar's pride continued to blind him to the authority of his Maker. Though he gave lip service to the unrivaled strength of Yahweh, Babylon's king saw himself as omnipotent and ultimate. To him, the strength of his kingdom was from the work of his own hands. Thus, God again came to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, but this time with a warning of his impending humility. Daniel not only interpreted the vision, but also pleaded unsuccessfully with his leader to repent.

Unfortunately, we often fall victim to the sin of self-reliance as well. Though every good and perfect gift in our lives is from above (James 3:17), we dangerously live as if we are the source of the blessings we enjoy. In order to appreciate the grace of Christ fully, however, God desires that we walk in faith and humility. Failing to do so blinds us to the authority God has over our lives while also creating the illusion that we chart our destiny. Because Jesus submitted to the will of the heavenly Father, we must seek to do the same. Unless we humble ourselves, God's greatest blessings in our lives can actually become stumbling blocks that foster sinful arrogance.

**In what ways are we capable of mishandling God's blessings in our lives?**



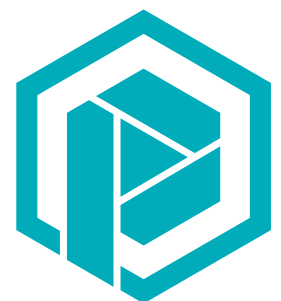
## Tuesday

Daniel 4:28-30

How do you respond to bad news? Despite God's revealed intention to humble Nebuchadnezzar like an animal, Babylon's king continued to boast in his strength. In his mind, the strength of the kingdom was a testimony to his power and majesty. Though he claimed the Hebrews worshiped the Most High God, the wayward king lived as if he was above all others. Tragically, it is not difficult to see ourselves falling into the same destructive pattern.

Though we say that Christianity is not about us, we sometimes live to the contrary. We may nod our heads in agreement with declarations about the priority of God's kingdom, yet we might also reduce the kingdom to whatever makes us happy or fulfilled. Knowing that God's glory takes precedence over our own does not prohibit us from magnifying ourselves at the expense of our Savior. Like Babylon's ancient king, our hearts gravitate toward what we perceive to be testimonies of our strength. In our efforts to be like God, we sometimes recklessly compete with Him.

**What are some ways you have looked to your own strength and alleged achievements instead of Christ?**



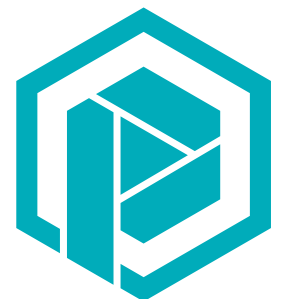
## Wednesday

Daniel 4:31-33

Grace takes many forms and is not always immediately recognizable. Yet, what sometimes appears to be God's harsh judgment often turns out to be one of His blessings in disguise. Driven from the throne to the field in order to eat like cattle, Nebuchadnezzar endured the harshest of circumstances from the hand of God. The goal of this plight, however, was to rescue the king from himself. Because the only remedy for pride is humility, the Lord was actively wooing His subject to repentance. We should expect no less today.

Because life is no more than a vapor (Jas. 4:14), we should often remember that the temporary inconveniences we dislike so much are intended to humble us. In fact, we can rejoice knowing that God compassionately interrupts our temporal lives in order to reward us eternally. Rather than get upset with Him for every problem we face, we should first look for ways to humble ourselves before the Lord instead. What we mistakenly perceive as His absence in our lives is often the greatest evidence of His activity.

**What inconveniences has God used in your life to humble and sanctify you?**



## Thursday

Daniel 4:34-37

Nebuchadnezzar's journey comes full circle in these verses. After enduring a time of great distress, the king was able to see reality much more clearly. By recognizing God's supreme sovereignty over his life, Nebuchadnezzar was now able to appreciate his achievements as gifts from the Lord rather than evidence of his equality with the Most High God. Because he yielded to God's chastening hand, the former pagan felt compelled to Yahweh.

