

Spiritual Disciplines

Practices That Shape the Christian Life

A 56-Day Devotional Guide

Dear Church Family,

Over the next several weeks we will be studying what the Bible calls the practices of the Christian life. We often refer to these as *spiritual disciplines*. These are the habits God uses to shape our hearts and form our lives.

Christians believe many important truths. We believe the gospel. We believe that Christ died for our sins and rose again. We believe that we are saved by grace and not by our works. Yet believing these truths does not automatically change us.

Truth changes us when it moves from our minds into our hearts and into the patterns of our lives.

That is where spiritual disciplines come in.

Spiritual disciplines are not ways of earning God's favor. They are not religious techniques for making ourselves acceptable to Him. The gospel tells us that we are accepted because of Christ alone. Instead, spiritual disciplines are practices that allow the truth of the gospel to take deeper root in our lives.

Through these practices God trains our hearts.

As we open Scripture, pray, worship, forgive, welcome others, and walk in obedience, the Holy Spirit uses those practices to shape us more into the likeness of Christ.

This devotional guide is meant to accompany the sermon series and extend it into daily reflection. Each reading focuses on a portion of Scripture and a particular aspect of the Christian life. The goal is not to rush through the material but to slow down, reflect on God's Word, and allow it to reshape our hearts.

My prayer is that these readings will help you grow in faith, deepen your understanding of the gospel, and encourage you to walk more closely with Christ.

May the Lord use these simple reflections to strengthen your love for Him and your love for one another.

Grace and peace,

Chris Ruwaldt

How to Use This Guide

This devotional guide contains **56 daily readings** connected to the sermon series on the practices of the Christian life. Each reading is designed to help you reflect on Scripture and apply its truth to your life.

Each day includes four simple elements:

Scripture

A short passage or verse from the Bible that anchors the day's reflection.

Devotional Reflection

A brief explanation that highlights the meaning of the passage and connects it to the Christian life.

Reflection Questions

Two questions intended to help you think more deeply about the passage and how it applies to your life.

Prayer

A short prayer that responds to the truth of the passage and asks God to work in your heart.

You may find it helpful to follow a simple rhythm each day:

1. Read the Scripture slowly.
2. Read the devotional reflection.
3. Spend a few moments considering the reflection questions.
4. Close by praying the suggested prayer or your own prayer.

The goal is not to complete the readings quickly but to allow God's Word to shape your thinking, your desires, and your daily life.

Day 1 — Belief and Transformation

Scripture: Psalm 1:1–2

Key Truth

God's truth reshapes life as it is meditated upon, not merely affirmed.

Devotional Reflection

Scripture recognizes that believing true things about God does not automatically produce inward change. We may confess God's love and still be anxious or discouraged. Psalm 1 contrasts two formative paths: a life shaped by surrounding voices and a life shaped by delight in God's Word. Meditation slows our encounter with Scripture so truth moves from awareness into affection and conduct. Transformation does not come from effort alone but from sustained exposure to God's revealed Word, through which the Spirit forms stability over time.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do we see tension between truths confessed and responses experienced?
2. What voices most shape our thinking when unsettled?

Prayer

Father, grant us hearts that receive Your Word seriously and gladly. Press Your truth beyond understanding into desire and response, forming delight in what You have spoken through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 2 — Rooted or Carried

Scripture: Psalm 1:3–4

Key Truth

Spiritual life is determined not by outward virtue but by whether we are rooted in God.

Devotional Reflection

Psalm 1 contrasts two lives using images of a tree and chaff. The difference is one of nature: a tree lives because it is rooted, while chaff is carried wherever the wind drives it. Scripture does not measure spiritual reality by personality or respectability. The decisive matter is dependence — where hope and identity are sourced. Meditation directs our hearts toward God's character and promises so that our endurance rests not on circumstances but on Him. This rootedness ultimately rests in union with Christ, through whom life and standing before God are secured.

Reflection Questions

1. What qualities do we instinctively use to evaluate spiritual health?
2. When life shifts unexpectedly, what steadies our hearts?

Prayer

Lord, plant us deeply in Yourself and turn our confidence away from outward appearance and changing circumstances. Establish our hearts in Your truth and cause us to draw life from Christ alone, that we may endure in faith and steadiness before You. Amen.

Day 3 — Beneath Circumstances

Scripture: Psalm 1:3

Key Truth

Our stability rests in being rooted in God Himself rather than in changing circumstances.

Devotional Reflection

The righteous are described as a tree planted by streams of water. Strength lies beneath what is visible. Psalm 1 reminds us that spiritual stability is grounded not in favorable conditions but in trust in God and His work. Meditation directs our attention toward His character so His truth becomes the ground from which we live. In Christ our standing is secure, allowing endurance beneath changing seasons.

Reflection Questions

1. Which circumstances most influence steadiness or discouragement?
2. How might returning to God's promises reshape our footing?

Prayer

Father, teach us to be rooted in You rather than governed by shifting conditions. Ground us in the grace secured in Christ so we may endure with confidence before You. Amen.

Day 4 — Meditation as a Bridge

Scripture: Psalm 1:1–2

Key Truth

Meditation forms a bridge between hearing God’s Word and speaking to Him in prayer.

Devotional Reflection

Psalm 1 begins not with prayer but with meditation, showing us how to listen carefully before we speak. Meditation presses truth into the heart so prayer flows from revelation rather than impulse. Lingering over God’s Word prepares us to respond with reverence. Christ modeled attentiveness to Scripture, and we follow His pattern by hearing and responding in faith.

Reflection Questions

1. How often do we move quickly from reading Scripture to prayer?
2. How might lingering reshape how we speak to God?

Prayer

Lord, teach us to listen carefully to Your Word before speaking to You. Shape our prayers by truth and draw us into deeper fellowship with You through Christ our mediator. Amen.

