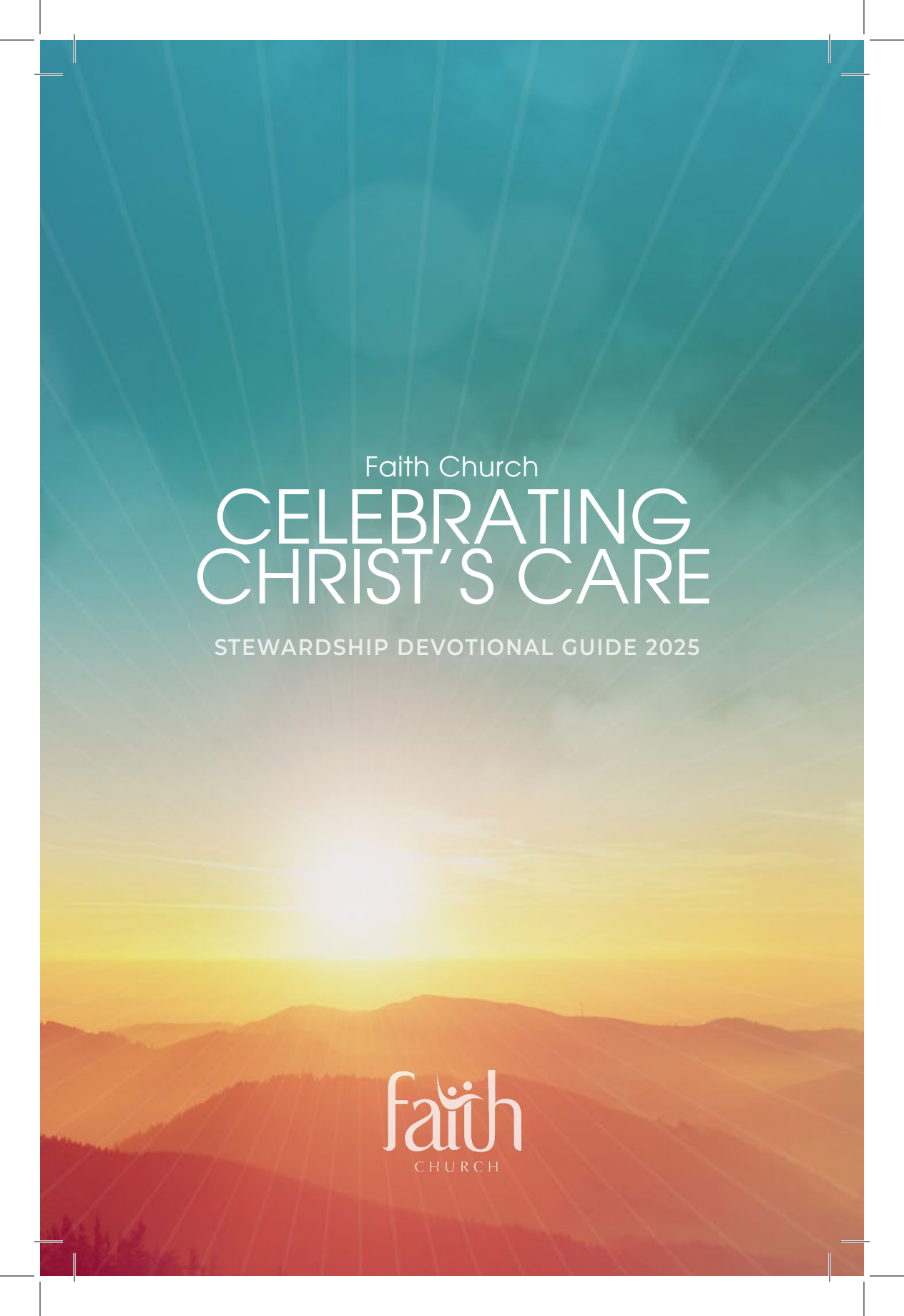




Faith Church

CELEBRATING CHRIST'S CARE

STEWARDSHIP DEVOTIONAL GUIDE 2025

faith
CHURCH

Dear Friend of Faith,

For more than 45 years, Stewardship Month has served as a key part of the Faith Church calendar. Throughout Stewardship Month, we seek to hold our lives up to the light of God's Word to evaluate how we can grow to become more pleasing to God.

This year, we are focusing on **Celebrating Christ's Care**. Our motivation to faithfully care for each portion of our life comes from the faithful care our Savior has shown to us. We are going to consider 4 different circles of responsibility within our life that Jesus has entrusted to us, and we are going to ask two questions: (1) "How has Jesus shown care for this area of my life?" and (2) "How can I show the same kind of Christ-like care for this area?"

Here are the four circles we will consider:

- (1) **Stewarding Christ's Care for Our Hearts**
- (2) **Stewarding Christ's Care for Our Families**
- (3) **Stewarding Christ's Care for the Church**
- (4) **Stewarding Christ's Care for the Lost**

For each devotional, we encourage you to study the Scripture passages, read the devotion, and write out answers to the listed questions. Our prayer is that you will grow in your love for your Savior, and that as a result, you will look more like him.

In Christ,
Your Pastors

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STEWARDING CHRIST'S CARE FOR OUR HEARTS

#1: Christ Cares about the Condition of Our Hearts

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23; Luke 6:43-45

What do you guard and look after with great care and attention? Perhaps you carefully look after your children or grandchildren. Maybe you diligently keep track of your exercise routine and diet to monitor your physical health. Possibly you have cameras that watch the comings and goings of your home to protect your household. More than all these, Proverbs says that the wise steward who fears God will watch over their heart above all.

The word "heart" in the Bible often describes the center and source of a man's life, including his thoughts, will, passions, and desires. The fears that keep you up at night, the thoughts that play in the background of your mind, the deep-seated desires that motivate you, and the values that shape your decisions all make up your heart. Why is it so important to watch over your heart above all else? The reason is because "from it flow the springs of life." The outgoings of life come from your heart. In other words, what is in your heart will always come out and impact those around you.

Christ himself also spoke about the importance of caring for your heart. *"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart"* (Luke 6:45). Not only is your speech an outflow of the heart, but also *"out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders"* (Matt 15:19). Anytime we think, speak, or act in a sinful way that hurts our relationship with God or others, it is because we failed to guard our heart. This is why Jesus cares so deeply about our hearts and desires us to love him with all our heart.

