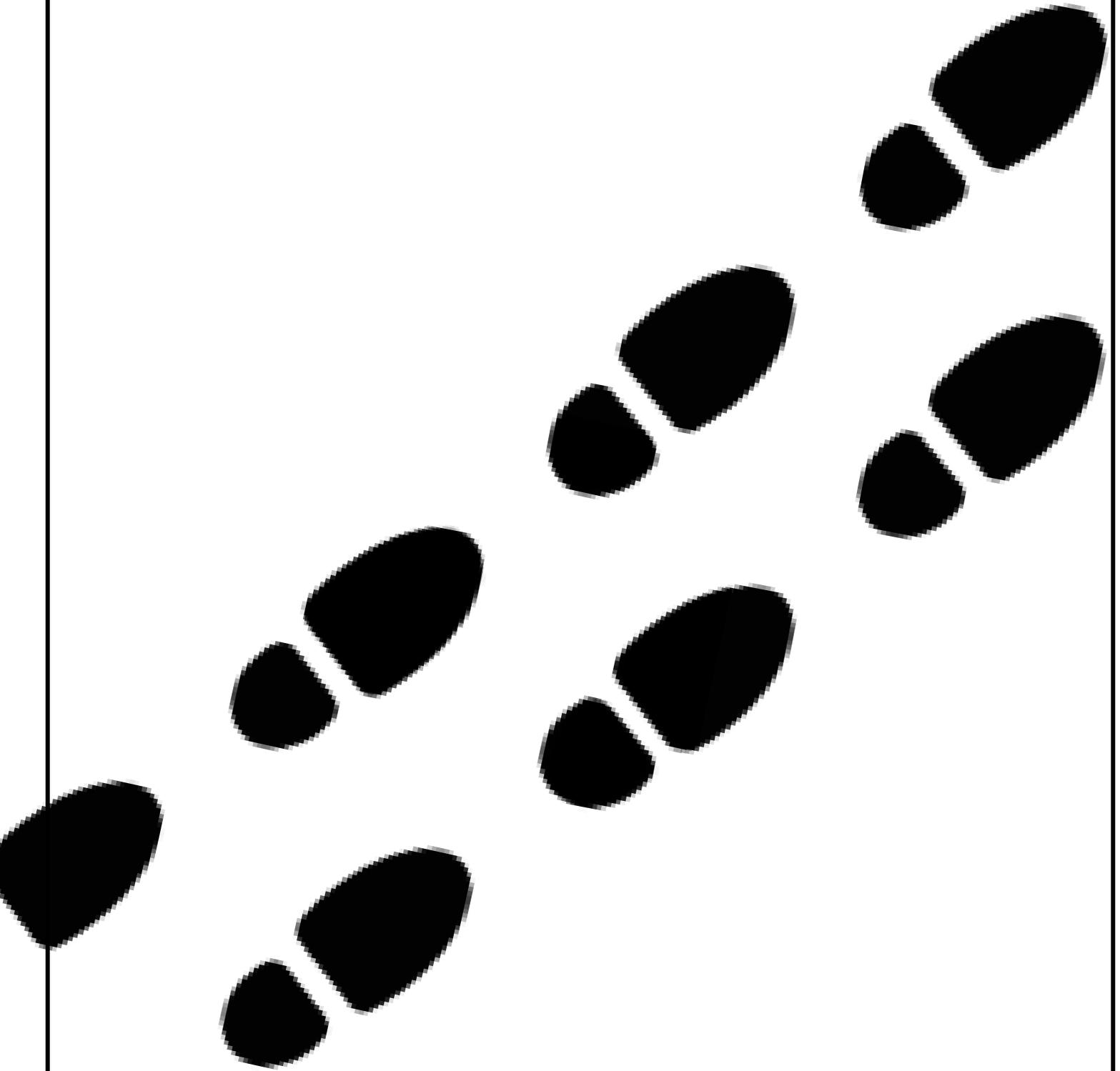


STEPS OF FAITH

DISCOVER WHAT IT MEANS TO WALK BY FAITH



PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

When I think of “faith”, a couple of life experiences come to mind for me. One while working on a roof with a steep pitch and the other while flying in a small airplane with Chaplain Walt Bean. Both of those experiences required that I place my trust in someone who knew what they were doing. The peace that I experienced with both of those situations was amazing. I would admit to you that I was nervous, but I trusted, and that made all the difference. It is that same peace that rests at the heart of the matter of spiritual faith. I am convinced that many of us are living way below our potential when it comes to this matter of faith. Oh, we trust, but do we really trust and have confidence in the God we serve?

