

The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 25 | JUNE 21-25



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

## Monday

### [Ephesians 5:15–21](#)

In our lives, we have others who hold us accountable – parents, teachers, directors, teammates. We have to submit or yield to what the coach is asking of the team. It is easier to follow through on what is being asked of you when you have teammates beside you also submitting to the coach you respect. The same is true in our walk with Jesus. We are able to look more like Jesus when we mutually submit to one another out of a reverence for Christ. Biblical accountability enables us to know how to walk as followers of Jesus.

**Why do you think submitting to one another in light of reverence to God is so important?**

**Name someone who holds you accountable. If you don't have someone, reach out to a godly friend and ask him or her to begin to hold you accountable.**



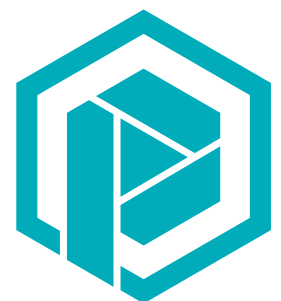
## Tuesday

### 1 Peter 5:5-7

As we saw yesterday, biblical accountability enables us to know the way we are to walk. You must first be submitted to the Lord as He holds you accountable. Only then are you able to honestly hold someone else accountable. Seeing who we are in light of who He is enables us to have a clear picture of our own importance. The biggest hindrance to true accountability is pride. When we seek to puff ourselves up, we will not be honest or transparent allowing the Lord to transform us from the inside out. Humility keeps us from being arrogant.

What you “wear” says a lot about you – the team you support, bands you like. Take some time to list some attributes of who God is that help you clothe yourself in humility.

**How can accountability to others help you be accountable to God?**



## Wednesday

### 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Far too often, people seek to destroy instead of build up. Biblical accountability enables us to support one another. Accountability is not making a list of another's faults and picking that person apart. In fact, our aim with accountability should always be to affirm and encourage. We should reinforce the foundation Jesus has laid in others' lives so each of us can stand firm in our faith. This should be our continual process. Daily we should seek to encourage and build up one another. And this is a call to confirm the way we see others loving and reflecting Jesus. We replicate those things for which we are praised. In love, encourage others to be more like Christ.

**Name someone who greatly encourages you in your walk with Jesus.**

**Text, call, or talk to someone today and take the time to build up her or him.**



## Thursday

### [Hebrews 13:17](#)

To “watch over” someone means “to guard for protection or safekeeping.” Biblical accountability enables us to help guard one another as we each seek to follow Jesus, to help protect someone’s walk with Him as he or she is growing in faith. There are men and women God has placed in our lives, and the Bible tells us we are to obey and submit to them. As we’ve seen this week, this, in turn, enables us to be protected as we pursue a life with Christ. The great thing in accountability is that while we are being kept safe, we are also able to watch over those watching over us. We are able to mutually, and joyfully, protect one another.

**How can having biblical accountability help you watch over one another?**

**How are you watching over those around you as you mutually seek to pursue Jesus?**



## Friday

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12–14

Holding one another accountable as the Lord calls us has a dual purpose. To *admonish* means “to caution or reprove for correction.” If someone is not walking in line with the truth, Scripture tells us to lovingly help that person see the correct way to walk. We are also called to esteem, regard highly, and value greatly in love. We must encourage those who are struggling. Only when both aspects of accountability are accomplished are we able to grow together and look more like Jesus. We are called to love others well. Accountability must be offered and accepted. We must hold our accountability partner(s) accountable and submit to their admonishments in our own life.

**Look at verses 13 and 14 again. Which is hardest for you in accountability?**

**Do you struggle to admonish (caution or reprove for correction) or to encourage?**



The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 26 | JUNE 28–JULY 2



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

## Monday

[John 15:17; Romans 12:10](#)

So often we hear about “accountability” within the church. But how often is it that this component is brushed off? More personally, how hard is it to be accountable toward others? As believers, we are commanded to love one another genuinely and to walk alongside one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

To love one another means many different things. In terms of accountability, a crucial step is that we should reach out and be open to it. In a career, you have a network of those whom you can reach out to for advice, for guidance, and yes, for accountability. It is said that a network is like a net: the fewer holes and the more lines there are, the stronger the net. It stands to reason that in our own walk, we should have others who genuinely love us and can keep us accountable while helping us to strengthen our walk (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

**Whom can you reach out to for accountability and in your daily walk with Christ?**

**There are so many things of which we are to be accountable: school, family, work, relationships. Can you identify areas where accountability is needed in your life?**





## Tuesday

### [Romans 14:13](#)

When pursuing or providing accountability, we are challenged not to be perceived as judgmental. This responsibility, in and of itself, is admittedly not easy at times, especially when it's with our own peers. Much the same as we are to genuinely love one another in accountability, Paul instructs that we should approach others with a gentle spirit (Galatians 6:1-2). The task of accountability should not be taken lightly because our motivation is found in genuine love. If you have asked someone to keep you accountable, you can rest in knowing you are not going through it alone because the accountability partner's responsibility is not limited to being open to the task, but being available, providing insight in a judgment-free environment. If you really think about it, another word for accountability is *friendship*. A believer's walk is based on individual situations and experiences, but, just like having a friend, it's not done without encouragement from others. One of the best ways to have accountability is to spend time together, to confess (talk it out) with your accountability partner (e.g., your friend, mentor, parent, LifeGroup Leader, etc.). There is power in numbers when in pursuit of accountability (James 5:16).

**ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER: Is it hard to remain in an open mindset and not come across as judgmental? How can we promote grace over judgment?**

**What traits are you looking for in an accountability partner?**



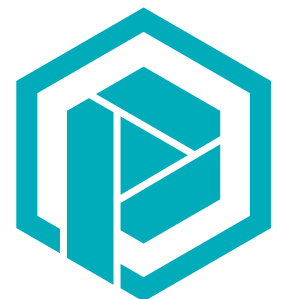
## Wednesday

### [Ephesians 4:25](#)

All our lives, we've probably been told that "honesty is the best policy." It's certainly a crucial element in our own walk, and the same is true with accountability. You must be honest (open) with yourself and vulnerable enough to be open with your accountability. The same expectation of honesty is just as crucial for an accountability partner. Paul points out that each one of us should speak truth with one another because we are members of the same body, the Church. This may look different from person to person and from situation to situation, but the common factor in all of it is having honesty as a priority. Let's face it: We can never hide anything from the Lord. By wholeheartedly bringing honesty into the accountability equation, we are developing relationships with other believers through spiritual realities and obedience together with the common goal of strengthening our personal relationship with God.