It's easy for us watch more carefully over other areas of our life than our hearts. Thankfully, Jesus is concerned about our hearts with the utmost care, even when we are not! Jesus knows that our hearts need cleansing, and he regularly seeks to purify our hearts so that we might experience the blessing of whole-hearted devotion to him. When we are irritable, uneasy, anxious, or angry, may we see these as opportunities that the Lord is providing to care for our hearts (James 1:1-2). He is allowing us to see things revealed about our desires so that we might diligently watch over our hearts and renew them according to his Word (Eph 4:22-24). May we grow in showing the same care for our hearts as Jesus does by regularly exposing our hearts to the transforming power of Christ through his Word.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. In what ways have you been irritable, uneasy, unsettled, or angry? What are you wanting in these situations? Are the desires of your heart aligned with God's desires and Word?
2. What does it look like for you to diligently watch over your heart throughout the day?
3. How can you help care for others to help them watch over their hearts with all diligence?

#2: God Cares When Our Hearts Condemn Us

Scripture: 1 John 3:11–24

Christians are called to love like God and not hate their brothers like Cain. Love for Christians is not merely something we talk about but something we do. “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (v.18). Put simply, love without deeds is dead. When we love genuinely, “in truth,” we have assurance that we are children of God and are “of the truth.” (v.19).

The challenge is that even when we try to love our brothers and sisters to the best of our ability, we often become aware of how lacking our love is. Maybe you tried to love a family member, but then they responded with anger, and then you started wondering, “Did I love that person at all?” Perhaps you have tried to confess sin to a brother or sister and sought to be reconciled as much as depends on you, but the relationship remained strained. You sensed the inadequacy of your love for them, that your love did not seem powerful enough to bring reconciliation to the relationship, or that your motives were tainted by something other than pure love for the other person. These are times when our hearts condemn us.

In those moments, God cares so much for us that he reassures our hearts with his own greatness. God does not want us to be discouraged from loving others even when your heart reveals deficiency in your love. Nor does he want you doubting you are a Christian in those moments. When your heart condemns you and your conscience pricks you, reassurance comes from considering God's greatness. John says, “for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.” Turn to God, repent, confess, abide in him, and obey him. Be reassured that God knows everything and is greater than your heart. When your love is lacking, rest in the greatness of his love.

Jesus's love for us, which was demonstrated by his death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins, is the basis of our hope. The greatness of God's love and power provides assurance that we can be called children of God. Believers in Jesus are assured that “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). When your heart condemns you, don't rationalize, justify, wallow in self-pity, or seek to cover your sin yourself. Run to Jesus, and praise the Lord that the greatness of Christ's care conquers our condemning hearts!

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. When your heart condemns you, what about God's greatness assures your heart?
2. What relationships can you continue to seek to love in truth and deed by faith because of the greatness of God, even when your love seems lacking and you cannot see your heart completely?
3. Listen to and sing a song of praise that focuses your heart on the greatness of God, the forgiveness of your sins, and freedom from condemnation because of your faith in God. For example, “*And Can It Be, That I Should Gain?*” by Charles Wesley.

#3: God Cares about the Concerns of Our Hearts During Challenges**Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-7**

What are some of the concerns and cares of your heart right now? You might be concerned by the loss of respect or status in a position at work. Perhaps you care about relationships and standing within the family. Maybe you are concerned about challenges that affect your livelihood, or even your very life. It's easy and natural for us to try and solve our problems ourselves. We can be tempted to believe that no one will care for us, and so we must take matters into our own hands. "God helps those who help themselves," as the old saying goes. The problem is that our weak hands are a poor substitute for God's mighty hands.

One of the prominent themes throughout the whole book of 1 Peter is how Christians must respond to suffering in their life. Instead of our natural response of proud self-sufficiency, God calls his children to instead humble themselves under the hand of the Lord and entrust their cares, pains, and trials to his care.

The way we humble ourselves in challenges is by casting all our cares on Him (**v.7**). The reason we do this is because God cares for us. God cares about our concerns, so pray to him. Proud people don't pray because they don't believe God cares or that they need his help. The humble cast themselves upon God's grace and draw near to God for strength and help.

When we feel in danger, we often want to protect ourselves, and responding righteously in humility toward others may put us in a vulnerable position to be hurt again. God cares about this concern and comforts us. When we humble ourselves, we are not left exposed under no protection, but rather under the mighty hand of God! Remembering God's care and his mighty hand moves us to humbly cast the cares of our hearts upon God's gracious grip.

Edmund Clowney states, that "the very act of casting our cares on God often changes them." In other words, when we cast our cares on the Lord, we often see our concerns are about our shaky little kingdoms rather than Christ's glorious kingdom, and God changes the concerns of our hearts. Our present cares are calmed because of the sure hope of exaltation "at the proper time," when Christ sets up his eternal kingdom and vindicates all who trusted in him even amidst suffering.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. Are there certain relationships in your life that you fear being hurt again? How does it help you entrust your care to God by knowing that when you humble yourself you are under God's mighty hand?
2. Read passages about God's mighty hand (see **Exod. 3:9; Deut. 3:24; 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:26; 11:2**). How does remembering these passages about God's powerful care for his people encourage you to trust the Lord and obey his Word?
3. Make a list of your current concerns and pray that list out loud to the Lord believing that he is concerned about you. Ask him to help you see the cares of your heart that you are trying to control without trusting him.

#4: Christ Cares about the Questions and Thoughts in Our Hearts

Scripture: Luke 2:33-35

When was a time when you were painfully hurt by someone's questions or thoughts about you? The questions and thoughts of people can be quite painful. When Simeon blessed Mary and Joseph, he also warned Mary of the pain she would experience because of what the Christ would do. Simeon said, "this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed." Jesus would divide the nation of Israel. Some people would reject Jesus in their hearts and oppose him publicly. This rejection would be like a painful sword to Mary's soul. In the end, the Christ would reveal the "thoughts from many hearts."

From the beginning of Christ's public ministry to the end, Christ revealed the hearts of the people around him. For example, when healing the paralyzed man, "Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'" (**Matt 9:4**). Jesus "looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart" (**Mark 3:5**). He cared about not only the crowd's hard hearts but also the hearts of his own disciples. After feeding the four thousand, Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" (**Mark 8:17**). Even after his resurrection, when his disciples had questions and doubts, Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" (**Luke 24:38**).