For us, abandoning the subtle deceptions of pride can be just as painful. Though God will not likely force us to the ground like an animal, He will strip us of any stumbling blocks that prevent our total dependence upon Him. In His providence, God is willing to hurt us in order to help us. Praise readily falling from our lips is a good indicator that we, like Nebuchadnezzar, finally realize how undeserving we are of the good gifts in our lives.

**What season or event in your life has led you to praise the Lord more deliberately than before?**



## Friday

Daniel 5:1-31

Our lives would be much easier if we could learn from the mistakes of others without repeating them. Yet, the sins of the past, in this case pride, seem to rear their ugly realities in every generation. After King Nebuchadnezzar's reign in Babylon ended, Belshazzar began to rule. Despite knowledge of his predecessor's costly arrogance, this new king also refused to walk with humility (Dan. 5:22-23). As a result, God stripped the kingdom from Belshazzar in dramatic fashion, proving that He would not be mocked. The same is true today.

The Bible repeatedly warns that God will not share His glory with anyone. Wisdom beckons us to avoid great heartache by not following in the devastating examples of how pride destroys us. Are our modern idolatries any less significant than Belshazzar's? Do we expect our disregard for God's commands to go unnoticed? As difficult as humbling ourselves before the Lord might be, facing the His judgment for pride is much more painful.

**How have you learned from the sins of others? In what ways have you failed to do so?**



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SPRING 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 22 | MAY 31 – JUNE 4



P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

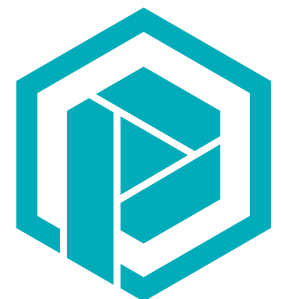
## Monday

### Daniel 6:1-5

Daniel's elevation during Israel's exile is inspiring. Under three unbelieving leaders, God's servant remained faithful and righteous, earning him the trust of all he served. Not everyone, however, celebrates when the people of God function as salt and light in the world. The resistance Daniel faced is not unlike the open hostility that living as a Christian in the twenty-first century invites. Though God will use us to be a blessing to many, some enemies will resent and lash out at genuine faith. The more God elevates us, the greater the resistance will likely be.

Responding correctly to attacks like these requires tremendous confidence in God's sovereignty over your life and an abiding contentment with His plans. The hatred of a few should not prevent us from blessing as many people as possible as we live by faith. Daniel's commitment was unshakable, much like the resolve of Jesus. We, too, must strive to live with complete integrity no matter the personal cost.

**How has your service to the Lord been a blessing to others? How has it cost you?**





## Tuesday

Daniel 6:6-10

Faithfulness to God's Word is not only difficult in our modern era, but it also puts us in direct contradiction to the expectations and rules of our contemporary context, whether spoken or unspoken. Because the days of cultural religiosity are gone, the basic expressions of Christianity are becoming increasingly offensive. Daniel's example is a reminder that our obedience must not change even as the world around us does. With full knowledge of the potential cost, Daniel chose to live by a higher law. God calls us to do the same.

Doing so will require us to resist compromise. Often, keeping our faith quiet or hidden seems easier. While we should strive to be good citizens whose presence blesses society, we should be unashamed in our determination to please God more than those around us. Our enthusiasm to our true King ought to be a constant reminder that this world is not our final home.

**In what ways do you feel pressure to compromise your faith because of the standards in our world?**



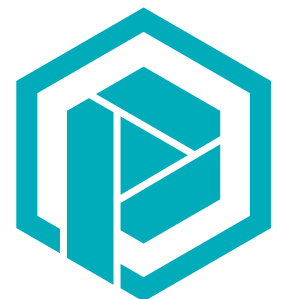
## Wednesday

Daniel 6:11-24

The Lord always protects His people. Daniel's survival in the lion's den is a vivid example of the relentless care and security God offers to us. This does not mean, however, that our outcomes in adversity will always be as favorable as what we read here. Though we praise the Lord when He meets an earthly need or provides deliverance, our confidence in Him must rest beyond what we can see with our eyes. Because nothing can separate us from the love of God, we know our Savior's faithfulness is not based on circumstances (Rom. 8:31-39). We do not fear those who can kill our bodies because of our certainty that our heavenly Father protects our souls.