**If we are truthful with ourselves, how honest are we in our accountability?**

**What does it mean to be open (honest) in your accountability? How much are you willing to be vulnerable in your accountability?**



## Thursday

[Romans 12:6; Colossians 3:13](#)

Reality Check: We will stumble in our walk with God. It's inevitable, but accountability is made for these likely stumblings. Forgiveness is one key element for your own accountability and your accountability partner. However, we must caution ourselves not to let the burdens of a struggle be another hurdle Satan puts in our walk. Even Paul, being admirable as he strived to do what is right according to the Law, recognized the struggle and the war that waged in his mind as sin tried to hold him captive. This is a genuine appeal - he calls out his own sinful nature, and at the same time, he expresses thanks to God through Jesus. By doing so, Paul demonstrates that Christ is the answer to the problem of sin (Romans 7:24-25). In the same way, if we are called to keep someone accountable, we must be compassionate and patient through the struggles of accountability. This mirrors the comfort and forgiveness which we receive as followers and believers of Jesus Christ.

**Christ's sacrifice is the ultimate sign of forgiveness. What does it look like to show forgiveness in accountability?**

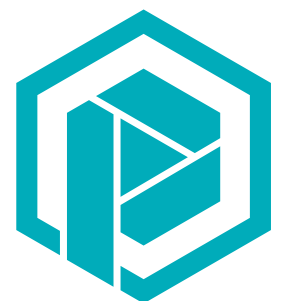


## Friday

### Galatians 6:2

The power of prayer is vital in every aspect of a believer's walk. This practice brings the honest burdens into the open and hands those burdens over to the Lord. Prayer is crucial to being honest and open, not only to the Lord, but to yourself in your own accountability. Why? Because you're not only praying, but others who walk alongside you in your accountability are tasked with sharing those burdens and bringing them to the Lord. As sure as your own prayers are vital, *"the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working"* (James 5:16). That is why we must confess our sins with each other and pray for one another in our walk together.

**What does your prayer life look like? As you think on your own time, are you open enough with yourself to pray for the struggles you are experiencing? How about with someone who is walking alongside you?**



The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 27 | JULY 5-9



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

## Monday

### Obadiah 1-4

You may have never read or even heard of the small Old Testament book Obadiah, but through its warnings against the arrogance of Edom and the hope of restoration reminds us of an important truth: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17, CSB).

God inspired every page of the Bible, and every word is meant for our good and growth in godliness. That includes Obadiah, which powerfully points us to God’s compassion and mercy, even as it condemns the sinful deeds of the arrogant. Every word of Scripture points us to the good news of the Gospel, showing us the reason for the hope we have in Christ. May it never be said of us that we left a page of Scripture unturned and missed an opportunity to glory in Christ. Instead, let us rejoice in every word, and feast on every page, as we see Jesus on every page—even the obscure ones like Obadiah.

**Have you ever participated in a Bible reading plan that covers the entire Bible? If not, find one this week that interests you and dive into covering every book of the Bible in a year.**



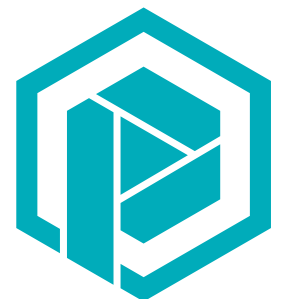
## Tuesday

### [Jeremiah 49:7-22](#)

Obadiah was not the only warning against Edom's arrogance. Jeremiah's prophecy was also a strong condemnation of their evil. But Jeremiah doesn't stop with condemnation—He also called them to run and turn back! This is an example of God's compassion toward sinners. Because He desires that people repent and be saved, He calls for us to flee from sin. He brings what is done in the darkness to light, and then calls us to walk in that light (1 John 1:5-7).

God continues to do this today. As we read His Word, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. As we walk in relationship with other believers, we speak truth into one another's lives, and we carry one another's burdens as we pursue holiness. The conviction that comes in the moment is rarely comfortable. But the freedom that results from repentance is sweet.

**Who is someone that speaks difficult truth into your life?**

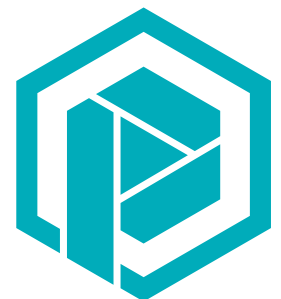


## Wednesday

### Obadiah 10-14

Edom and the nations had sinned against Judah and against God, and the Day of the Lord would come against them. But the promise of retribution was not the entirety of Obadiah's message. God also promised restoration for His people. He would make them holy. And greater still, He would come and establish His kingdom for all to see. Imagine what it must have been like first to hear these words. God's people had never had a history of unfailing faithfulness. Throughout the Old Testament, God was continually calling His people to repentance, to turn away from the sin that ensnared them. The situation they found themselves in was the fruit of years of rebellion against God. Yet even as He disciplined them, God had not abandoned them. He would restore His people, and better still, He would ultimately establish His rule over all the nations.

**How does God's call to repentance challenge you today?**





## Thursday

### Obadiah 15-18

The people of Israel had been devastated by the Babylonians. Jerusalem was burned to the ground. The temple was ruined. The people were murdered and those who were kept alive were taken as slaves. And through it all, the Babylonians—who had been used as instruments of judgment against God’s wayward people—rejoiced. They delighted in the destruction they caused. But despite his harsh language, the psalmist was not wishing for vengeance in human terms. He was praying for God’s justice. He was putting his trust in God’s promise to repay the Babylonians for what they had done. He was trusting that God will deliver His people, as God had promised. Throughout this song of praise, he called the people to remember: Remember Jerusalem in your grief—and remember the Lord’s promise of deliverance.

