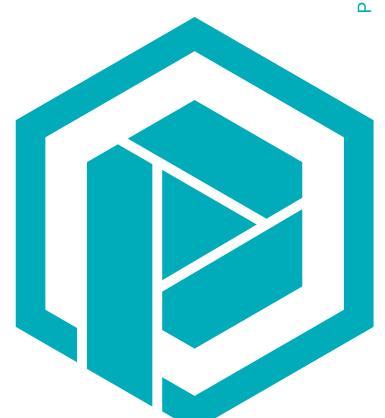
SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 25 | JUNE 20



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ACCOUNTABILITY

Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14



main point Accountability ... It's Biblical!

essential



Accountability

The stark reality of Scripture is that every person, Christian and non-Christian, is accountable before a sovereign God (see Romans 3:9-19) and will one day have to bow before Christ (Philippians 2:9-11). Unfortunately, however, man is a rebel who wants to do his own thing without any or very little accountability for his actions. Since the fall of man (Genesis 3), this has been the case, but a worldwide phenomenon of our day is a defiance of any form of established authority whether religious or secular, social or political. This sad reality has colored the beliefs and actions of our present society worldwide. Without a sense of accountability to a sovereign God, the world can quickly gravitate in the direction of the ruthless acts and tyranny of people like Hitler. When God either does not exist in the beliefs of men or when the truth about God is distorted into man's own image of who and what God is like, everything is permitted, morally speaking. Accountability to God and to one another according to the directives of Scripture is the foundation for freedom and liberty. Accountability is one of the means God uses to bring about solid growth and maturity with the freedom to be what God has created us for.

Ultimately accountability is all about Christ. At the core of accountability is one Christian's submitting to the Christ-centered counsel of another Christian in one or more areas of life. Only through a true relationship with Jesus can one correctly help another know how to walk in a manner worthy of our calling (1 Thessalonians 2: 12). Jesus is both our Savior and our pattern to follow. God's plan is to make us more like Him. Through the example of Jesus, we are able to hold others accountable through the lens of His life. The great news is that we don't do this in our strength but through the strength of the Holy Spirit.

- 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.
- What you "wear" says a lot about you the team you support, bands you like. Take 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?
- 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 that person.
- 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?
- Looking 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?

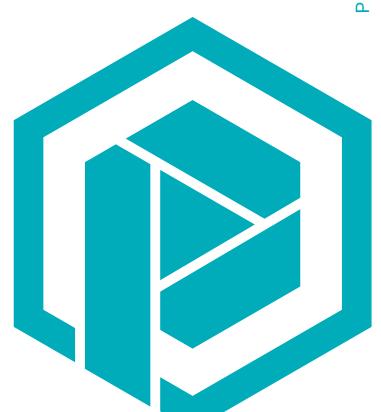


- Discuss the dual purpose of accountability: a calling to Christlike faith and an attitude of grace and forgiveness where we bear one another's burdens.
- Which of the above is harder for you as an accountability partner?
- What is the difference between having an accountability partner and other Christian friendships?
- Why are both so important in your life and walk with Jesus?
- Accountability isn't a form of "confession" where we just admit what we shouldn't
 be doing. Instead, it should be a time of encouragement to be more like Christ.
 Cutting out negative behaviors should be a by-product, not our main goal. Discuss
 how our spiritual growth should be our aim in accountability.
- How do we practically allow accountability to mature us in our walk with Jesus?
- Do you have someone who is holding you accountable? How can you biblically do that for one another?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 26 | JUNE 27



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ACCOUNTABILITY

John 15:17, Romans 12:10, Romans 14:13, Ephesians 4:25, Romans 12:6, Colossians 3:13, Galatians 6:2

main point



Accountability is a crucial practice in our daily walk with God.

essential doctrine



Love for One Another

Believers cannot hide anything from God. He obviously knows us better than we know ourselves. Just as Christ has immense love for us, we should have the same genuine love for each other, which is what helps form accountability. This is why the word friendship can also be used in place of the word accountability. In this practice, we are instructed to have grace in accountability, to be honest in accountability, have forgiveness in accountability, and pray in accountability. There is power in numbers, and the power from believers is an even greater power.