Trusting God may be a simple concept to grasp, but it is much more difficult to live. Knowing that our future is secure, however, helps us lift our gaze to eternity when the present is harsh and painful. Daniel was just as victorious before God saved him from the lions as he was afterward, and so can ours be.

**How do your circumstances today increase or diminish your confidence in God's protection over your life?**



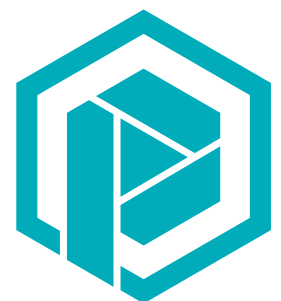
## Thursday

Daniel 6:25-28

The enduring Impact of Daniel's faithfulness to the Lord is as inspiring to us as it is instructive. After watching his servant emerge from the lion's den unscathed, King Darius not only rejoiced but also worshiped Daniel's God. Consider, for a moment, how remarkable it is that two pagan rulers voiced the eternal glory and power of Yahweh because of the witness of one man. The consistency and perseverance of Daniel were powerful tools for advancing God's kingdom in a difficult place. His presence in Babylon was even instrumental in Israel's return to their homeland.

Today, our lives possess similar potential. Though our eternal impact is rarely the result of big accomplishments, the steady, constant witness of trusting God through all of life's hills and valleys has profound influence on those around us. Ultimately, only eternity will reveal the full ripple effect of our commitments to Christ.

**How do you want your life to make a difference for God's kingdom?**



## Friday

Acts 4:1-31

Boldly speaking the words of Christ and pointing others to Him can often be costly. Just as Daniel nearly died because of his faith, the early apostles faced threats and hardship because of their efforts to influence others. After Peter and John healed a lame man, religious leaders who could not deny the miracle attacked them anyway. These men are a reminder to us that just as prophets suffered persecution, circumstances will sometimes force us to choose between obedience or sinful compromise (Matt. 5:11-12).

Yet, we should not lose sight of the reality that the endurance of God's faithful servants often results in miraculous results. The early church continued to grow exponentially because of their witness. Likewise, our resolve to be salt and light no matter the personal cost will bear eternal fruit as well. Regardless of how well known you might be, your life can make a significant difference in God's kingdom. Insults and false accusations should never hinder our efforts to be Christ's witnesses (Acts 1:8).

**How are you intentionally bold for Christ? How has God used your efforts?**



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SPRING 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 23 | JUNE 7-11



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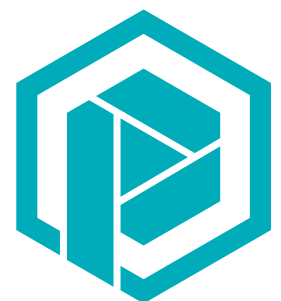
## Monday

Daniel 7:1-8

As we move into the prophetic material of Daniel, God's future reign over the kingdoms of the earth becomes apparent. The four beasts described in these verses represent the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Because these nations war against God's agenda for humanity, the world's hostility toward Christianity and Scripture should not surprise us. Rather than be dismayed, however, we ought to rejoice knowing that today's satanic influences are temporary. Though the whole earth is under the power of the wicked one (1 John 5:19), the Son of God gives us eternal life. The accelerated wickedness we see today is but a forerunner to God's final word of vengeance.

Until Christ comes, we must be diligent to resist the lawlessness that is already at work around us. Knowing that rebellion will increase before the Day of the Lord due to the spirit of antichrist, we should be careful to hold fast to the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Ours are not hopeless days, but we cannot afford to be careless either.