**How are you able to remain hopeful when God seems indifferent?**



## Friday

### Obadiah 19-21

As much as Obadiah is a book about sin and judgment, it is one of hope. And as readers today, we have an even greater hope because we have seen the promise begin to come to fruition in Jesus. When Jesus—God Himself—began His earthly ministry, He declared, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!” (Mark 1:15, CSB). He came proclaiming “the good news of God” (1:14) and performing signs and wonders. He went to the cross and died in place of His people and was raised again from death. And God gave Him power and authority over all creation, and every knee “in heaven and on earth and under the earth” is commanded to bow before Him and “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

### **How does the Gospel give you hope today?**



The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 28 | JULY 12-16



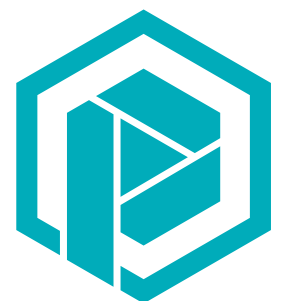
P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

### [Ezra 1:1-11](#)

“The Lord has appointed me” is a powerful declaration of praise and an affirmation of God’s authority. There may be no greater truth in the universe than the reality that God is in authority over all things. It is not only a truism, but it is among the most comforting of all thoughts. For those of us who serve God, we are on the side of the One who is in authority over all things. That is a deeply comforting reality that gives us confidence to live with extreme optimism and even happiness. A faithful Christian, even through moments and days of difficulty, should assume a general posture of optimism toward the world and the future.

**Are you frightened about the future? How might confidence in God’s authority change your view of the future?**

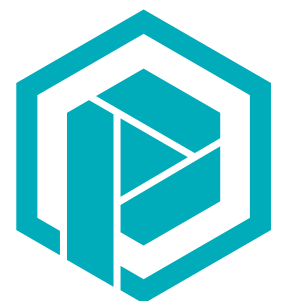


## Tuesday

### [Ezra 2:1-67](#)

Nearly everyone wants to be remembered. Whether it be something as inescapable as a tombstone, or something more rare like a biography, remembering the lives of the those who have gone before us is a significant part of nearly every culture, and a desire that most of us wish for our own lives. We want to know that our lives mattered. This passage seems easy to pass over, until you realize that this list is God's way of remembering those who had faith in God's promise, and were the first to return after exile. This listing, while seemingly insignificant, is a marker for the Israelite people of the faith of those who went before them, and even more importantly, of the promises of God that were fulfilled. When we read passages like this, we should be stirred to remember their lives, and we should be reminded that God knows every one of us. And although history itself may never remember us, God will always remember. This is a picture of God's covenant-keeping love and His affection for His people.

**Do you wonder whether you will be remembered in the future? How might your confidence in God's love and His remembrance of you serve to motivate your obedience and your faithfulness?**



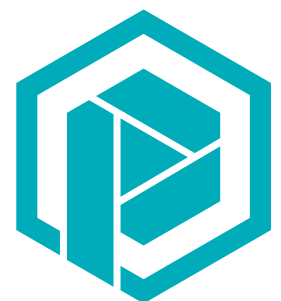
## Wednesday

### [Ezra 2:68-70](#)

Did you notice the omission in verse 68? There's something that should be there that isn't. The passage tells us that some of the family heads gave freewill offerings to the Lord. This matters because God almost always funds his activity through freewill offerings. This is the picture across Scripture. And yet, in this instance, although God had been faithful to accomplish His promise, and although the Israelites had followed Him in faith, it appears that some had already moved on and were forgetting God's faithfulness. Only some gave the freewill offering, but not all.

It's easy to fall into that same forgetfulness, isn't it? We move along in the business of our lives and we quickly forget about how good God is to us. We are tempted to have confidence in ourselves, and forget what God has previously done.

**In what ways has God blessed you in the past? How might you need to take some time to remember and thank God for His faithfulness in your life?**

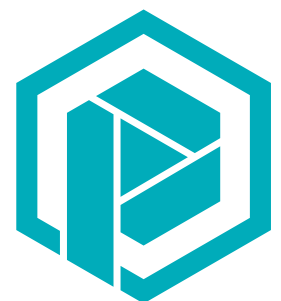


## Thursday

### Ezra 3:1-7

In verse 1, we see something remarkable for any large group of people, but especially for the Israelites. The passage says that the people “gathered as one”. This is remarkable unity. So often when groups of people are in proximity to one another—and all the more in our current cultural climate—we too often try to divide based on our differences instead of unify around our commonalities. Not so in this moment. The Israelites had experienced the goodness of God, and they were working toward the purposes of God, and they unified together in that moment. It is true that, among the people of God, there will always exist reasons for us to be divided. Personality conflicts, theological conflicts (within the bounds of orthodoxy), methodological conflicts, and so on, all exist. And yet the work of God must triumph over those things. We need to unify to see God’s work accomplished.

**What Christians do you find it difficult to partner together with? Could God be calling us to work intentionally with more believers to see the work of God accomplished?**



## Friday

### [Ezra 3:8-13](#)

As the Israelites were celebrating, and some were experiencing sorrow, their cries were incredibly loud. They were so loud, they were heard from “far away.” There’s a lesson in this, isn’t there? God had been working, keeping His promises, showing them His faithfulness, and now they were celebrating, and their celebration caught the attention of many from far away.

This is exactly how God calls each of His children to be. He works redemptively in our lives, He transforms us by His grace and our celebration of Him ought to be so clear and so powerful that it catches the attention of many. Yet for too many of us, our celebration is nearly non-existent, or we attempt to keep it to ourselves. Too often we have forgotten just how significant God’s grace is in our lives. God has done much in each of our lives, and our response to His grace, especially in the eye of the public, speaks to our confidence and gratefulness for His grace.

**With whom have you shared the celebration of God’s work in your life?**

**With whom might you need to share?**





The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 29 | JULY 19-23



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

## Monday

### [Haggai 1:1-11](#)

No matter at what age really, bedtime for kids can be a struggle. They are professionals at postponing it as long as they can. The Israelites shared a similar capacity, which we see acknowledged in Haggai 1:2. God had called them to rebuild the temple, and they kept saying that it was not the right time. In a real sense, they were repeating the same line that the serpent in the garden of Eden said to Eve when he tried to persuade her that God did not really say what He in fact did say. We can often be guilty of this, trying to confuse God's revealed word in an effort to avoid what He is calling us to do. Our response has to be repentance, faith, and obedience.