George Barna in his book, Maximum Faith, says that most Americans are people of substantial faith. It’s simply a question of who or what we place our faith in, and how that faith shapes our lives. We have considerable faith in many people, gadgets and substances that we know little about. But do we have a deep and growing faith in God and the willingness to let Him transform us into the person he wants us to be?¹ The transformation that comes with faith begins when we are willing to trust God and become fully dependent upon Him.²

Over the next several weeks we’ll explore what it means to become a person of faith and then how that faith challenges us to live (walk) by faith every single day of our lives. To get the maximum out of this series, you will need to make a personal investment. This participant’s guide is intended to help in that process. Here’s how it works: there are three sections to each week. First, there is a devotional guide with an activity for Monday through Saturday. This section also includes three action steps: (a) Scripture reading, (b) Questions for consideration (c) Prayer. Secondly, there is section for you to take notes during the service on Sunday morning. Finally, there is a small group section that will serve as a guide for the conversation in small groups on Sunday evening.

Looking Forward to Walking Together in Faith,

Pastor Greg

¹ Barna, George, Maximum Faith, Fedd and Company (2011), pp. xi-xii

² Barna, George, Maximum Faith, Fedd and Company (2011), p. 14

STEPS OF FAITH

DISCOVER WHAT IT MEANS TO WALK BY FAITH

SERIES OUTLINE

January 13th – Week 1	3-9
AM – What It Means to Have Faith (2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 11:1; The Book of Esther)	
PM – What is Faith?	
January 20th – Week 2	10-17
AM – Saved by Faith, Ephesians 2:1-10 (Dr. James Thrower)	
PM – Faith Matters	
January 27th – Week 3	18-25
AM – Faith & Fruit, James 2:14-26	
PM – Belief that leads to Action	
February 3rd – Week 4	26-31
AM – Faith that He Will Provide, Genesis 22:1-19 (Abraham)	
PM – Trust	
February 10th – Week 5	32-39
AM – Build a Boat, Genesis 6:9-22 (Noah)	
PM – God is Looking For A Few Boat Builders (Obedience)	
February 17th – Week 6	40-46
AM – Get Out of the Boat; Matthew 14:22-36 (Peter)	
PM – Get Out of the Boat; Take a Risk, but Keep Your Eyes On Jesus	
Sumter First Nazarene “App” Download Instructions	47

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WEEK #1 – DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday, January 7th

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:1

Questions: What does it mean to have faith? What does it mean to have confidence in something or someone? How are faith and confidence related? Do you think that faith is blind faith? Explain.

Prayer: Ask the Lord to help you have confidence in Him. Pray that this kind of faith becomes a way of life for you.

Tuesday, January 8th

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:1-40

Questions: What do you notice about the individuals listed in the “Faith Hall of Fame”? Does this passage of scripture help with your understanding of what it means to have faith? If so, why and how? How do the stories of past heroes of the faith influence your personal life? _____

Prayer: Give thanks for the heroes listed in this passage. Give thanks for the individuals in your own life that have been examples of the faith.

Wednesday, January 9th

Scripture Reading: Esther 1-3

Questions: Today’s passage of scripture is essential to the passage that you will read tomorrow. It is the story of how one person can

make a difference. Describe the dilemma facing the Jews below. Do you believe that one person can make a difference? Why do you believe that? Could you be that person? _____

Prayer: Pray for individuals that are being persecuted for their faith in Christ.

Thursday, January 10th

Scripture Reading: Esther 4

Questions: Where do you see faith at work in Esther's life? (See 4:15-16) Why do you think Esther is willing to be so bold? Do you think she is afraid? Is it okay to be afraid? Has God asked you to do something bold? Is He asking you now to do something bold? What is He asking you to do? Will you say yes? _____

Prayer: Ask the Lord to help you to be bold in your faith.