**What evidence do we see of Satan's influence in our world today? What should be our response as Christians?**



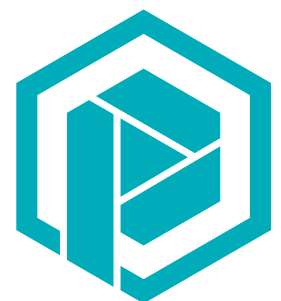
## Tuesday

Daniel 7:9-12

Do you ever feel weary due to the wickedness of our world? These verses remind us that, though God has a purpose for the evil around us, He will not allow it to continue forever. Daniel's vision of the Ancient of Days reminds us God's reign is eternal and that He will judge the nations who rebel against Him with swift judgment. Though Satan's kingdom is extensive and damaging, the Lord will exercise His authority over His sinister enemies as He rids the earth of all unbelievers and demonic forces. Christ will rule over all creation as the King of all kings.

Daniel's message is just as encouraging today as it was to ancient Jews who lived in captivity outside of Israel. Despite the dismal forecast on the nightly news, God's victory is coming without delay. Though our world is broken, our great Savior will restore our fallen home to Himself. No matter the pain that soils your life, God will make all things new.

**How should we respond to injustice of our world in light of God's future victory over it?**



## Wednesday

Daniel 7:13-28

The glory of a new heaven and earth is often lost on us. Contrary to the fallen kingdoms chronicled in Daniel's vision, the glory of our eternal dwelling place is unparalleled. With a dominion that will last forever, Jesus Christ will restore what was lost in the Garden of Eden. He will dwell among us as our God, and the wounds of our fallen past will be wiped away. With the curse removed, we will enjoy the presence of our God like never before. Through Daniel's interpretation of his vision, we learn that earthly realities will get much worse before than improve. But history is working toward the enthroning of the Lamb who died to take away our sins.

How are we to live in the meantime? What do these realities mean for us today? First, they remind us that no sacrifice is too great in order to follow our King. Second, we rest knowing that our heartaches and troubles are temporary. Finally, we devote our lives to helping others discover the hope and rescue that is ours in Christ Jesus.

**How might your temporary trials strengthen your perspective about eternity?**





## Thursday

Daniel 8:1-9:27

With a second vision regarding the demonic kingdoms of history, Daniel learned of the coming hardship that God's people were going to face. By focusing on the harsh reigns of the Medo-Persian empire and Greece, the need for God's sovereign authority over the nations once again comes into focus. Realizing the depth of Israel's sin, Daniel repented before the Lord and pleaded for mercy. Because of the interpretive guidance of Gabriel, we understand the revealed seventy weeks to be partially, though not entirely fulfilled. The period known as the Great Tribulation will mark the conclusion of these prophetic words.

How should we live in light of challenging verses like these? Despite what might be difficult for us to understand, again we observe the clear, abiding sovereignty of the Lord over the affairs of history. God disciplines His own and condemns those who reject Him. Though He uses the destructive agendas that dominate the earth, He will also bring them to a screeching halt as Jesus is exalted over all creation. We should take comfort in the fact that the God who rules the universe is also in control of the daily events in our lives.

**How does the certainty of history's conclusion give you peace about your present challenges?**



## Friday

Daniel 10:1-12:13

This final vision in the book of Daniel again speaks vividly about future events. Because the angel speaking was initially unable to communicate with Daniel due to demonic resistance, we know that Satan aggressively opposes and resists God's agenda for His people (Dan. 10:13-14). We also learn from these verses that God sends His angels to influence the world's political realities for His kingdom (11:1). Again, the Lord reveals numerous leaders who would influence the trajectory of history toward its conclusion. The vision culminates with a description of the coming antichrist who will compete for God's glory by attempting to hinder His work. Though the timing of these events remained unclear, Daniels' vision established their certainty.

Again, we must consider how prophecies like these should shape our faith. And, just as in previous devotions, we should celebrate the assurance of our eternal victory through Jesus Christ. Living with conviction and faith requires believing in what we have yet to see (Heb. 11:1). Daniel's words urge us to remember that we will win in the end precisely because our Savior will not be denied the glory due His name.

**How does the satanic resistance to God's kingdom help us frame the evil we see in the world today?**