**How have you been guilty of pushing away obedience?**



## Tuesday

### [Haggai 1:12-15](#)

Notice the motivation for obedience from the Israelites: they feared the Lord and responded in obedience (v. 12). As followers of Jesus we often misunderstand what our response should be when we recognize our disobedience. Too often we think the immediate response is just to do better. The problem is that doing better is not ultimately our reason for a lack of obedience. The real reason that Christians don't obey is because we do not worship well. A true picture of God and ourselves leads to obedience. So the next time we find ourselves confronted by a lack of obedience, we ought to pay attention to the way we are not obeying. But, the question of what we are worshiping ought to loom even larger in our mind.

**How have you found that a lack of worship in your life leads to greater temptations to sin?**

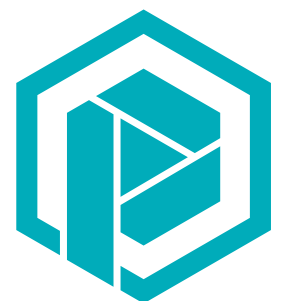


## Wednesday

### [Haggai 2:1-23](#)

Recently my daughter celebrated her birthday. Leading up to her actual birthday she was a bit upset because she had not received any birthday cards in the mail. What she didn't know is that her mom was confiscating them, waiting to give them to her on her birthday. Her mom was working, even when our daughter was unaware, because she wanted to surprise her with a big day. In verse 6, Haggai reminds us that God's activity is not new. It is consistent with what He has done in the past. God is always at work. Always. Even when it seems that God is silent, God is at work and is always on the move. This reality should simultaneously bring us both comfort and confidence.

**When has God appeared to have been silent in your life but later, in hindsight, you were able to see that He was working?**

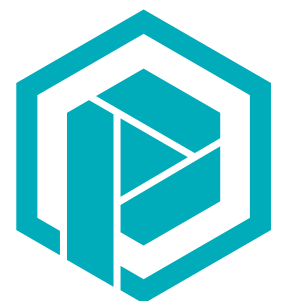


## Thursday

### [Ezra 4:1-5:17](#)

There is a popular idea that floats around contemporary Christian circles that, if we honor God, He will bless our efforts. In other words, if our hearts are pure, and we are working in a way that honors God, our plans will succeed. These ideas are supported by various Scriptures. The problem is, this is not always the case in Scripture. Sometimes those who are trying to honor God do succeed. Sometimes they ultimately succeed, but they often struggle in the meantime. And sometimes, they seem to fail. They lose their lives. They are imprisoned. In this story, they ultimately succeeded at building the temple, but not without great opposition, opposition that might often discourage us. In this story, they were strongly opposed, and often, as they attempted to accomplish God's purposes. This should encourage us to be faithful in God's work, even when difficulty comes.

**In what ways have you experienced difficulty when trying to be faithful to God in the past? How does this encourage you to be faithful in the future?**



## Friday

### [Ezra 6:1-22](#)

I love the response to the Israelites in verse 16. They celebrated with joy. Far too often this kind of response to the work of God in our lives seems to be lacking. We focus on the difficulties of the faith, or the challenges that we face in culture, and we fail to celebrate, to rest in the victories that God accomplishes. There is something good about enjoying the results of God's faithfulness and our commitment to His work. When we celebrate these moments, we are participating in something of a precursor to our life in eternity when we will celebrate forever the good life that comes with the presence in the eternal kingdom of God. Celebration is a marker of the people of God who understand the depth of the sin and brokenness around them, yet are moved by the lengths to which God will go in the preservation of His kingdom and His people. This is evidence of a God who is not distant but who is active and loving among us, and who is worthy of our praise.

**What has God done in your life that is worthy of your celebration?**

**Can you take a moment today and celebrate His good work in your life?**



The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 30 | JULY 26-30



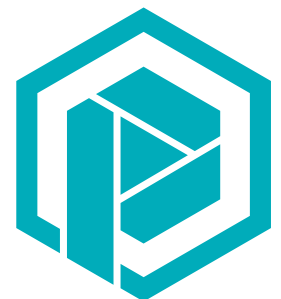
P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

### [Zechariah 1:1-2:13](#)

I have three children. They're all teenagers. I can't count the number of times I've said to them, "Listen to me!" It can seem frustrating to get their attention. What's more, I have tried to help them not make the same mistakes that I have made in the past. In these verses God was doing the same thing. He was trying to convince the Israelites not to make the mistakes of their ancestors and to pay attention to Him. The beauty is, that if they did, He promised that they will be with Him and He will be with them. This is the promise of the Garden of Eden. Once again, humanity and God walking together, experiencing the unbroken relationship of Creator and created. God is continuing to say these things to us today. He wants us to learn from history; He wants us to learn from God's Word, and He wants us to follow Him in faith. Our promise is the same; that we will walk with Him.

**Are there areas of your life that God has been trying to get your attention? Are there areas that you need to obey Him in but you have struggled to do so?**





## Tuesday

### [Zechariah 3:1-6:12](#)

I love what this passage tells us about the branch as it is grown into a full vine (3:10). It says that it will cast shade for those who gather under it. Read retrospectively, it says that the followers of Jesus are the ones who will sit under it. And then the passage calls God's people to invite others to join them, sitting under the shade of the vine. This is important because, first, it reminds us that sitting under the vine is richly satisfying. That's the picture here. There is restoration for hot and thirsty souls under the vine's shade. Beyond that, though, it speaks to our role. We don't provide shade; we just point to the One who does. The world is full of hot and thirsty people. We cannot quench their thirst, but we can give them directions to the One who can quench their thirst. God is calling His children to invite those they know who do not know Christ to join them in enjoying the comfort of the shade from the vine.

**Who is someone you know who does not know Christ? How might you use this passage to witness to them?**



## Wednesday

### [Zechariah 6:13-9:17](#)

We are to rejoice, and we are to shout! These are the expectations for the children of God who have enjoyed the comfort and redemption of the Messiah. Remember this principle: the manner of our worship says something about the object of our worship. We celebrate the things that mean the most to us, the things that move us the most. Can you imagine a baby's first birthday and no one celebrating? Can you imagine everyone just standing around, nodding lethargically? Of course not. Those days are fabulous celebrations that we enjoy. Why do we enjoy them, and why do we celebrate so loudly? We do this because we love the child and we understand the wonder of both birth and growth. The same type of excitement should apply to our worship of the Messiah who has redeemed us.