Friday, January 11th

Scripture Reading: Colossians 2:6-7

Questions: Faith is not an isolated event, but it begins a walk of faith that is marked by a dependence on God. How do you continually depend on God? How do you live your life for Him daily? _____

Prayer: Ask the Lord to give you the strength to live your faith out in everyday life.

Saturday, January 12th

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Questions: Does it matter who or what you put your faith in?

Why? _____

Prayer: Pray for the service, each small group that will meet tomorrow tonight, your small group leader and the members of your group.

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #1 – SERMON NOTES

January 13, 2019

SERMON TITLE: What It Means To Have Faith

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 11:1; The Book of Esther

SERMON FOCUS: Defining Faith

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #1 – SMALL GROUP

January 13, 2019

TITLE: What is Faith?

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 11:1; The Book of Esther

OPENING:

- Introductions: During the opening of your small group you will be asked to introduce yourself to the group. Be prepared to share when you begin attending church.

- Prayer: List your prayer request in the space below. Add the requests that others in your group share. Belief in the power of prayer is a vital part of being a person of faith.

DISCUSSION:

- What discovery did you make during your devotional time this week? _____

- Video: “The Good Life – Faith” (1:48)

- What is faith? _____

- Is faith blind? _____

- Does it matter who or what you put your faith in? Why? _____

- What are some things that we put our faith in? (Pastor talked about a few of those things in this morning's sermon) Why do we put our faith in those things? _____

- Dr. Ray Dunning said this about faith: "Faith is the mode of entrance into the Christian life, it is also an element in its continuance. One does not exercise faith as an isolated event but begins what is a walk of faith marked by continuing dependence upon the mercy and grace of God."³ In light of this statement what do the following scriptures teach us about faith? How do they help us define faith? _____

³ Dunning, Ray, "Grace, Faith & Holiness", Beacon Hill Press (1988), pp. 440-441

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

CONCLUSION:

- Share personal stories of faith. (How individuals came to faith and how we continue to place our faith in God daily.)

- Continue with daily devotions.

- Pray

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #2 – DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Written by Dr. James Thrower

Monday, January 14th (Saving Faith)

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:8-9

Questions:

When Paul said we are “saved by grace through faith”, what did he mean by “through”?

How are “grace and faith” gifts of God to us? _____

How does Scripture describe “coming to faith” in Christ? _____

How does faith in Jesus “reorient” our perspectives on God and others? _____

Prayer: If you do not know Christ as your personal Savior, pray this prayer and invite Him to be Lord of your life. *“Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.” (Copied)*

If you have invited Christ to be your Savior, reaffirm your faith and commitment to be a follower of Jesus. Give thanks for His sacrifice.

Tuesday, January 15th – Defining Faith

Scripture Reading: Write your definition of faith and compare it to the following verses.

Romans 1:17

Ephesians 2:8-9

Hebrews 12:2

Romans 10:17

Romans 5:2

I John 5:4

Questions: What does each verse say about faith? Is your definition in harmony with them? _____

Prayer: Pray for the members of your small group by name.

Wednesday, January 16th – The Object of our Faith

Questions:

Where, or what, or upon Whom, does your faith rest? _____

Consider where some may place their faith?

Their own “self-righteousness”

Their relationship to the church

What they have “been told about Jesus”

Even the Bible itself

Discuss why these are dangerous positions spiritually. _____

How does a “personal relationship” with Jesus affect each of them? _____

Prayer: Pray for your small group leader.

Thursday, January 17th – What is my faith in God producing...“in me”?

(Discuss) Am I becoming “more Christ-like” in my walk with Jesus?

(James 2:14-26) _____

(Personally Assess) Is the “fruit of the Spirit” growing in me? _____

(Galatians 5:22)

(Ask) As “His sheep”, am I “hearing His voice” and “following Him”? (John 10:27) Why is this critical to the Christian? _____

Prayer: Lord, help me to continue to hear your voice and follow you.