As we walk with Jesus throughout our Christian life, we too will have doubts, questions, and hard-heartedness within us. Jesus, our good Teacher, will reveal those areas of our hearts over time so that we might have faith in him and love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He already knows the questions, doubts, and struggles we hold within us, and he cares too deeply for us to let those areas of our hearts stay hidden.

The gospel proclaims that because we are justified by faith in Jesus, we don't have to justify ourselves to God or other people. Jesus already knew the pain that our thoughts and questions would bring to God and others, and he still chose to save us. May we be amazed at the forgiveness of sins and eternal life Jesus offers to sinners like you and me! And as Jesus cares for us by painfully revealing our hearts over time, may we choose to respond by repenting and clinging ever more tightly to Christ.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. Are there certain doubts, thoughts, or questions that you are afraid to admit or confess directly to God and others? Why?
2. Review some of the questions that Jesus asks people in the gospels. How can you use the questions that God asks to help you reveal your heart?
3. Have you felt convicted recently after the Lord revealed wrong thinking or doubts in your heart? If the answer is no, why do you think you are not experiencing this aspect of Christ's care? If the answer is yes, what did you do with that conviction?

#5: God Cares to Pour His Love Within Our Hearts**Scripture: Romans 5:1-9**

The Lord knows that our hearts can be tempted to doubt his love when life is hard. In this world, Christians are bombarded with tribulations and sufferings, and you likely are experiencing trials in your life right now. But for the Christian, God makes it possible to "exult in our tribulations" (v.3) as we come to know his love in our hearts.

Listen to the spiritual blessings that are realities for all who are in Christ Jesus. We are justified, or declared righteous by faith, and this produces a peace with God (v.1). We have been granted access by faith to stand in God's grace (v.2). That means that we always are right in the middle of God's grace, and nothing can take us out of that grace. All of this produces a sure hope that God will carry us safely home so that we may someday fully experience his glory. When we remember all the blessings that are ours in Christ, that gives us reason to exult even in trials, because God uses trials to grow our character and ultimately strengthen our hope (v.3-4).

You might respond, "This all sounds great, but how do I know for sure that these blessings are mine and that my hope in Christ won't let me down? The challenges in my life make it so hard to hold on to my hope!" God knows our hearts will struggle, and he cares enough to give us assurance in his love for us. God's love is our source of assurance and hope (v.5).

God gives hope to our hearts of his love both externally (objectively) and internally (experientially). First, God objectively demonstrated his love in sending Jesus to suffer, die, and rise again for our sins that we might love him (v.6-9). This gives confidence to our hearts of God's love for us even in the past, before we ever loved God! And his same love for us will carry us through to the end. Second, the Holy Spirit has poured out God's love internally to our hearts. The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian and gives us inner love and desire for God as well as assurance that we are his children. As we walk with Jesus, we will increasingly experience fellowship and communion with him that give us subjective assurance of his abiding love for us.

So, if you are lacking confidence and hope of God's love for you in your trials, consider both the external and internal assurance that God gives through his love. May you not lose heart in your sufferings, but may you "know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19).

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. How have both external and internal assurance helped you to have confidence in God's love in past trials?
2. What would it look like for you to pursue a deeper fellowship with God in your life, so that you might be able to stand strong in trials with a greater assurance of his love?
3. How can your prayer life better reflect the joyful reality of the grace and access that you stand in because of Christ?

STEWARDING CHRIST'S CARE FOR OUR FAMILIES

#1: Christ the Foundation of Our Families

Scripture: Matthew 7:24–27

Every family builds on something. Jesus illustrated this truth with the picture of two builders: one wise, one foolish. Both constructed houses. Both appeared to succeed for a while. But when the storm came, the difference between their foundations became undeniable. The wise man built on the rock, the foolish man built on sand, and only one house endured.

In many ways, this parable is a mirror for our families. Whether we realize it or not, we are all building. The question is: what foundation are we building on? Some families build on tradition, doing things the way they have always been done. Others build on financial security, making decisions primarily around money and success. Still others build on personal comfort, prioritizing convenience and ease above all else. But only one foundation will last through the storms of life: Jesus's Word.

When Christ and his Word anchor the family, storms do not destroy. Storms will still come. Illness, conflict, financial strain, and disappointment are part of life in a broken world. But families built on Christ have stability because their hope does not rest on circumstances. Families that hear Jesus's words and put them into practice know where to turn when pressure mounts. They open Scripture together, they pray together, they encourage one another to trust God's promises. Their obedience is not just a Sunday activity. It is woven into daily rhythms like mealtime prayers, bedtime blessings, conversations in the car, and forgiveness offered after conflict.

Stewarding Christ's care for our families begins with this simple but profound choice: to hear and obey his Word. It is not about perfection, because every family will have failures and flaws. It is about surrender. Families who choose to make Christ the center in decision-making, in conflict resolution, in joy, and in sorrow discover that he is enough. They find his promises reliable, his presence near, and his strength sufficient.

Think for a moment about the storms you have already endured as a family. Did they reveal cracks in your foundation, or did they show the solid ground of Christ? Storms have a way of testing us, but they also give us the chance to rebuild on what is eternal. If Jesus is not yet the foundation of your home, it is not too late. He invites you to start now by listening to his Word and obeying it in the everyday moments of family life.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are the main "foundations" your family is building on right now?
2. How do your daily habits reflect hearing and obeying Christ's Word?
3. What one step could you take this week to shift your family more onto the Rock of Christ?

#2: Loving as Christ Loves the Church

Scripture: Ephesians 5:25–30

Paul compared the love of Christ for the church to the love husbands are called to show their wives. This comparison sets a standard of sacrificial, servant-hearted care that is much higher than cultural expectations. Christ nourishes and cherishes his people, and Christian families are called to mirror that same love in their everyday relationships.

Stewarding Christ's care for our families means that we do not use authority or influence for selfish gain, but to bless, protect, and strengthen. In a family setting, this kind of love shows itself in patient listening, kind words, consistent encouragement, and regular acts of service. It means that husbands, wives, parents, and children all model Christlike submission and sacrifice in their relationships. No role is about domination or control. Every role is about reflecting Christ's love in practical ways.