**What does the manner of your worship say about the God you are worshiping?**



## Thursday

### [Zechariah 10:1-12:14](#)

How much hope is present in Zechariah 10:6? It's bubbling up on the page and spilling out in the life of those of us who are reading it. It's hard not to sit back and just be in awe of God's covenant-keeping. God loves His people, and the promise of God, across Scripture, is that God will love, restore, and be with His people. This is why God is referred to as Immanuel—the God who is with us. All the way back in the Abrahamic Covenant, God promises to be with His people. And all the way forward to Revelation 21, God ultimately promises to be with His people. The greatest promise of Scripture, from the time that Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, and from God's presence, is that God will once again be with us. This is yet another picture of God fulfilling that promise. One of the most beautiful pictures of this is Psalm 23:4. Even when we walk through the darkest valleys, we do not have to fear because God is with us.

**How does God's promise of His presence give us hope? How is God's presence able to keep us from fear?**



## Friday

### [Zechariah 13:1-14:21](#)

God promises to put His people through a refining process. He will make us increasingly into His Son's image through this refinement (Rom. 8:28-29). Refinement, though, is not easy. It is often painful and challenging. Thankfully, in this passage, God points out that we can cry out to Him as we walk through difficult moments. This guarantee is one of the beautiful realities of Jesus. He is not a God who is distant and uninterested. He is a God who loves His children, and as the passage reminds us, He is both with us and for us. The title "Immanuel," used a few places in Scripture, literally means "God with us." He knows us, He loves us, and He invites us to cry out to Him. He promises then to come to us and to be with us.

Maybe you are struggling from time to time with some particular pain. You need to hear today that God is with you, He is for you, and He wants you to cry out to Him. He is your hope.

**In what areas do you need to cry out to God, sharing with Him your hurt and confirming your confidence and hope in Him?**



The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 31 | AUGUST 2-6

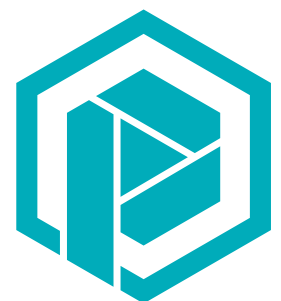


P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

## Monday

[1 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#)

This is a very popular question among Christians today: What is God's will for my life? What if I make a wrong decision? Well, this week we will look at five truths regarding God's general will for our lives as believers in Christ. The first one is that we may be saved. Each of the verses today clearly states that knowing God and making Him known is the will of God for our lives if we are Christians. Today, meditate on these verses, pray the Lord would open your eyes to the people around you who do not know Jesus, and look for opportunities to share the Gospel with them! This is God's will for your life: that *"all people will be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4).

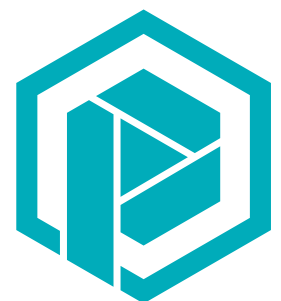


## Tuesday

[Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)

Today, we are going to look at another fact regarding God's will - that we may be thankful. When you hear the word "thankful," what do you think of? Honestly, the first thing that comes to mind is turkey, because of ... well ... Thanksgiving, of course! On this day, we come together with our families to celebrate and give thanks for all of our blessings. Here's a question for you: What would your life look like each day if you lived in a spirit of thanksgiving? That is God's will for our lives, that no matter what we do, no matter what we go through, we should be thankful. James 1:2 says we should count it all as joy. Joy is a result of trusting in Christ as our personal Lord and Savior and being thankful. Today, here's your challenge: Ephesians 5:20: *"Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything."* Let's do just that today.

**On a sheet of paper, list 10 things you are thankful for. Then pray and give thanks to God for the things you wrote down.**



## Wednesday

### [Colossians 3:23–24](#)

Before you read this short devo for the day, read the verses and then jump back in.

WOW and OUCH. Work as though you aren't working to please people, but rather work as if you are working to please the Lord. We should serve out of an abundance of our thanksgiving for all that God has given us (which we discussed yesterday). Our serving should not be to "get a gold star" or "get another follow," but it should be about serving God's people and to please the Lord.

Here's your challenge for today: Look for a way to serve someone around you. Offer to clean the dishes for your parents, mow the lawn, help a sibling with a chore, or text a staff member and ask how you can help set up for MDWK.

**Remember: Work as if you are working for the Lord. When you are doing that specific task, give thanks to the Lord, and work as if you are working for the Lord, not just to get a "thank you." Philippians 2:3 says, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit.*" This is God's will for your life: that you may serve.**





## Thursday

[1 Thessalonians 4:3–7; Romans 8:28–29](#)

God's will for our lives is that we may be sanctified and conformed. What in the world is sanctification? What does it mean to be conformed? Well, let's explain it in the simplest way: *Sanctification* is a really big word that means "to become holier," like Jesus. *Conformed* means that we should become more and more like Christ and less like ourselves. John 3:30 says, "*He must become greater and I must become less.*" How do we become sanctified? How do we become more like Jesus? Have you ever realized that the more time you spend with certain people, the more you start to talk like them and even act like them? For example, think of your closest friend. He or she probably does things that you didn't do before, but now you've started to do. Make sense? So when we spend more time with Jesus, reading the Word, praying and seeking Him, the more we start to look like Jesus. Although we can never be Jesus, we certainly can try to follow after His example through serving, giving thanks, and making the Gospel known!

**What's one way you can spend more time with Jesus today?**

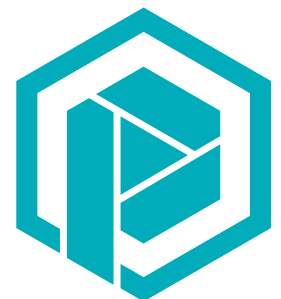


## Friday

### [1 Peter 3:14–17; 4:19](#)

Lastly, God's will is this: that we may suffer. Let's explain. As believers, we are called to do good, not evil. We are called to be *in the world*, but not of *the world* (John 17:16). When we follow after the commands of Jesus, often they are not what the world claims as "good." But we see in the verses today that even if we should suffer for what is right, we are blessed. Peter encourages us by saying, "*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have*" (1 Peter 3:15, NIV). The book of James doesn't talk about IF we go through trials, but WHEN we go through trials, trials that will probably involve suffering and maybe even pain. But this is the will of God: that we may know Him, give thanks, serve, conform, be sanctified and suffer. When we go through trials and suffer, let's lean in to the other facets of God's will for our life.