Friday, January 18th - Faith and Family and Friends

(Answer) How does “my faith in God” impact my family? Do I see them “as Jesus does”? and respond to them “as Jesus would”? _____

Should my faith in God impact my choice in friends? How? _____

What does 1 Cor.15:33 say the impact of “bad company is on good character”? _____

What does John say that “friendship with the world” is? (James 4:4) _____

How can we be “in the world” but not be “of the world” as Jesus said? _____

Prayer: Pray for the needs of your small group.

Saturday, January 19th – Faith and Choices

Questions:

Define the word “priorities.” List your top 2. How did you decide to establish them? (Romans 6:33) _____

What is the guidance of Proverbs 3:5-6 in making choices? _____

Answer: Am I, in faith, willing to yield all of my desires to God’s purposes expressed for me in His Word? _____

Can I be “living by faith” in God if I am not? _____

Prayer: Pray for the service, each small group that will meet tomorrow tonight, your small group leader and the members of your group.

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #2 – SERMON NOTES

January 20, 2019

SERMON TITLE: Saved By Faith

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 2:1-10

SERMON FOCUS: Saving Faith

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #2 – SMALL GROUP

January 20, 2019

TITLE: Faith Matters

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 2:1-10

OPENING:

- Open with stories of faith from this week. Who was influential in leading you to Christ?

- Prayer: List your prayer request in the space below. Add the requests that others in your group share. Belief in the power of prayer is a vital part of being a person of faith.

DISCUSSION:

- What discovery did you make during your devotional time this week? _____

- (Discuss) Faith and works _____

- Does your faith in God affect your daily decisions in life? How? _____

- Does faith enable and empower us to interpret and react to life from a Scriptural rather than merely emotional place? _____

- How critical is our “faith in God ” to the vitality and life of our church? _____

- To an on-looking world, is it important that our faith mirror faith as defined in Scripture? Why? _____

- Should our faith in Christ have an impact in our church in advancing God’s Kingdom? How? _____

- What are some ways that we can exercise our faith in helping to build Christ’s Church? _____

CONCLUSION:

- Video: “A New Heart” (4:41) or “A Kingdom That Fell” (4:49)

- Continue with daily devotions.

- Pray

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #3 – DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday, January 21st

Scripture Reading: Romans 2:13

Illustration: Mother Teresa was scheduled to speak at a world conference on hunger in Bombay. She arrived at the conference late because she got lost on the way. As she was going into the building, she saw a man lying in the front door dying of hunger. She took him to the nearest home for the dying and as a result missed the entire meeting. The man was dying on the doorstep of the very building where representatives from powerful countries were confidently discussing plans to eliminate hunger in the next 15 years.

Questions: We have been called not only to hear and obey the Word. We are called to be people of action. How does this scripture and story challenge you? Have you ever missed an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus? _____

Prayer: Ask the Lord to give you an opportunity to help someone in need this week.

Tuesday, January 22nd

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:15-20

Questions: Last week we discovered that salvation is a “free gift”. Free in that we cannot earn it or buy it. But it is not free in the sense that it is given without responsibilities and expectations. How would a group of believers who have grasped the cost of the gift that they have received change the world? _____

Prayer: Give thanks to God for the gift of His Son.

Wednesday, January 23rd

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-29

Questions: What benefits come from hearing the Word and then putting it into practice? Can you think of a time when you didn't put His Word into practice? What did you learn from that experience? _____

Prayer: Pray James 1:5

"If any of you **lacks wisdom**, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

Thursday, January 24th

Scripture Reading: Titus 1:15-16

Questions: This passage deals with identifying false teachers. What does Paul say gives them away? Why is it that our lives have a way of revealing what we truly believe? What does your life say about what you believe? _____

Prayer: "Lord, may my life be a reflection of my love for you."

Friday, January 25th

Scripture Reading: James 2:14-19

Questions: Paul teaches that one is saved by faith alone, and not by works. In this passage James seems to say that faith is not enough. Some might think that James is implying that we are saved by works. But that is simply not the case. James declares that deeds

(actions) are an expression of “Living by Faith”. What is the balance between faith and works? _____

Prayer: Ask God to help you say it and live it!