The example Paul gave is striking: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Christ's love was costly. He willingly laid aside his rights, his glory, and even his life for the sake of his bride. Families who imitate this love display the heart of the gospel to a watching world. When a husband serves his wife with humility, when a wife encourages her husband with respect, when parents discipline with gentleness, and when children obey with honor, Christ's love is put on display in daily life.

Of course, loving in this way is not easy. Sacrificial love requires us to put aside our preferences, delay our own desires, and extend grace when we feel wronged. Sometimes it means lovingly confronting a family member who is in error, so that they might grow in holiness. Sometimes it means choosing to speak kindly or not speak at all when our emotions want to lash out. It means offering forgiveness even when wounds still hurt. It means serving others quietly without demanding recognition. But this is exactly how Jesus has loved us. He has borne with our weaknesses, forgiven our failures, washed us with his Word, and faithfully cared for us even when we were unworthy. When we meditate on his love, we find new strength to love our families the same way. Christ's Spirit enables what our flesh resists.

Every family has daily opportunities to reflect this love. A parent may need to put down a phone and listen attentively to a child. A spouse may need to choose gentleness in a moment of frustration. A child may need to obey quickly, trusting that God is honored by respect for parents. Even conflicts become opportunities to show Christ's care as forgiveness and reconciliation are practiced again and again. Each act may seem small, but together they weave a pattern of love that makes Christ visible.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. In what ways can you demonstrate sacrificial love to a family member today?
2. How does Christ's love for the church challenge your view of family roles and responsibilities?
3. What consistent practice could strengthen the atmosphere of love in your home?

#3: Teaching Our Children the Ways of the Lord

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Mark 10:13–16

Jesus loves children. When children draw near to Jesus with their innocent dependence and child-like faith, Jesus loves to receive them and bless them. We, too, should delight in leading the hearts of children to Jesus, starting with the hearts of the children within our own home. So often it is easy to view the neediness of our children as a burden, rather than a blessing. Stewarding Christ's care for our families means joyfully embracing the sacred calling to lead our children to Jesus.

Right after calling the people of Israel to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength, Moses reminded the people of their responsibility to pass on their faith to their children in every part of life. "These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children." Parents were to talk about God's commands when they sat at home, when they walked along the road, when they lay down at night, and when they rose in the morning. In other words, teaching children about God was not to be reserved for set lessons but integrated into the fabric of daily life. Eating meals, taking walks, driving to school, and getting ready for bed can all become opportunities to remind children of God's presence and promises.

The home is the primary place where the next generation learns who God is, what his Word says, and how his truth speaks into daily life. It is easy to assume children will "pick up" faith along the way or that someone else will provide spiritual training. But God placed them in our homes so we could model faith for them. Churches and Christian schools can provide excellent support, but they cannot replace what parents are commanded to do. Our children are always watching. They notice where we put our trust, how we handle stress, what we value, and how we treat others. If our love for Christ is genuine, they will see it. If our faith is shallow or compartmentalized, they will see that too.

Parents are not expected to disciple perfectly. There will be days when we are distracted, moments when we lose patience, and seasons when it feels like little progress is being made. Yet even in weakness, God's grace is sufficient. Apologizing to our children when we fail can itself be a powerful lesson. It shows them that following Jesus is not about perfection but about repentance and dependence on His mercy.

Over time, the rhythms of Scripture reading, prayer, worship, and conversation about God shape children's hearts. We cannot control how or when fruit will appear, but we can faithfully sow seeds. Our task is to teach diligently, lead them to Jesus, and trust God to bring growth.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Where do you need to change your attitude so that you take joy in leading your children to Jesus, rather than viewing their neediness as a burden?
2. How consistently do you bring Christ into the daily conversations of your home?
3. What rhythms of prayer, Scripture, or worship could help anchor your family's faith more deeply?

#4: Bearing One Another's Burdens

Scripture: Galatians 6:1-5

Families are places of both joy and difficulty. The apostle Paul urged believers to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” This is not just a command for the church community in general but also a principle that applies within the family. Homes where burdens are shared become places where the care of Christ is made visible and tangible.

To bear one another’s burdens means more than helping with chores or lightening someone’s workload, though that is certainly part of it. Paul had in mind the heavy weight of life’s struggles—temptations, sorrows, disappointments, and weaknesses. When someone around us stumbles, the instinct of our flesh is often to criticize, withdraw, or ignore. But Paul said that those who are spiritual should restore such a person gently. This is a picture of Christ’s own heart: He does not break the bruised reed or snuff out the smoldering wick. He lifts up the weary and binds the brokenhearted. Families that bear one another’s burdens in this way reflect his character.

At the same time, Paul also reminded believers that “each will have to bear his own load.” Families must hold these truths together. We are called to help each other without removing responsibility. A healthy home is one where love and accountability go hand in hand. Parents, for example, provide support for their children while also teaching them to work hard and take ownership of their lives. Spouses carry one another’s emotional and spiritual weights, but each is still responsible before God to grow personally in holiness.

Practically, burden-bearing in families takes many forms. It can mean listening with patience when a child is struggling rather than brushing off their concerns. It can mean carrying financial or emotional strain together as a couple rather than one person shouldering it alone. It can mean praying with and for one another during times of temptation, loss, or discouragement. Sometimes it is as simple as noticing when someone is weary and stepping in with encouragement, a word of truth, or an act of service.

Sharing burdens requires humility and courage. It takes humility to admit weakness and ask for help. It takes courage to step into another’s pain when it would be easier to remain distant. But when families choose this path, they experience the care of Christ flowing through each member. Ultimately, bearing one another’s burdens fulfills “the law of Christ,” which is the law of love. Christ carried our greatest burden at the cross—the weight of our sin and guilt—and now calls us to reflect His love by carrying one another’s lesser burdens. Families that practice this truth become living witnesses of his grace.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What burden are you carrying that you need to invite your family into?
2. How can you step in this week to help carry the weight of someone else’s load at home?
3. In what ways can your family practice both grace and responsibility together?

#5: Hospitality that Begins at Home

Scripture: Romans 12:9–13

When Paul urged believers to love sincerely, cling to what is good, and practice hospitality, he was not only giving instructions for how the church should treat outsiders. His words also apply to how we treat one another within our homes. Families must learn to extend Christlike hospitality to each other before they can extend it outward to neighbors and guests.