### How can you glorify God through suffering?



The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 32 | AUGUST 9-13



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

## Monday

[Psalm 37:4; Romans 12:1–2](#)

The will of God is not something that can easily be discovered or unveiled. The problem is that most of the time we allow our own will to get in the way of our seeing His will clearly. In order to understand and know the will of God, we have to first sacrifice our own will. Psalm 37:4 says, “*Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*” This means that we need to allow our desires to be shaped by the Lord. The Hebrew word translated here as *delight* can mean “malleable, soft or delicate.” This has to be the posture of our hearts in order to discover the Lord’s will. We must be able to allow the Lord to shape and direct our desires, leading us toward Himself.

**What is keeping you from surrendering your own desires?**

**How can you allow your heart to be shaped by the Lord?**



## Tuesday

[Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 119:105](#)

God has given us His Word to discern and understand His will. The Bible is a guide and instrument that is meant to be used. Psalm 119:105 says, *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”* We cannot see in the darkness of life without the light of God’s holy Word leading us. It is vitally important to be in the Word consistently and approach the Bible with intentionality. We are told in Isaiah 55 that Scripture never returns empty but instead, “accomplishes what the Lord desires.” This is how we know the will of God for our lives. His desires start to become our desires when we abide in Him.

**How do we prepare our hearts to hear from God through His Word?**

**How does God’s Word help us know the will of God?**



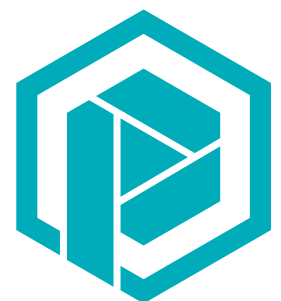
## Wednesday

[James 1:5; Romans 8:14](#)

Prayer can sometimes be intimidating. Prayer is simply an avenue for us to communicate with the Father. Much like Scripture, prayer is never in vain. The Holy Spirit leads us toward uncovering the will of God, and He also walks with us in prayer. Romans 8 ensures us that when we don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. He steps in and leads the way in our conversation with God. This is a time when we come to the Lord with our thoughts, concerns and even questions. If we approach Him with a thankful and humble heart, He is faithful to listen to us and answer our prayers. Answered prayers are not always what we think they are going to be, but He is faithful to guide our hearts and minds toward a peace that transcends all understanding.

**What does your prayer life consist of?**

**Are you praying for your will or for the Lord's will in your life?**



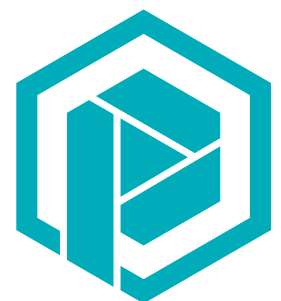
## Thursday

[Acts 16:6–10; Proverbs 16:9](#)

Along the journey of understanding the Lord's will for our lives, we must remember that God speaks and works in many different ways. He can speak through people in our lives, through circumstances, or even dreams. Be watchful for how the Lord may be revealing His will to you. Paul saw visions on his missionary journey as direction for future locations, and God made a way for those things to happen because it was a part of His plan. Proverbs 16 says, *"The heart of a man plans his ways, but the Lord determines his steps."* God is faithful to redeem all things and work all things together for good. It is our job to walk faithfully through the doors He makes available to us.

**Are you making the most of the opportunities God has given you?**

**How have you seen God open or close doors in your life?**



## Friday

### Proverbs 3:5–6

We are not going to know exactly what we should do in every situation or circumstance. There are going to be seasons where it isn't very clear to us what the will of the Lord is. Sometimes we simply have to put all our trust in the Lord and remember that He is the one in control. Proverbs tells us to "lean not on our understanding," but instead to lean on the Lord and fully trust as He makes our paths straight. Sometimes, the answer to knowing the will of God in our lives is just to trust Him fully without any reservations. This takes faith and leads to peace that is greater than anything we can imagine.

**What are you trusting in?**

**What is keeping you from fully placing your trust in the Lord?**





The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 33 | AUGUST 16-20



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

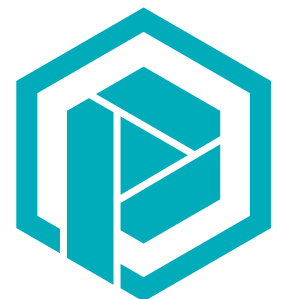
## Monday

### [Luke 14:26–27](#)

This passage can be tricky to understand. The idea of hating your family and yourself can seem a bit odd when you think about it coming from an all-loving God. The verse can appear to be dangerous if not understood in its proper context. The word *hate* in the original language refers to how we should give to something *less* than our own complete devotion or allegiance. Simply put, Jesus is calling His followers to devote themselves to Him first, before anyone or anything else. It compels us to answer this question: Who comes first in our life? When Jesus says to hate these others, He means we need to be devoted to Him and no one else. He offers a love others cannot, and when you love Jesus more than all these others, you will see your love for everyone else increase because of who He is.

**Why must we first devote ourselves to Jesus above anyone else?**

**How differently would your life look if you pursued Christ and nothing else?**



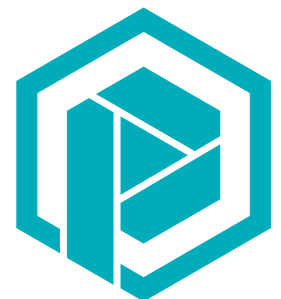
## Tuesday

### [Luke 15:1–10](#)

Yesterday we went through what it looks like to go after Christ and to pursue Him, and today we are talking about pursuing others. If we are not pursuing Christ, we are in no position to pursue others. In this portion of Scripture, we see the Pharisees baffled because Jesus is eating with tax collectors who were considered to be the absolute worst people to be around. Then we see Jesus turn and tell them two parables about people celebrating something that was once lost but is now found. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, so we should be doing the same. He goes as far as to say there will be more joy in one sinner's repentance than in 99 people needing no repentance. Our focus should be on others. If you read 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul says that as faithful followers, we should be pouring into others. We should be putting Christ first, others second and ourselves third. The pursuit of others is only accomplished through a selfless pursuit of Christ first.