Saturday, January 26th

Scripture Reading: James 2:20-26

Questions: Faith can only be seen as it influences the actions of the one who possesses it. What do you discover about faith and works from Abraham? Does your faith have any influence over your actions? Is there evidence of your faith? _____

Prayer: Pray for the service, each small group that will meet tomorrow tonight, your small group leader and the members of your group.

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #3 – SERMON NOTES

January 27, 2019

SERMON TITLE: Faith & Fruit

SCRIPTURE: James 2:14-26

SERMON FOCUS: Faith & Works Go Together

WEEK #3 – SMALL GROUP

January 27, 2019

TITLE: Belief That Leads to Action

SCRIPTURE: James 2:14-26

OPENING:

- Open with stories how faith & works go together.

- Prayer: List your prayer request in the space below. Add the requests that others in your group share. Belief in the power of prayer is a vital part of being a person of faith.

DISCUSSION:

- What discovery did you make during your devotional time this week? _____

- Do faith and works really go together? If so, what does that look like in the Christian Life? Are both important? _____

- **Video:** Hands & Feet (2:39) How does the video make the connection between faith and works? Are there other ways these two work together? _____

- James wanted faith to be more than a statement. Many organizations have a statement of faith and fail to put it into action. Why do you think that happens? _____

- Is it possible to focus on works without faith? Read the story below before you answer. What could the church learn from the story of the “lifesaving station”? _____

Illustration: On a dangerous seacoast notorious for shipwrecks, there was a crude little lifesaving station. Actually, it was merely a hut with only one boat, but the few members kept a constant watch over the turbulent sea. With little thought for themselves, they would go out day & night tirelessly searching for those in danger as well as the lost. Many lives were saved by this brave band who faithfully worked as a team in and out of the lifesaving station. By and by, it became a famous place.

Some of those who had been saved, as well as others along the seacoast, wanted to become associated with this little station. They were willing to give their time, energy and money in support of its objectives. New boats were purchased. New crews were trained. The station, once obscure and crude and virtually insignificant, began to grow. Some of its members were unhappy

the hut was so unattractive and poorly equipped. They felt a more comfortable place should be provided. Emergency cots were replaced with lovely furniture. Rough, handmade equipment was discarded and sophisticated, classy systems were installed. The hut, of course, had to be torn down to make room for all the additional equipment, furniture, and systems. By the time of its completion, the lifesaving station had become a popular gathering place, and its objectives had begun to shift. It was now used as a sort of clubhouse, an attractive building for public gathering. Saving lives, feeding the hungry, strengthening the fearful, and calming the disturbed rarely occurred.

Fewer members were interested in braving the sea on lifesaving missions, so they hired professional lifeboat crews to do this work. The original goal of the station wasn't altogether forgotten, however. Lifesaving motifs still prevailed in the club's decorations. There was a liturgical lifeboat preserved in the Room of Sweet Memories with soft, indirect lighting, which helped hide the layer of dust upon the once-used vessel. About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast and the boat crews brought in loads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty, some terribly sick and lonely. Others were "different" from the majority of the club members. The beautiful new club suddenly became messy and cluttered.

A special committee saw to it that a shower house was immediately built outside, away from the club so victims of the shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside. At the next meeting there were strong words and angry feelings, which resulted in a division among the members.

Most of the people wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities and all involvements with shipwreck victims. As you'd expect, some still insisted on saving lives, that this was their primary objective – that their only reason for existence was ministering to anyone needing help regardless of their club's beauty or size or decorations. They were voted down and told if they wanted to save the lives of various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast! They did.

As the years passed, the new station experienced the same old changes. It evolved into another club – and yet another lifesaving station was begun. History repeated itself. And if you visit that coast today you'll find a large number of exclusive, impressive clubs

along the shoreline owned and operated by slick professionals who have lost all involvement with the saving of lives.

Shipwrecks still occur in those waters, but now most of the victims are not saved. Every day they drown at sea, and so few others seem to care . . . so very few.⁴

- How does the balance of faith and works (fruit) affect the work of the church? _____

- In there a place in the church that you can volunteer to put your faith into action? _____

CONCLUSION:

- Share personal stories of people who put their faith into action. (Sunday School teachers who were influential in your life.)

- Continue with daily devotions.