Christ Connection



The devotion this week will point out how vital accountability is in our walks. Through the Scriptures and teachings, we will see how love, grace, honesty, forgiveness and prayer are key factors demonstrated in accountability. As we strive to be Christlike, this practice also shows a reflection of Christ Himself because He is woven within every fiber and aspect of believers and their walk.

- Whom can you reach out to for accountability in your daily walk with Christ?
- We need accountability for so many things: school, family, work, relationships. Can you identify areas where accountability is needed in your life?
- 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?
- If we are truthful with ourselves, how honest are we really 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?
- Christ's sacrifice is the ultimate sign of forgiveness. What does it look like to show forgiveness in accountability?
- 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?

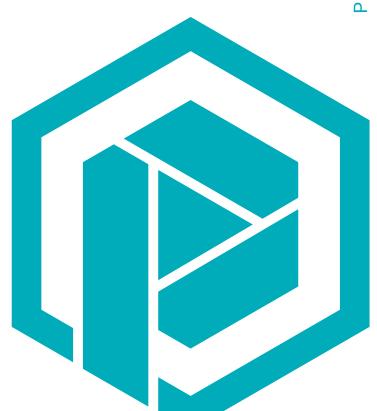


- What does accountability look like in your life right now?
- What are some reasons why we need accountability?
- James 5:16 and Galatians 6:2 point out how we come together in honest open partnerships, to walk together and pray together. If we are honest with ourselves, is this an easy thing to do?
- Paul admits how he even struggled in forgiveness. Is this easy to do with ourselves?
- Who are examples we can seek for accountability?
- How has your time with God been? Are you satisfied with the time you've spent with the Lord?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 27 | JULY 4



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THE VISION OF FUTURE JUSTICE

Obadiah 1-4, 10-21

main point



God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

essential doctrine



God is Just

God established standards for His moral creatures that are in accordance with His righteousness, and His moral creatures will be judged according to those righteous standards (Lev. 11:44-45; Rom. 2:5-11; 2 Cor. 5:10). It would be an injustice if God were not to uphold His righteousness, for such a failure would require God to violate His own righteous character. Since humanity has sinned by failing to live up to God's righteous standards, God has taken it upon Himself to make provision by being both just and the justifier of those who place their faith in Christ (Rom. 3:25-26).

Christ Connection



The prophet Obadiah was given a vision of the day of the Lord. On that day Edom and the nations would be judged for their sins and Israel would be delivered and live securely in the land. Through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, all those who trust in Christ are spared from judgment and can live securely, knowing they have been delivered from sin and death.

- 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.
- Who is someone that speaks difficult truth into your life?
- How does God's call to repentance challenge you today?
- How are you able to remain hopeful when God seems indifferent?
- How does the Gospel give you hope today?

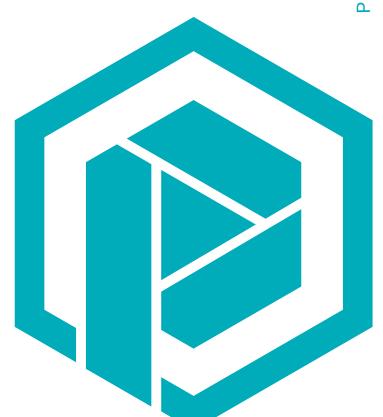


- Have you ever heard or witnessed something bad happening to someone you considered an enemy? How did you feel when you heard what happened? Why?
- How does our culture tend to view the idea of God's judgment? How are you tempted to respond to God's judgment?
- Is your response more consistent with culture's view or with the Bible? Explain.
- Is it strange to think of warnings of judgment as compassionate? Why?
- How should the promise of God's restoration of all creation motivate us to share with others God's judgment of sin and promise of salvation?
- What does this account teach us about the dangers of being arrogant?
- How easy is it for you to receive criticism? Would you rather receive criticism from someone who knows you well, or from someone someone that doesn't? Why?
- Why should God's grace through Jesus serve as a means to develop humility within us?
- What are some other means of grace God might use to humble us?
- What can we learn from the mistakes of the Edomites in regards to how we should treat people in distress?
- How can you show compassion to those suffering in your sphere of influence?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 28 | JULY 11



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THE RETURN OF EXILES

Ezra 1:1-5; 3:1-6, 10-13

main point



God keeps His word and is deserving of all worship.

essential doctrine



Worship

While many reduce worship to an event or the singing of worship songs, worship is first and foremost something of the heart and extends to all areas of life. The aim and focus of worship is God, giving Him the exact due of praise and adoration that He deserves. Worship should be carried out not only at a personal level within a Christian's life but also in joining with other Christians in the corporate act of worship and stewarding our gifts for the glory of God. Corporate worship serves to edify and strengthen other Christians, but it also serves as a witness to non-believers of the greatness of God.