**Is your focus on yourself or others?**

**Do others see Christ in your relationships?**



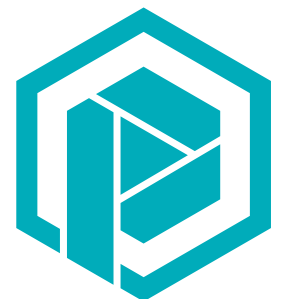
## Wednesday

[Mark 2:13–17, Matthew 25:34–36](#)

Today we see in this passage Pharisees who are upset at Jesus for eating with sinners, much like we saw them in yesterday's devotion. Specifically, we see Jesus with Levi, a tax collector whom Jesus told to follow Him. Immediately Levi did as he was told. That's weird for a man just to get up and follow someone because he's told to follow, right? Yet we see this throughout the four Gospels! From Jesus' telling people to leave their dead, drop their nets on the other side, stand up and walk with newly healed legs, to come back to life and walk out of tombs – people listened because there is power in the name of Jesus. He built a reputation for healing and saving people such that Levi couldn't help but do as he was asked! So many things are only possible through the name of Jesus. We see that in Colossians 1:15–20 where we see that *all* things were created in Him and through Him. The name of Jesus should be the only motive we need to live a life that seeks to save the lost.

**What are you willing to leave behind to follow Jesus?**

**Name someone in your life who is broken. What are you doing to help him or her find healing in Jesus?**



## Thursday

### [Matthew 5:13–16](#)

*Constant* is a great word to describe Jesus. It simply means “never changing or varying.” When you read this portion of Scripture, you may ask how salt loses its taste. The truth is that pure salt never loses its taste or its purpose; however, other minerals can contaminate salt and cause it to lose both its taste and its purpose. Jesus continues with a beautiful illustration that tells us that people don’t light a lamp to hide it under a basket, but they put the lamp on a stand so that it fills the entire room with light. Likewise, He wants us to be a light in the darkness filling the entire world. Part of reaching out is being set apart. If you aren’t living a life that shows you are different, why should people choose to follow you?

**What are things that contaminate your purity?**

**What are you doing to battle these things?**



## Friday

### [Jude 1:17-23](#)

Jude calls his readers to remember the apocalyptic future that was predicted by the apostles where people will mock God and follow after their ungodly desires (vv. 17-18). These people will cause conflict wherever they go, are consumed by things of the world and are empty of the Holy Spirit, which is in complete opposition to what believers are supposed to be. Jude instructs the believers to persevere by building themselves up in faith, prayer, love and mercy. He also tells them to wait for God's mercy. This waiting is not in vain because believers are assured of their hope that Jesus is coming back. Finally, Jude calls believers to show mercy to people who doubt God and don't have faith. Believers are supposed to be "snatching them out of the fire" (v. 23). What a vivid picture! Believers need to "grab people" and pull them away from hell! This is the highest form of mercy, to help people escape eternal punishment.

**What does suffering and pain look like in your school?**

**What are you doing to snatch nonbelievers away from lies and bring them to the truth?**



---

SUMMER 2021

**DEVO**

WEEK 34 | AUGUST 23-27

---

The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



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

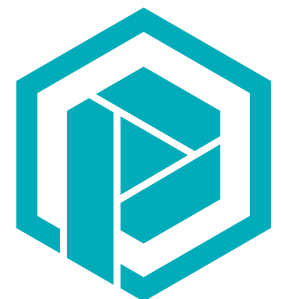
## Monday

### Colossians 1:9–14

The apostle Paul writes this letter to the Christians at Colossae, which is 15 miles east of Denizli province in modern day Turkey. In verses 9 through 14, Paul writes his prayer for the Christians in Colossae. Paul prays that these Christians would grow in their walk with the Lord; he asks that they would be filled with the *knowledge* of the Lord. The Greek word for knowledge here is the one the biblical authors typically use but with an added preposition that intensifies its meaning. This is a deep and thorough knowledge of the will of God that is finally and completely revealed in the Word of God. Paul then goes on to tell them to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, which means to live in a way consistent with your identification with your Savior. He tells the Christians in Colossae to bear fruit, and by this he means spiritual fruit, which is the product of a righteous life.

**How can you personally grow in your spiritual walk with the Lord?**

**Can you name some of the spiritual fruit you've produced?**





## Tuesday

### 1 Peter 1:13–16, 1 Peter 2:1–3

Peter says to be “sober-minded,” which literally means not to be drunk. Symbolically it means to be self-controlled and able to see things in perspective. When Christians are studying the Bible thoroughly, they can see everything in perspective. As Christians prepare their minds and stay sober-minded, they should also look to the new future, which is the revelation of Jesus Christ (v. 13). They are to rest their full weight of hope on what lies ahead for them at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Christians do that by putting their old ignorant passions behind and living out a life of holiness as Jesus did because He was holy. Just as children imitate their parents, Christians should imitate the nature of Christ because they are children of God. The reason Christians are commanded to be holy is because they have been adopted as children by the holy God. Christians should also treat His Word with reverence and respect.

**What is keeping you from being “sober-minded”?**

**Name three things you can do that would be considered holy.**



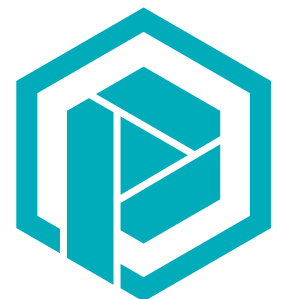
## Wednesday

### [Ephesians 4:11–16](#)

Paul tells his readers they need to mature in their faith and grow to be more like Christ. In verse 13, Paul says that unity of the faith and knowledge of God will create a maturity that measures to the fullness of Christ. The Ephesians should grow maturely in their faith, so they are not tossed around by the world's deceitfulness. People who do not grow into maturity remain in their immaturity, and so they are tossed around by waves, winds, human deception and schemes. All of those evil things represent Satan's attempts to get people to grow distant from the Lord and to stunt their growth in the faith. In order for young Christians to mature, they have to grow up to be like Christ, the Head of the Church. Young, immature Christians also need to hear from mature Christians who can speak the truth to them in a loving way through discipleship and accountability.