Hospitality is more than opening the front door to visitors. At its core, it is about creating spaces—physical, relational, and spiritual—where others feel welcomed, valued, and loved. In the context of family life, hospitality means cultivating warmth, patience, and generosity in daily interactions. It means greeting one another kindly, speaking with respect, and making room for each person's needs. Too often, family members offer politeness to strangers but harshness or indifference to each other. Yet the home is the first classroom for learning Christlike welcome.

Stewarding Christ's care for our families requires us to see our home life as ministry. A hospitable family meal, where members share both food and conversation, reflects the heart of God who invites his people to his table. A bedtime routine of prayer and blessing provides children with security and peace, reminding them that God himself watches over them. Even simple acts, such as listening attentively to a spouse or encouraging a child after failure, communicate the warmth of Christ's love.

When hospitality begins at home, it naturally flows outward. Children raised in an atmosphere of welcome are more likely to invite friends into that space. Parents who practice generosity with each other find it easier to extend the same to neighbors, coworkers, and church members. The home itself becomes an outpost of God's kingdom, a place where others experience his love in tangible ways.

Jesus told his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you" (**John 14:2**). This is the essence of his hospitality—he makes room for us in his Father's house. Families who imitate him do the same on a smaller scale. They prepare places for one another, whether that means a seat at the dinner table, a listening ear during a difficult day, or a space of grace when mistakes are made. In doing so, they reflect Christ's heart for welcome.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How would you honestly describe the atmosphere of your home—welcoming or cold, generous or guarded?
2. In what ways can your family grow in practicing hospitality with one another daily?
3. Who outside your family could you bless this month by extending Christlike welcome into your home?

STEWARDED CHRIST'S CARE FOR THE CHURCH

#1: Because He Made Us His Bride

Scripture: Ephesians 5:25-27, 31-32; 2 Corinthians 11;

Revelation 19:7-9, 21:1-2, 9, 22:17

The Bible uses several metaphors to describe the church. We are a body, a temple, a building, a new man, and a household. Each metaphor tells us something about Christ's relationship to his church. None of the metaphors illustrate care more than the metaphor of a bride.

Brides are beautiful, immaculately dressed, normally smiling (although sometimes crying happy tears), and adorned for their husband. They have long anticipated their wedding day and are thrilled that it has arrived. We stand when the bride traverses the aisle, longing for a glimpse of her in all her glory. At the reception, we want just a minute of the new couple's time to get a closer look at the bride's glory and the husband's joy.

The Lord chose this imagery as one way to talk about his people. The Revelation passages remind us of the bride's glory. The Lord is making us as a bride for her husband. It pictures beauty, purity, holiness, blamelessness, and uninhibited love. It is remarkable that the Lord would use this imagery to describe his people.

At a wedding, I want to see the bride just like everyone else, but I am more interested in watching the groom's reaction to seeing his bride. Some men forget to breathe, others cry, others smile, and still others do it all. It is hard to think of Christ being as excited for me to walk down the aisle. Yet, that is the imagery. Christ's righteousness has so covered and cared for us that we look radiant before him. When he replaced our sinful hearts with the cloak of his righteousness, we look perfect before him.

This truth is even better when we remember the cost. We were not free and nor was our radiance. The bride price was not a goat, ram, a bag of silver, or a plot of land. It was his own blood. Ephesians tells us that Jesus gave himself up for his bride. It tells us that he presents her without spot or wrinkle and that the Lord nourishes and cherishes the church.

It is hard to believe that he cares as much as the Bible says he does – even at such great personal cost.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. What tempts you to believe that the Lord does not care for you?
2. List 5-10 ways that the Lord has shown his care for you in the last month.
3. Write 1-2 actions that you should take knowing that the Lord views you as his bride.

#2: Because He Gave Us a Great Purpose

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20

Yesterday, we considered Christ's care through the imagery of a bride. At some point, the wedding and reception end and it is time to do life together. Few things bind people together more than a common purpose. We do not want to attend churches headed in a poor direction, work at places with little structure or leadership, or live with people who want to stay in the basement and play video games. We want leadership, purpose, and meaning.

Our Savior provided it because he knew we would want it. After all, he made us and set eternity in our hearts. Our Savior's purpose for his church is found in **Matthew 28:19-20**: we are commanded to make disciples. We accomplish that by (1) baptizing them (we are Baptists after all!) and (2) teaching them to observe all that the Lord commanded. Debate surrounds the little word "go," but the options are not terribly different. It is our joy to participate in the meaningful life purpose of making disciples, and Jesus promises to be with us to the end.

Baptism is a step of obedience done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It assumes the importance of evangelism (who can get baptized in the name of Jesus without first hearing about Jesus and believing in him?), and it involves the outward profession of the internal belief in the gospel as the only way of salvation. While not often true in the United States, many of our Christian brothers and sisters around the globe recognize a believer when they are willing to proclaim it. The Lord does not desire closet Christians, but those who boldly proclaim their faith. Baptism is an important first step in our spiritual journey.

Teaching "to observe" is different than teaching for an exam. Our goal is not simply for people to know certain things, but to live them out. Commands to use our tongue wisely, our time efficiently, our money as a steward, or our abilities sacrificially is far easier said than done. Yet, Christ expresses his care for us by giving us meaningful work to do.

But that is not all. He promises to be with us. He works in our lives all the way to the end. He demonstrates care for his people by being with us every step of the way.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How have I demonstrated that I appreciate the purpose God has given for my life?
2. Whom have I shared the gospel with recently, and whom have I encouraged to be baptized as one mark of true discipleship?
3. How can I be more effective at teaching others by example that the Lord's commands are always best?
4. How might the Lord want you to take a step of growth in fulfilling your purpose?

#3: Because He Seals and Secures Us**Scripture: John 10:27-30; Ephesians 1:13-14**

Because Christ cares for his church, he lovingly provided a meaningful mission to accomplish. However, we can make an idol out of anything. We can even convince ourselves that unless we achieve a certain competence in our purpose, the Lord will reject us as his bride. We can turn the Lord's loving instructions into a hamster wheel of struggle.

Today, let's consider how Christ's care for the church occurs through sealing and securing us. When I fulfill my purpose to gain God's favor, I have lost my way. I must fulfill my purpose in response to his care, knowing he has me perfectly secure.