Christ Connection



God kept His promise to bring His people out of exile from Babylon and restore their freedom to worship Him. Since Adam and Eve's first sin, all humans have been exiled from God and are in need of deliverance. Jesus came to end this exile, bring His people home, and restore our freedom to worship God.

- Are you frightened about the future? How might confidence in God's authority change your view of the future?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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?
- With whom have you shared the celebration of God's work in your life?
 With whom might you need to share?

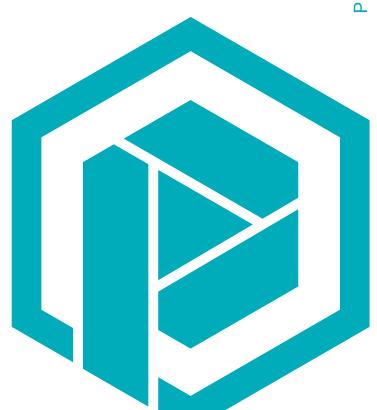


- How do we often display a lack of confidence in God's authority when it comes to global events? How have you seen this lack of confidence displayed in those around you?
- How have you seen God work around you in unlikely scenarios to accomplish His purposes? How might God be calling you right now to join Him in His work?
- How might our unity with other believers and our shared purpose in the Great
 Commission be a positive witness to those around us?
- What does the state of your worship, as it exists right now, say about the nature and character of God?
- How does awareness of your sin typically affect your personal worship?
 (paralyzed by guilt) (numbed to grace) (grateful for forgiveness)
- What does it mean to live a holy life?
- As Christians, how can we communicate a better way of living to our surrounding culture?
- Is worship dependent upon a location? Explain.
- If worship is primarily of the heart, how has your worship been lately?
- Why is it important for older and younger generations to worship together?
- Why is it important for younger Christians to build relationships with older Christians? Who are the wise, older people speaking into your life now?

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 29 | JULY 18



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THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Haggai 1:2-6, 12-13; 2:6-9

main point



God desires to dwell with His people and reveal His glory to them.

essential doctrine



Inspiration of Scripture

The inspiration of Scripture refers to God's direction of the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded His message to humankind in their original writings (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Occasionally this inspiration was achieved through dictation, where God spoke directly to the original authors. Most of the time, however, this inspiration was achieved through the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit through the personalities of the authors so that their writings can be considered the very words of God.

Christ Connection



When the people obeyed God and continued rebuilding the temple, God promised that the glory of the temple would be greater than that of the first. This promise was fulfilled in Jesus who emptied Himself by assuming the form of a servant to provide peace so God could dwell with His people and reveal His glory.

- How have you been guilty of pushing away obedience?
- How have you found that a lack of worship in your life leads to greater temptations to sin?
- When has God appeared to have been silent in your life but later, in hindsight, you were able to see that He was working?
- 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?
- 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?

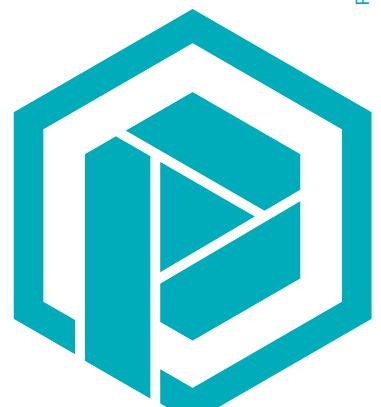


- Do you agree that delayed obedience is disobedience? Explain.
- In what ways are you guilty of putting your own comfort ahead of obedience to God?
- Give some examples of how obeying God's Word visibly displays your worship of Him.
- Have you found yourself fearful of the future because you trusted too much in someone or something other than God?
- How are you contributing to seeking God's peace in the community you call home?
- How has the Word of God reshaped the priorities in your own life?
- Why should Christians turn their attention to God's Word when battling against spiritual apathy?
- What was the promise God gave the Israelites in Haggai 1?
- In what ways do we tend to take for granted or forget the great gift that God Himself is to His children?
- What are some earthly comforts that can distract you from following God's will?
- How can Christians guard themselves from falling for such distractions?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 30 | JULY 25