**Would you consider yourself a young Christian or a mature Christian according to Ephesians 4:13?**

**Of the four pieces of evidence of spiritual maturity, which do you need to exhibit most?**



## Thursday

### Psalm 1:1–3

It's not certain whether David wrote the first few chapters of Psalms, so the writer is referred to as the psalmist. The psalmist here tells us that blessings come from God's Word. There is a great joy and contentment in knowing God's Word. The very first word of verse 1 is "blessed," which is parallel to the expression used in the beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–11. It signifies the blessing of a dynamic relationship with God through His Word on a daily basis. The blessings come from the meditation on God's Word. The verb *meditate* means "to whisper something under one's breath," referring to the quiet reading out loud of Scripture to oneself. Meditating on God's Word means to fill your mind with biblical text and to consider what it means and how it applies. In the Bible, the word *meditation* is often equivalent to the word *study*. Joshua was given this command when he gained leadership over Israel (1 Joshua 1:6–9). God tells Joshua to meditate on the Book of the Law day and night so it would not depart from his mouth, meaning that Joshua would always know God's Word and keep it with him.

**What time of the day will you read your Bible? (Circle one.)**

**Morning | Afternoon | Evening**

**Are you unsure where to start reading? Choose one of these books to start with: John, Romans or Proverbs (reading one chapter of Proverbs a day will get you through the book in a month!).**



## Friday

### Proverbs 3:1–8

Another part of growing spiritually in our walk with the Lord is putting our trust in the Lord and His teachings. Solomon tells his son in verse 5 to trust in the Lord with *all* his heart - not *some* or *part* of his heart but *all* of it. This wholehearted trust completely believes what God says, including accepting His words of wisdom while rejecting the way of folly, obeying His commands and embracing His promises. This trust also rests secure in God's care and relies completely on His resources. By having this kind of trust, you will not rely on your own knowledge and understanding but rather in God's alone. Solomon then goes on to say there are good results to having this kind of trust, one of which is that the Lord will make your paths straight. Lifestyles of wickedness are crooked in both the moral sense and the practical sense, but a lifestyle of righteousness is straight morally and smooth practically (in actions).

**How can you trust in the Lord with all your heart?**

**What in your life is preventing you from fearing the Lord?**



The Gospel Project for Students copyright ©2014 is published  
by LifeWay Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# SUMMER 2021

# DEVO

WEEK 35 | AUG. 30-SEPT. 3



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

## Monday

### [Matthew 10:16–23](#)

This week we are going to read several passages and learn about the importance of being sent as believers on mission. Jesus has established His ministry and had made His message known, but now He is empowering the disciples to go out with His message, His spirit, and His power to further His ministry. In these verses, Jesus warns them of the opposition they will face in all areas of their lives. With this warning, He urges them to be like a serpent and also like a dove. A serpent represented intelligence and tactics, meaning that we need to be aware of the ways of the world as well as the temptations that will come at us. The dove represents the symbol of innocence, meaning that we need to be genuine in all that we do. The importance is that Jesus told them to be both, a challenging balance to maintain. Although Jesus says the disciples will face much opposition, Jesus gives them the promise of the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

**Have you ever experienced opposition? If yes, how did you handle it?**

**With this knowledge of the gift of the Holy Spirit, how do you plan to influence your sphere of influence?**



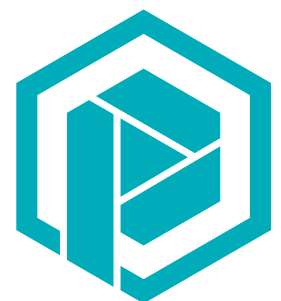
## Tuesday

### Acts 8:26–39

As we continue to dive into Scripture on the concept of being sent, we see Philip take action as an evangelist with boldness and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's calling. Philip receives clear instructions from the Spirit twice in this passage. The first time he was told to go on an interesting journey with not much understanding. The second time he was given a very specific instruction that provided further clarity. After hearing both of these instructions to go near the chariot, Philip obeyed and responded immediately. These instructions required boldness since the eunuch in the chariot was a man of high position and of wealth. It was prestigious to own a chariot or to have the book of Isaiah in hand. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Philip was able to have a spiritual conversation that led to his sharing about Jesus. Not only did he share with the eunuch, but he was also able to help him follow through with a response to the Gospel!

**Has the Spirit been urging you to make a move or have a certain conversation lately? If so, with whom?**

**Are you prepared to share the Gospel with Scripture if the Holy Spirit gave you the opportunity?**



## Wednesday

[Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 1:8](#)

In these two passages, Jesus breaks down what is commanded of us and how to do it. In Matthew, He expresses the urgency of disciple-making. Acts follows up perfectly to tell us where and how – ultimately everywhere and with the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells us at the end of the passage in Matthew that He will continue to be with us until the end of days, and in Acts 1:8, we come full circle to the fulfillment of that promise. The Holy Spirit is what drives our witnessing, and it is the fulfillment of the promise seen in both passages.

**As we consider the command that we are to go and baptize others, have you, yourself, been baptized? Is there an area of action in the Matthew verses you need to first own for yourself before doing it for others?**

**Have you ever found yourself resting in substitute sources for power and strength while on mission? What were they?**





## Thursday

### [Romans 10:13-14](#)

The author of Romans, Paul, specifically states in the first verse of this passage that the Gospel is for everyone. For *all* who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. This is actually a quotation of an earlier passage in the Old Testament, Joel 2:32. These verses both mention “Lord,” but they reference a different part of the Trinity in each passage. The Old Testament verse is referring to *Yahweh*, “the Lord.” The New Testament verse here in Romans is talking about the name of Jesus because of what He did for us on the Cross. This verse in Romans is important because it confirms the Gospel as universal, and identifies Jesus with God. In the next verse, Paul states some rhetorical questions that break down the steps a person would walk through before calling on the name of the Lord. The verses that follow this passage dive into the beauty of the one who brings the Good News and the necessary response from those who hear it.

**What are the four things that Paul says are needed in these verses?**



## Friday

[Psalm 105:1; Isaiah 6:8; Isaiah 12:4; Psalm 96:3](#)

As we wrap up this week talking about being sent and living on mission, we read in several different passages – both Old and New Testament – the importance of proclaiming the news, and where, how and why we should proclaim it. As we have learned this week, we are reminded that it is a joy and privilege to share the Gospel. Throughout these passages, the message was being shared as people were singing, which is the most joyful way to declare a message! We also are reminded that this message is for all people; we are to take it to the ends of the earth. The key thing for us to realize is why we proclaim the Gospel. We proclaim the Gospel so that God gets all the glory and the praise.

Take some time to jot down some ways you've seen God's greatness, His characteristics and things that He's done in your life.

**With whom can you pray and share the Gospel, and what God has done in your life this week?**