- Pray

⁴ Chuck Swindoll, "A Parable of Saving Lives"

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #4 – DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday, January 28th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12:1

Questions: The stories of Abraham (Abram) begin with God’s call upon his life. From the beginning, Abraham is willing to trust God with the details. T.W. Willingham says this about Abraham’s step of faith: How do you think you would respond if God asked you to move without giving you the destination? Why do we have this need to be in control, a need to know? _____

Prayer: Lord, I am willing to “let go” of the details because I completely trust you!

Tuesday, January 29th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12:2-9

Questions: After God calls Abraham to relocate, He makes a promise to him. What promise does God make to Abraham? (Keep this promise in mind as you follow the stories of Abraham.) How is accepting God’s promise a step of faith (trust)? _____

Prayer: Lord, I accept your promises as true. I believe those promised for myself and not just for others.

Wednesday, January 30th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 15:1-6

Questions: In this passage Abraham speaks to God. He not only replied to God’s promise of a son, he raised a question of how this

promise would be fulfilled. What do you think it means that Abraham “believed” the Lord? What is required to “believe” God when the promise seems impossible? _____

Prayer: Lord, today I trust you with the impossible things in my life.

Thursday, January 31st

Scripture Reading: Genesis 17:15-17; 18:9-15; Genesis 21:1-5

Questions: What would you do if you discovered that you would have a child at the age of one hundred? What was the name of the child born to Abraham and Sarah? _____

Prayer: Lord, help me when I am tempted to laugh at your promises.

Friday, February 1st

Scripture Reading: Genesis 22:1-2

Questions: Why do you think the phrase “sometime later” is an important phrase? What is the hardest thing the Lord has ever asked you to do? How does that compare to the challenge before Abraham? _____

Prayer: Lord, help me to trust you when I am afraid.

Saturday, February 2nd

Scripture Reading: Genesis 22:3-14

Questions: Do you think Abraham had a hard time sleeping the night before? How would you have answered Isaac's question? (See Genesis 22:7-8) Why does Abraham say with confidence that God will provide? (See Genesis 22:8, 14) How do you think you would have responded if you had seen the lamb caught in the thicket? _____

Prayer: Pray for the service, each small group that will meet tomorrow tonight, your small group leader and the members of your group.

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #4 – SERMON NOTES

February 3, 2019

SERMON TITLE: Faith That He Will Provide

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-14

SERMON FOCUS: Trust

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #4 – SMALL GROUP

February 3, 2019

TITLE: Trust, “We Will Worship and Then We Will Come Back to You”

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-14

OPENING:

- Open with stories of how God has provided.

- Prayer: List your prayer request in the space below. Add the request that others in your group share. Belief in the power of prayer is a vital part of being a person of faith.

DISCUSSION:

- What discovery did you make during your devotional time this week? _____

- Video: “Just Go” (4:30) Faith begins with the first “Go”.

- How much do you think Abraham’s experience with God influenced his response to God when he was asked to sacrifice his only son, whom you love – Isaac? There is no question about the who and the what in this test. _____

- Identify some of the moments when Abraham declared his confidence (faith) in God. _____

- How far was Abraham willing to go? _____

- T.W. Willingham said this about Abraham’s step of faith: “He (Abraham) was sure that God had spoken. Abraham believed in God’s power and His Word and was sure of the speaker.”⁵

“Most of us believe (in profession, at least) that God has power – power to do the impossible. The more difficult thing is to know just what He has promised and that He has promised it to us.”⁶

What name did Abraham give the place where God met his need?
Are you confident that God will provide when you are in need?

CONCLUSION:

- Share how God has been speaking to you tonight.
- Continue with daily devotions.
- Pray

⁵ Willingham, T.W., “Crumbs of Faith”, Beacon Hill Press (1987), p. 33

⁶ Willingham, T.W., “Crumbs of Faith”, Beacon Hill Press (1987), p. 34

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #5 – DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday, February 4th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:8-12

Questions: What do you notice about Noah in this passage? How does the life of Noah contrast with the description of the world? We too have been called to be a light in the midst of great darkness. How is your light shining? _____

Prayer: Sing your prayer this morning!