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A PROMISE OF A COMING KING

Zechariah 3:8-10; 6:12-13; 9:9-10; 13:7-9

main point



Jesus suffered to bring us peace.

essential doctrine



Christ as High Priest

As our Great High Priest, Jesus accomplishes the work of reconciling us to God. He is the One whose perfect righteousness is presented to the Father for our justification. He is the One who intercedes for us before the Father (Heb. 7:25; 9:24) and prays for us to remain faithful (Luke 22:31-32; John 17).

Christ Connection



God promised to send a priest, a king, and a shepherd to remove iniquity, bring peace, and be struck down for the sheep. Jesus is the one who fulfilled this prophecy as the perfect intercessor, ruler, and sacrifice for God's people. Jesus laid down His life on the cross as the substitute to pay sin's penalty and bring peace between God and sinners.

- Are there areas of your life that God has been trying to get your attention? Are their areas that you need to obey Him in but you have struggled to do so?
- Who is someone you know who does not know Christ? How might you use this
 passage to witness to them?
- What does the manner of your worship say about the God you are worshiping?
- How does God's promise of His presence give us hope? How is God's presence able to keep us from fear?
- In what areas do you need to cry out to God, sharing with Him your hurt and confirming your confidence and hope in Him?

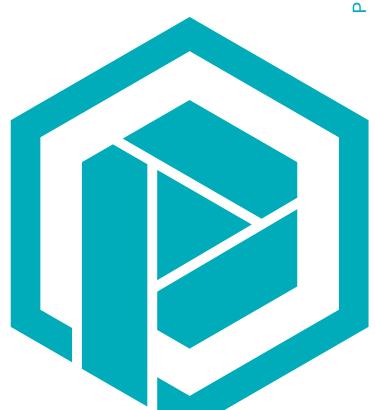


- What stands out to you the most about the branch and stone imagery used by the
 Old Testament prophets to describe the Messiah?
- How would you explain to someone the forgiveness of sins through the cross of Christ?
- Why is it important for Jesus to be both king and priest?
- In what ways have you seen God refine your faith, even through trials?
- How would you describe your willingness to see the pain in your life as an indication
 that God is at work in you to accomplish things that lead to His glory and your own
 good? (extremely against) (generally willing) (joy despite sorrow)
- How encouraging is it to know that God is sovereign to bring good out of painful circumstances?
- What are some examples, either biblical or personal, of God bringing good from evil?
- How should the truth of what God has done for us through Christ motivate us toward greater love for Him?
- How can we fight apathy in our own lives toward God with the truth of what Christ has done for us?
- How should the fact that Jesus reigns over the nations motivate us toward missions?
- What are you and your local church actively doing to ensure the Gospel reaches the corners of the earth?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 31 | AUGUST 1



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GOD'S GENERAL WILL

1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, Ephesians 5:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, Romans 8:28-29, 1 Peter 3:14-17; 4:19

main point



God's will for our lives is to live as Jesus lived and to become more like Him each day.

essential doctrine



Sovereignty

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. -2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is sovereign, and His plan will always prevail!

Christ Connection



Through Christ, we are able to know the will of God, which is to be sanctified; to know Him and make Him known; to be thankful; and to serve. God commanded everyone to know Him and to make Him known in the Great Commission. Share the Gospel with those around you; seek Him and make Him known.

- What is God's will for your life?
- When you hear the word *thankful*, what do you think of?
- How can you serve those around you today?
- How can you take intentional time to spend with Jesus each day this next week?
- How can you glorify God through suffering?

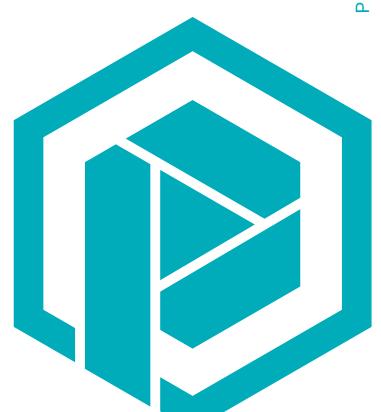


- What do you think of when you think about God's will?
- ANSWER THIS HONESTLY: Do you truly desire God's will for your life? Or do you
 want to do what you want in your life?
- What do you think God's will for your life is?
- Do you ever get caught up in trying to do the right thing rather than trusting God and His perfect plan?
- What might hold you back from fully trusting the Lord's will and seeking Him?
- How can you achieve God's will in your life?
 - o ANSWER: Seek Him; make Him known; suffer well through trials; give thanks in all things; and serve well.