When we were little, our parent's arms were secure places. We ran to them when we were hurt, scared, confused, or sick. They were safe and secure. The Lord uses similar imagery in **John 10** to prove that we are secure, that we will be there on the wedding day, and that we can face trials with confidence. The Lord's sheep hear his voice, and he gives them eternal life. Even though we do not always feel secure, the Lord tells us that no one can remove us from our Father's hands. They are strong, secure, and protective. He gives us eternal life, and we will never perish. We have eternal security and are no longer on a hamster wheel of performance. It is so caring of Christ to tell us that the Father has us secure in his hands. That is especially true when we remember that sometimes we allow Satan and his host to win or the world to push us into one aspect of its mold. Rather than condemning us, our loving Father is holding and securing us.

Ephesians 1:13-14 explains that the Lord took a further step. He gave us a seal as a promise that he would fulfill his promise. The Spirit of God is that seal, ensuring our inheritance to the praise of his glory. In our culture, we give engagement rings, sign contracts, make formal offer letters, and leave collateral to prove that we will keep our commitments. Amazingly enough, the Lord cares about us enough to similarly prove his commitment to us with a seal.

The Lord could have told us that his Word was enough. He is God after all. But Jesus knew we would struggle, and so he graciously explained our Father's protective hands and the Spirit who seals us for the day of redemption. The Lord's care is great.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. In what ways do you need to exercise courage knowing that the Lord secures your future?
2. What are some of the fears that overcome your faith and take your courage?
3. Please list 4-5 ways you are thankful for the Father's protection and the Spirit's sealing.

#4: Because He Gives Us Leaders

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16

After the church expanded past Jerusalem, they needed to gather in local congregations with appropriate leadership. Titus appointed elders to exhort in sound teaching and refute those who contradict (**Titus 1:5-9**). His shepherding responsibility required that he teach what was right and protect the flock from false teaching. From the early days of the church till now, the Lord has given his bride teachers and leaders for this same purpose.

Since believers live by every word that proceeds from God's mouth (**Matt 4:4**), it is crucial that we find pastors that we can rely on to teach the Word properly. It is always possible to compromise – either to find a reason to ignore the Word because we do not like how it challenges us, or to make it say something it does not say to our own advantage. That is one reason it is important to pray for your pastors and teachers. We want to differentiate between “thus says the Lord” and applications to life. Both are important, but only one is inspired.

Ephesians describes these gifts as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. While some of these are no longer active (like apostles or prophets), others remain. Think back to people who made a difference in your life. Many of us remember a pastor who encouraged or challenged us. Some would point to a teacher who helped them figure out how to deal with certain challenges. The Lord decided that certain people among his bride should have the responsibility of equipping the saints for works of service.

This obligates all of us in some way. Pastors and teachers have an equipping responsibility. Pastors cannot refuse to equip because it is easier or faster to do it alone. It also obligates others to be equipped. Either side can fail to accomplish the Lord's desire for us to do “works of service.” When these failures occur, we all miss out in building up the body of Christ.

Theological deception comes in many forms, but rarely as a frontal attack. Subtle attacks are difficult to spot, and the full consequences may not immediately be seen. The Lord cared for us by warning us about the schemes of the enemy and providing gifts that would help the body see them for what they are.

This passage ends reminding us that as we all do our part (**Ephesians 4:16**), then the Lord grows the whole body in love.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. Pray for two or three people whom the Lord gave you at the right time to equip you for life and ministry.
2. Please pray for your pastors to be excellent students of the Word and to communicate it clearly with love and grace.
3. What is one area you need further equipping to participate more fully in works of service? What steps will you take to accomplish that?

#5: Because He Gives Us Gifts to Serve Each Other**Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26**

Christ cares for the church. This week's devotionals attempted to illustrate the many ways that Christ demonstrates care. Earlier we mentioned that the Lord has given us a great mission and the need for equipping to do the required works of service. Today reminds us that God designed all of us to appreciate each other's gifts. Like our fall church-wide series, Caring for One Another, there is a sense in which even this subject is a way Christ cares for the church.

In **John 17**, our Lord prayed for his disciples because he will no longer be there to protect and guard them. Christ's long-term care plan for his bride included gifting each of his followers with functions to serve that the whole body would need. Don't miss the significance of this. Your function in the church body is part of Christ's plan to care for the health of his bride.

1 Peter 4 divides all the functions between those who use words and those who serve. You use words in song, prayer, and in speech. Whether you lead a small group or teach in a public setting, you should speak as if you are speaking for the Lord. Those who serve typically are those who like the behind-the-scenes responsibilities. You complete your service with the strength that God provides.

1 Cor 12:12-26 teaches that each person and their function is so important that none can be minimized or magnified. That is why feet cannot claim insignificance (**v. 15**) and nor can eyes claim superiority (**v. 21**). Christ's loving care for his bride puts all of us on equal ground before the cross. He mediates his care through people. Just as bodies have many members, so do churches have many functions. We encourage you not to minimize your role or make it larger than it seems. It is loving to value your contribution and the contribution of others. The Lord even states that he notices and honors the parts of the body that are not normally recognized (**vv. 22-24**).

As we each do our part, we learn to be a genuine body. We have unity rather than division, and we experience things together. We are a body that suffers together, rejoices together, experiences honor together, and deals with shame together. One of our strengths is our unity. That ensures that no one bears too much, nor does anyone take glory that belongs to the whole.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How have you either minimized your contribution or inappropriately maximized another's?
2. What is one way you could help Faith suffer, rejoice, experience blessing, or endure discipline together?
3. What ways might the Lord want you to serve that you have not yet chosen to do?

STEWARDING CHRIST'S CARE FOR THE LOST

#1: Understanding Jesus's Mission

Scripture: Luke 19:1-10

In today's passage, Jesus provided a summary of his mission on earth: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost" (v.10). Jesus didn't mean people who are physically lost, in the sense of, "we can't find them!" Instead, Jesus was referring to people who were spiritually lost, far from the Lord and destined for destruction in their sin.

One example of a lost person was Zaccheus, a wealthy chief tax collector. To really understand how much the Jews hated tax collectors, consider a dishonest salesman who artificially inflates his prices just to make extra profit when a desperate customer has no knowledge or nowhere else to go. Or consider an employee at a scam call center, whose profession in life is to cheat people out of their money by calling and lying to them. Somewhere in that spectrum stood the ancient Roman tax collectors, who had governmental authority to take whatever money they needed to in order to pay the lawful tax and have extra for themselves. People knew that Zaccheus was rich because he defrauded people of their money, and they hated him for it. Zaccheus was lost.