This little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
Oh, this little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine

This little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, all the time, let it shine

All around the neighborhood
I'm going to let it shine
All around the neighborhood
I'm going to let it shine
All around the neighborhood

I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm going to let it shine

Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm going to let it shine

Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm going to let it shine

Tuesday, February 5th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:22; 7:5

Questions: At the heart of this passage is simple obedience. “Noah did everything just as God commanded him.” (6:22) “And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him.” (7:5) What is the key to living in such a way to say “yes” to God? Is there anything hindering your “yes” to Him? _____

Prayer: Lord, I make myself available as an instrument of your Kingdom.

Wednesday, February 6th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:13-14

Questions: Have you ever wondered what Noah’s neighbors were thinking while this old man (nearly 600 years old) was building a boat in his backyard? How do you respond when others don’t understand what God has called you to do? _____

Prayer: Lord, give me the grace and wisdom to respond to those who have questions about the trust that I place in you.

Thursday, February 7th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:14-16

Questions: The attention to detail in this passage is not for us to see the ark, but rather that we might appreciate the meticulous care with which this godly and exemplary man went about his task of obedience to God’s will.⁷ Why should we give God our very

⁷ The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Vol 2, pp. 82-83

best? (See John 3:16) What does it say when we pay attention to the details? Are you giving God your best? _____

Prayer: Lord, I give you my heart. Time to sing again! Sing the words below from “I Give You My Heart” by Hillsong Worship.

Lord, I give You my heart
I give You my soul
I live for you alone
And every breath that I take
Every moment I'm awake
Lord, have Your ways in me

Friday, February 8th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:17-18

Questions: We again discover the promises of God to care for those who “walk with Him”. Two things seem to be clear in this passage. (1) God uses people like you and me to carry out His plan. (2) He enables us to complete the tasks He has called us to. What is God asking of you? What excuses have you been making? _____

Prayer: Lord, I am through making excuses. Here I am, send me!

Saturday, February 9th

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:8-22

Questions: What has the story of Noah taught you about yourself and God? What is the lesson in this passage that you needed to hear? _____

Prayer: Pray for the service, each small group that will meet tomorrow tonight, your small group leader and the members of your group.

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #5 – SERMON NOTES

February 10, 2019

SERMON TITLE: Build A Boat (Noah)

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:9-22

SERMON FOCUS: Obedience

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #5 – SMALL GROUP

February 10, 2019

TITLE: God Is Looking For A Few Boat Builders

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:9-22

OPENING:

- Open with stories of obedience and God's blessings.

- Prayer: List your prayer request in the space below. Add the request that others in your group share. Belief in the power of prayer is a vital part of being a person of faith.

DISCUSSION:

- What discovery did you make during your devotional time this week? _____

- Video: Noah and the Flood (1:14)
After years and years of labor, Noah must have wondered if it was ever going to rain. But he continued working. He continued to live out what God had placed in his heart. And then one day it started to rain. And it didn't stop. This video shows Noah's reaction to those first drops of rain and leads all the way to the point where he arrives at the ark.

Some estimate that Noah worked 100 plus years on the ark. What would keep him working for that long without results? Are you ever impatient with God? _____

- What does it mean to be a person who is described as “one who walks with God? _____

- What kind of faith does it take to build a boat that is 450’ long, 75’ wide and 45’ tall? Keep in mind that Titanic was 880’ long and 91’ wide. How would you respond if God called you to take on a task this large? What do you think motivated Noah to Obey God? _____

- C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity says this about obedience: “There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus, if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him.”⁸ How does this statement apply to Noah? How does this statement apply to you? _____

- During the daily devotions we discovered that the details of the ark were not so that we could see the ark, but instead so that we could see the attention given to details by those called by God. Do you ever give God less than your best? If so, why? Do you ever give God the leftovers? (Time, talent, etc.) _____

⁸ Lewis, C.S., Mere Christianity, p. 66

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- Have someone lead your small group in singing “This little Light of Mine”.