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 32 | AUGUST 8



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GOD'S SPECIFIC WILL

Romans 12:1-2, Genesis 12:1, James 1:5, Romans 8:14, Acts 16:6-10, Proverbs 3:5-6

main point



The Lord's will for our lives begins and ends with our giving up our own desires and allowing Him to shape our hearts to see His desires as our own.

essential doctrine



Faithful

"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). When we abide fully in Christ, when He is our everything and we are connected to Him, everything then flows from that. When we are connected and willingly abiding in our Creator, we are living as we were intended to. He is faithful to give us what we need - sometimes what we want - but always what He knows is best for us. We must prepare our hearts through time spent with Him and allow Him to shape and mold our hearts the way only our Creator knows how.



The heart of man is naturally deceiving and in conflict with the goodness of the Lord. This places emphasis on our need for Christ and His transformative power of salvation in our lives. The transformation does not just stop at salvation but is a process of sanctification. Each and every day, we are to strive to live a holy life. Putting our sinful and misleading desires aside and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us (2 Corinthians 5:17).

- What is keeping you from surrendering your own desires?
- How can you allow your heart to be shaped by the Lord?
- How do we prepare our hearts to hear from God though His Word?
- How does God's Word help us know the will of God?
- What does your prayer life consist of?
- Are you praying for your will or for the Lord's will in your life?
- Are you making the most of the opportunities God has given you?
- How have you seen God open or close doors in your life?
- What are you trusting in?
- What is keeping you from fully placing your trust in the Lord?

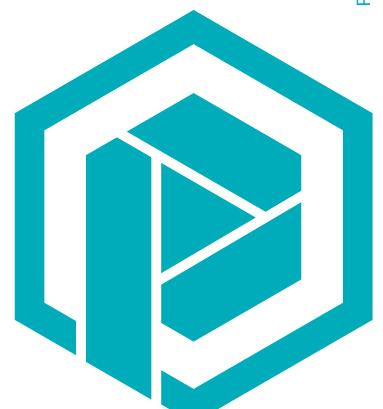


- What role does the Holy Spirit play in how we discover God's will?
- What does it look like to allow the Lord to change our desires?
- What do we abide in that takes the place of God?
- What should our time spent with God look like?
- What directs your thoughts? How can you control where your mind goes?
- What is pulling your attention and desires away from the Lord?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 33 | AUGUST 15



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REACH

Luke 14:26-27, Luke 15:1-10, Mark 2:13-17, Matthew 25:34-36, Matthew 5:13-16, Jude 1:17-23

main point



REACH - As a result of our pursuit of Christ, we will love those who are lost around us.

essential doctrine



Evangelism

Evangelism is the preaching of the Gospel, and it's the first part of our mission statement: Reach. The most important part of having ministry is having people, but we have to make sure we are equipped to lead those people first.

Christ Connection



The first thing we have to do is pursue Christ. He wants us to go after Him by carrying our cross daily and by putting Him above everything else in our lives. Once we put Him at the center, then He wants us to pursue others. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and we should do the same thing.

- Why must we first devote ourselves to Jesus above anyone else?
- How differently would your life look if you pursued Christ and nothing else?
- Is your focus on yourself or others?
- Do others see Christ in your relationships?
- What are you willing to leave behind to follow Jesus?
- Name someone in your life who is "broken." What are you doing to help that person find healing in Jesus?
- What are things that contaminate your purity?
- What are you doing to battle these things?
- What do suffering and pain look like in your school?
- What are you doing to snatch nonbelievers away from lies and bring them to the truth?