But while most people disdained Zaccheus and distanced themselves from him, Jesus chose to draw near. Zaccheus had heard that Jesus was coming, and God had put a desire in his heart to see Jesus, whatever it took. So Zaccheus climbed into a tree to make sure he could see Jesus as he walked by. But Zaccheus didn't have to yell or plead with Jesus to notice him. Jesus, with a heart of pursuing of love, looked up at Zaccheus and called him to come down so that they could share a meal together. Zaccheus responded to that initiating grace with joy, gladly receiving Jesus's invitation for a relationship.

The crowd quickly turned on Jesus, shaming him because he chose to associate with a sinner like Zaccheus. But Jesus cared more about pursuing and rescuing Zaccheus than avoiding public shame. As a spiritual son of Abraham, Zaccheus demonstrated his faith and thankfulness for Jesus's grace by repenting of the exact idols that had previously gripped his heart: earthly wealth and possessions. God's grace has the power to radically change even a hardened sinner at the deepest levels of his heart.

As we consider Christ's care for the lost this week, take some time to meditate on Jesus's heart for Zaccheus and his mission to pursue and rescue those who are far from God. May God deepen in our hearts the same passion Jesus had for the lost.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. When you think of "the lost" in your life, especially those who seem so far from God or have mistreated you, who comes to your mind?
2. How does your attitude need to change to reflect Jesus's heart for those people in your life?
3. If you really believed that God's grace could radically change the lost around you, what would be different in your life?

#2: Praying in Line with God's Heart

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:1-8

It is a fact of life that we will pray most about what we care most about. The contents of our heart will become the contents of our prayers.

Consider carefully then what Paul instructed Timothy that the church should be praying for. Instead of our natural tendency to pray first and foremost about our own concerns, Paul commanded that we offer prayers, entreaties, petitions, and thanksgivings on behalf of all men (**v.1**). The church is to intercede for the world around us, bringing all men before God and asking him to save them and bless them.

Specifically, we are to bring our leaders before God and ask that they come to know Jesus and that they have wisdom to make righteous decisions (**v.2**). Consider the reason given in **verses 3-4**: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God himself desires all men to be saved, and so we should desire all men to be saved.

Our natural tendency is to pray for our own needs and concerns. We ask God to smooth out the hard parts of our day, we ask God to bless our work and family, and we ask God to heal us when we are physically sick or hurting. There's nothing wrong with those requests in and of themselves. The problem is that a prayer dominated with self-centered requests reveals a self-centered heart. We will pray most about what we care most about.

Our gracious God cares about the lost coming to know about Jesus, because Jesus is the only way that any person can be made right with God. "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (**v.5**). While in his sovereignty, God allows many to reject Jesus and experience the consequences of their rejection, God desires all men to be saved. That includes each person in your life who does not know Jesus yet, even the most hardened person who you think could never change. When discussing the Lord's delay in returning, Peter stated, "The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (**2 Pet 3:9**).

May we increasingly share God's heart and pray for specific people around us who are lost to come to know Jesus, the only mediator between God and man.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What percentage of your prayer life centers on your own concerns versus praying for those around you?
2. If someone could listen to all your prayers over the past week, what would they say you care the most about?
3. What steps can you take to cultivate a heart like God's heart that yearns for the lost to be saved, resulting in earnest prayer on their behalf?

#3: Seeing Jesus's Purpose in Redeeming Paul

Scripture: Acts 26:1–29

In our text today, Paul was on trial after being turned in to the Roman authorities by the chief priests and elders of the Jews (25:15). When Paul had the opportunity to give a defense, he chose to share his testimony of what God had done in his life. He could have chosen to say nothing, because there weren't any real charges being brought against him. He could have tried to get himself freed by telling the leaders what they wanted to hear. Instead, he chose to evangelize to everyone in the room by sharing his testimony.

Consider 3 insights from Paul's testimony:

- 1 Consider how closely Paul's salvation was tied to his purpose in reaching the lost. Re-read **verses 16–18**. Jesus stated that he appeared to Paul (which summarizes Paul's conversion experience) for the purpose of appointing Paul as a "minister and witness" of Jesus's message. Paul's conversion was not for Paul's benefit alone. From the moment of being called by Jesus, Paul's conversion came with a purpose of being a witness for Jesus to everyone around him.
- 2 Jesus described Paul's mission to the lost with soaring words: "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith" (v.18). That was a more glorious purpose than any other purpose he could have devoted his life to! More glorious than accumulating wealth and leaving an inheritance for his kids, entertaining himself with bigger and better toys, or even working hard to leave a legacy of being a "good person." None of those compared with the privilege of being used by God to free the lost from enslavement to Satan and to help them find an eternal home in God's kingdom.
- 3 Paul took his mission to heart, so that he used every opportunity to win the lost. Even King Agrippa admitted, almost tongue in cheek, that Paul would soon make a Christian out of him! Paul responded that he hoped that everyone who heard his message would come to know Jesus like he did.

While Paul had the unique mission of carrying the gospel to the Gentiles for the first time, every Christian bears the mission to be a witness for the name of Jesus and make disciples (**Matt 28:19–20; Acts 1:8**). Our salvation is not for our benefit alone, but it comes with a purpose to take Jesus's message to the lost all around us. May we all take to heart God's glorious purpose for our lives of being his witnesses.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Where have you allowed "mission-drift" to infiltrate your life, so that you are living for a purpose other than making and strengthening disciples for Jesus?
2. If it's true that one of God's purposes in saving you was to give you a mission to be his witness, how should that change the way you think about your Christian life and ministry?
3. What opportunities are in your life right now where God would desire you to be a better witness for him?

#4: Delighting in the Lost Being Found

Scripture: Luke 15:1-32

Verses 1-2 set the context for all 3 parables that Luke 15 contains. Obviously sinful people (tax collectors and sinners) were coming to Jesus and listening to him, and the religious people (Pharisees and scribes) grumbled that Jesus was spending time with the sinners.