This little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
Oh, this little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
This little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, all the time, let it shine
All around the neighborhood
I'm going to let it shine
All around the neighborhood
I'm going to let it shine
All around the neighborhood
I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.
Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm going to let it shine
Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm going to let it shine
Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm going to let it shine

CONCLUSION:

- Share how this kind of obedience could be lived out in everyday life. Give specific illustrations.
- Continue with daily devotions.
- Pray

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #6 – DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday, February 11th

Scripture Reading: John 1:40-42; Matthew 4:18-19

Questions: The journey of faith begins for Peter at this moment. Do you remember when God called your name? Write a brief summary of your faith story. _____

Prayer: Lord, give me an opportunity to share my faith story today.

Tuesday, February 12th

Scripture Reading: Luke 5:1-11

Questions: Peter is a professional fisherman. He knows how and where to fish. And yet, when Jesus instructs him to put out into deep water, and to let down the nets for a catch he obeys. Why? What happens when Peter does what Jesus says? _____

Prayer: Lord, help me not to let my knowledge get in the way of your work.

Wednesday, February 13th

Scripture Reading: Matthew 69-75

Questions: This is one of the most difficult moments in Peter's life. What happened to Peter in this moment? Have you ever had one of those moments when you disowned Jesus? Maybe not with your words, but with your actions. _____

Prayer: Lord, may my life be a reflection of who you are, both in my words and actions.

Thursday, February 14th (Valentine's Day)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:22-24

Questions: Jesus because we are followers of Jesus does not mean we are exempt from adversity. However, it is often during adversity that we learn the most. What have you learned about faith (trust) in a time of adversity? _____

Prayer: Lord, I love you and trust you even in the midst of adversity. Help me to learn as I walk through difficult times.

Friday, February 15th

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:25-31

Questions: The rest of the disciples stayed in the boat! They stayed where it was safer – better to face the storm in the boat than in the water. Why do we have a tendency to stay in our comfort zone? Why is it hard to get out of the boat, even if it isn't storming? Stop giving Peter a hard time and get out of the boat. _____

Prayer: Lord, when I get out of the boat help me keep my eyes on you and not the storm.

Saturday, February 16th

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:22-26

Questions: Would you have gotten out of the boat? Why or why not? How have you gotten out of the boat? _____

Prayer: Pray for the service, each small group that will meet tomorrow tonight, your small group leader and the members of your group.

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #6 – SERMON NOTES

February 17, 2019

SERMON TITLE: Get Out of the Boat (Peter)

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:22-36

SERMON FOCUS: Start Walking, but Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

STEPS OF FAITH

WEEK #6 – SMALL GROUP

February 17, 2019

TITLE: Get Out of The Boat

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:22-36

OPENING:

- Open with stories of getting out of the boat.

- Prayer: List your prayer request in the space below. Add the request that others in your group share. Belief in the power of prayer is a vital part of being a person of faith.

DISCUSSION:

- What discovery did you make during your devotional time this week? _____

- Video: Jesus Saves: Peter (2;29)
- What compels Peter to get out of the boat? (See Matthew 14:28-29) _____

- Why do you think the focus of this passage is often on the storm and Peter's lack of faith? What are we missing? (John Ortberg's

book "Get Out of the Boat" take this unusual approach to understanding this story) _____

- Why is it important to know that that it is Jesus who is calling before you get out of the boat? _____

- Once you are out of the boat, be prepared to walk by faith and not sight. Peter knew he was getting out of the boat in the middle of a storm. Nothing about the storm changed. The only thing that changed is what Peter focused on. It truly matters who or what you put your faith in. Have you found yourself walking by sight instead of faith? What changed? _____

- What risk, by faith, is God calling you to take? What are you afraid of doing? Remember the phrase used so often in the Bible, "Do not be afraid". Does that help you? _____

- What is God calling us as a church to do? Something we can only do with great faith and God's help. _____

SUMTER FIRST APP

Use the Sumter First App to Receive You Daily Devotion

Step One: Go to the “Apple App Store” or “Google Play Store” and download the “Sumter First Nazarene” App.

Step Two: Once you’ve downloaded the App, select the three little bars in the left-hand corner. In the dropdown menu select “My Tracks”. Then select the (+) in the top right-hand corner to add “Steps of Faith”. You will then be able to select the time of day you would like to receive your devotionals.