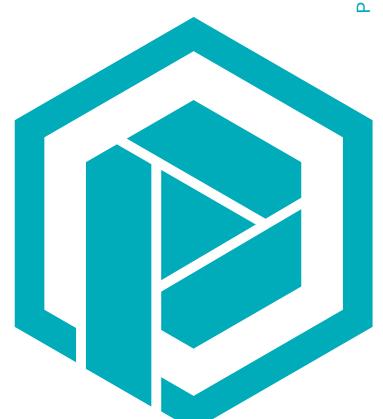


- Why must Christ be at the center of your life?
- What does it look like in your everyday life to carry your cross?
- Are you mindful of taking up your cross every day?
- Why is it necessary to make sure people see Christ in us in order for our ministry to be effective?
- What are we doing to help each other in our ministries ... not what *CAN* we do, but what *ARE* we doing?
- Do you see evangelism as optional, or as a necessary part of being a Christian?
- Have you shared the Gospel with a nonbeliever before?
- Do you have any fears in evangelizing?
- Who are two people you can be sharing the Gospel with?
- Are you sharing the Gospel with them? If not, how can you start doing that?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 34 | AUGUST 22



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LEARN

Colossians 1:9-14, 1 Peter 1:13-16, 1 Peter 2:1-3, Ephesians 4:11-16, Psalm 1:1-3, Proverbs 3:1-8





LEARN - The fruit of following Christ is spiritual growth.

essential doctrine



Spiritual Growth

During their entire lives, Christians must grow in their spiritual walk with the Lord.



Throughout devotionals this week, we will see that living lives of holiness, being sober-minded, meditating on God's Word and trusting in the Lord are all ways of growing spiritually in our walk with Jesus. God rewards those who are faithful and grow in Him.

- How can you personally grow in your spiritual walk with the Lord?
- Can you name some of your spiritual fruit that you've seen being produced?
- What is keeping you from being "sober-minded"?
- Name three things you can do that would be considered holy.
- Would you consider yourself a young Christian or a mature Christian according to Ephesians 4:13?
- Out of the four pieces of evidence of spiritual maturity, which do you need to show more of?
- 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!).
- How can you trust in the Lord with all your heart?
- What in your life is preventing you from fearing the Lord?

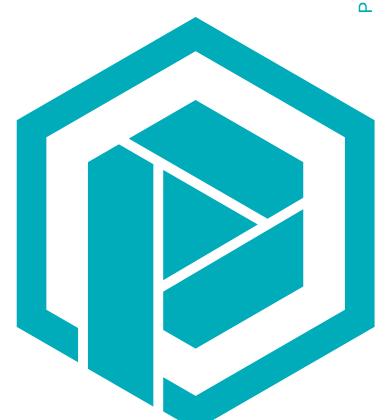
discussion questions

- Do you see spiritual growth as an important part of being a Christian? Why or why not?
- Personally, how can you grow spiritually every day?
- What are some things that hinder your spiritual growth? How can you eliminate those things from your life?
- What are ways that you are meditating on God's Word every day? What are some apps that you could use to help you?
- If you are growing spiritually every day, what will be the results? What fruit will be produced?
- What are some practices that you see in the lives of mature believers that would also help you to grow?
- How important is it to have other believers in our lives who will hold us accountable to spiritual growth?

SUMMER 2021

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 35 | AUGUST 29



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LOVE

Matthew 10:16-23, Acts 8:26-39, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:13-14, Psalm 105:1, Isaiah 6:8, Isaiah 12:4, Psalm 96:3

main point



LOVE - Christians are called to live on mission.

essential



Serving Others

We are all commanded to live on mission and be witnesses of the Gospel.



Jesus' life on earth in itself was an evangelistic ministry. If we are truly serious about living as Jesus lived, we will be evangelists wherever we are at all costs.

- 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?
- Has the Holy 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 gives you the opportunity?
- As we think about 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?
- What are the four things that Paul says are needed in these verses?
- Take some time to jot down some ways that you've seen God's greatness, His
 characteristics, and things that He's done in your life.
- With whom do you need to share the Gospel and what God has done in your life this week?



- In what way is your life going to look different now because of these passages this week?
- How can we, as a group, keep each other accountable to follow through with these goals and desires for our lives?
- What does it mean to live on mission?
- Do you see one-on-one evangelism as important? Why or why not?
- Do you have reservations about evangelizing to your friends? Why or why not?
- What are some methods of evangelism that might help you be more comfortable sharing the Gospel with others?
- With whom can you pray and share the Gospel?