In response, Jesus told 3 parables, all with essentially the same point. In the first parable, a shepherd pursued a lost sheep and called everyone to rejoice with him when he found the sheep. In the second parable, a woman searched carefully for a lost coin and called her neighbors to party with her when she found the coin. In the third parable, a father lost his son to a promiscuous lifestyle, and when the son returned, the father threw a huge party to celebrate.

At the end of the first parable in **verse 7**, Jesus drew the conclusion that there is "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" (who lives in heaven?). At the end of the second parable in **verse 10**, Jesus concluded, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (who dwells in the presence of the angels?). In the third parable, the father is the clear figure rejoicing and celebrating the return of his son (who does the father represent?). The main point should be obvious: God himself rejoices with exceeding joy when a sinner repents and comes to Jesus for salvation. God throws a party!

One of the key motivations for us to live evangelistically should be our desire to share in God's delight when the lost are found. If we want to be like God, then each one of us should experience great joy when someone in our life repents and turns to the Lord. We should constantly be attending the "party" that God the Father throws!

We often don't display this kind of joy over winning the lost; we fail to show up at the "party." Consider how the two brothers in the parable might represent two reasons why. First, might you be like the younger brother, too caught up in pursuing joy in the things of this world to be excited when someone turns to Jesus? You aren't at the party with Jesus, because you aren't spending much time with Jesus to begin with! Second, might you be like the older brother, who believed he had "earned" his spot with the father? If you only spend time going to church or reading your Bible to earn approval with God, then you will believe you are better than the lost, and you won't be excited when they repent. In either case, we must recognize our lostness and run to God ourselves. Then, as we enjoy the party of God's grace thrown on our behalf, we will long for others to experience that joy with us.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your level of joy and enthusiasm over seeing the lost repent and come to Jesus?
2. Where in your life are you like the younger brother (separated from the joy of the father because of worldly desires)? Where in your life are you like the older brother (separated from the joy of the father because of self-righteousness and pride)?
3. What would it take to move your answer to #1 up one number?

#5: Spreading the Word to the Lost

Scripture: Romans 10:1-17

In today's passage, Paul provided us with (1) the reason for evangelism, (2) the content of evangelism, and (3) the process of evangelism. First, Paul explained why evangelism is necessary. It's a common misconception that passion for spiritual things or good deeds are enough to bring someone close to God. According to Paul, neither will provide salvation. Even people who are zealous for God, if they don't know Christ, are lost (v.2). Good deeds won't save you either, because when we try to establish our own goodness, we end up missing Jesus and rejecting God's true righteousness (v.3). People you meet walking down the street are staking their eternity on the false hopes of devotion and morality and are destined for destruction.

Paul then gave us the true hope we share with people, the content of evangelism. The Word of faith declares "that if you confess Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (v.9). This good news is hope for all people in all places for all time. From the single mom struggling to make ends meet, to the skeptical college professor, to the older man dying of cancer after rejecting God for years, "whoever believes in him will not be disappointed" (v.11). Jesus is the "Lord of all" (v.12), and he has authority and power to save any and all who call on him.

The process of evangelism has two necessary components. First, for people to believe in Christ, they must hear the Word of Christ proclaimed to them! Our most powerful tool in evangelism is directing people to God's Word unashamedly, knowing that the Scriptures have the power to pierce their hearts (Heb 4:12) and provide them the knowledge that leads to salvation (2 Tim 3:15). The best preparation for evangelism is not studying the newest apologetic strategies or memorizing scripts, as helpful as those may be. The best preparation is knowing God's Word inside and out so that you can skillfully share it with the lost.

Even when the Word is proclaimed, some who hear will choose not to believe (v.16). That's why we must also pray fervently for the Spirit to actively work to regenerate hearts and bring salvation. Paul began in verse 1 by stating that he prayed for the salvation of the lost. Salvation is an act of God work to bring new life to dead hearts.

There are all kinds of activities that are useful to evangelism (community events, godly character, loving service), but only two activities are essential: the proclamation of the Word and prayer. May we be a people known for fearlessly declaring the Word to the lost, and may we dedicate ourselves to fervent prayer for God to save the lost around us.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Why are acts of service/community events/blameless character insufficient for evangelizing the lost? Why must we proclaim the Word of Christ?
2. What steps can you take to better know the Word of truth so that you can more effectively share it with the lost?
3. Who in your life needs to hear the Word proclaimed to them? Pray for them to have ears to hear!

WINTER EVENTS @ FAITH CHURCH

NOVEMBER

- 21 & 22** Taste of Christmas* (Women's Event) 6:30pm
23 Stewardship Celebration* 5:00pm

**these two ticketed events are held at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds*

DECEMBER

- 7** Christmas Worship Concert @ Faith West 9:30 & 11:00am
12-14 Living Nativity 6:30 - 8:30pm
14 Christmas Worship Concert @ Faith East 8:00, 9:30 & 11:00am
19-21 Living Nativity 6:30 - 8:30pm
21 Christmas Worship Concert @ Faith North 9:30 & 11:00am
24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Services @ Faith East 5:00 & 8:00 pm
Service for Families with Children @ Faith East (age 4 - 5th grade) 5:00pm
24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Faith West 6:00pm
24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Faith North 7:00pm



faith
WOMEN'S MINISTRY

FAITH WOMEN'S MINISTRY PRESENTS

**For Unto Us
A Child Is Born**

2025 Taste of Christmas Concert with Dinner

November 21 & 22, 2025

Doors open at 6:00pm. Tickets are \$20 per person and can be purchased online starting October 1st at faithlafayette.org/toc or in the church foyers. Held at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds Event Center

Faith Church

STEWARDSHIP CELEBRATION

November 23 at 5:00 PM

Celebrating Christ's Care for Our Church Family

Tickets are free and available online at

faithlafayette.org/stewardship

This event is held at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds Event Center.



Faith Church - East Campus

5526 St. Rd. 26 East, Lafayette

Faith Church - North Campus

2000 Elmwood Ave., Lafayette

Faith Church - West Campus

1920 Northwestern Ave., West Lafayette

En Español

Servicios de alabanza y predicación cada domingo a las 11:00 a.m.

Nos reunimos en el segundo piso del Northend Community Center

Estudio y compañerismo en grupo pequeño cada miércoles a las 6:30 p.m.

Para mayor información en español llamar: 765-404-8408

765-448-1986

faithlafayette.org/church