Day 5 — Pressing the Word Inward

Scripture: Psalm 1:2

Key Truth

Meditation moves God's Word from awareness into the inner life.

Devotional Reflection

Meditation presses truth inward so it shapes thought and response. By reflecting deeply, Scripture instructs relationships and affections. Questions guide this reflection, not to achieve righteousness but to live within grace secured by Christ. The Word forms us under His completed work.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do we engage Scripture superficially?
2. What questions help deepen reflection?

Prayer

Father, grant patience to dwell with Your Word. Let Your truth shape thoughts and desires through Christ who fulfills the Word for us. Amen.

Day 6 — Learning to Reflect

Scripture: Psalm 1:2

Key Truth

Meditation engages the mind thoughtfully with Scripture rather than emptying it.

Devotional Reflection

Christian meditation is attentive engagement with revelation. We reflect through questioning and conversation within the church, guarding against hurried familiarity. Because Christ has fulfilled the Word, we engage honestly and grow in wisdom through grace.

Reflection Questions

1. How can we give Scripture thoughtful attention?
2. How might shared reflection deepen understanding?

Prayer

Lord, train our minds to engage Your Word with care and reverence. Grant understanding shaped by Your Spirit that we may grow in wisdom through Christ. Amen.

Day 7 — The Law and the Cross

Scripture: Psalm 1:2; Romans 8:1

Key Truth

Meditation on God's law exposes our sin and leads us to rest in Christ who bore its judgment.

Devotional Reflection

Deep reflection on God's commands reveals our need. Scripture presses beyond conduct to motives, clarifying dependence on Christ. He fulfilled the law and bore judgment, so meditation leads not to despair but assurance. In Him we return to the Word as those already received by grace.

Reflection Questions

1. How does reflection reveal need for grace?
2. How does remembering Christ reshape response?

Prayer

Merciful God, when Your Word reveals sin, lead us to Christ who bore our judgment. Grant repentance joined with assurance and teach us to walk as those restored through Him. Amen.

Day 8 — Formed by the Word

Scripture: Psalm 119:1–8

Key Truth

God uses His Word to shape belief into a life of obedience and character.

Devotional Reflection

Scripture assumes that right belief does not automatically result in right living. We may confess true doctrines and still remain unchanged in our habits, reactions, and loves. Scripture calls us not only to hear God's Word, but to live under it. Belief must lead us into a life of growing obedience.

The Word of God is more than information; it is formative. It exposes, directs, and steadies us. As we submit to it, our lives are gradually aligned with God's ways. This is the slow work of His grace through His Word in those who belong to Him.

Christ alone walked blamelessly in God's law. Because we are accepted in Him, we return to Scripture not to earn blessing, but to be shaped by the God who has shown us mercy.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do we notice a gap between what we believe and how we live?
2. How might regular exposure to God's Word reshape our character?

Prayer

Faithful God, shape us through Your Word as those already accepted in Christ. Form our character by Your truth and lead us in growing obedience by Your grace. Amen.

Day 9 — All of It Is True

Scripture: Psalm 119:1, 151, 160

Key Truth

The authority of Scripture extends to all its parts because it is wholly true.

Devotional Reflection

“All your commandments are true” (Psalm 119:151), and “The sum of your word is truth” (Psalm 119:160). Scripture presents itself as binding revelation. Its authority extends to every part — poetry, history, command, and promise — because God has spoken.

We do not stand in judgment over the Word; the Word stands in judgment over us. Christ declared that not even the smallest letter would pass away (Matthew 5:18). Because He trusted and fulfilled the Scriptures, we receive them with reverence.

Reflection Questions

1. Are there portions of Scripture we are tempted to treat as less binding?
2. How does Christ’s submission to Scripture shape our posture toward it?

Prayer

God of truth, give us humility to receive all that You have spoken. Guard us from selecting only what is comfortable, and teach us to trust Your Word as wholly true. Amen.

Day 10 — True for Every Age

Scripture: Psalm 119:89, 152

Key Truth

God's Word stands above every culture because it endures forever.

Devotional Reflection

"Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens" (Psalm 119:89). "Long have I known from your testimonies that you have founded them forever" (Psalm 119:152). God's Word is not bound to one moment in history.

Every generation assumes it sees clearly. Yet history shows how easily cultures mistake their assumptions for truth. God's Word provides needed distance, standing above every age and speaking into every age. Christ trusted this enduring Word completely, even in suffering, and fulfilled it.

Reflection Questions

1. Where might our cultural assumptions influence how we read Scripture?
2. How does knowing that God's Word endures forever steady us?

Prayer

Eternal God, anchor us in Your enduring Word. Let it examine our assumptions and steady us in a shifting age through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 11 — Freedom Through Submission

Scripture: Psalm 119:45, 133

Key Truth

Submission to God's Word leads to true freedom rather than confinement.

Devotional Reflection

"I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts" (Psalm 119:45). Freedom flows from submission. "Let no iniquity get dominion over me" (Psalm 119:133). If God's Word does not rule us, something else will.

No one lives without authority; the question is not whether we submit, but to whom. When God's Word becomes our highest authority, competing masters lose their grip. Christ obeyed fully, and through Him we are freed from condemnation and invited into obedience that leads to life.

Reflection Questions

1. What pressures most easily rule our decisions?
2. How might submission to God's Word reshape our understanding of freedom?

Prayer

Lord, free us from lesser authorities and teach us to find true liberty in joyful submission to Your Word, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 12 — Authority and Relationship

Scripture: Psalm 119:2; John 17:17

Key Truth

We cannot have a true relationship with God apart from submitting to His revealed Word.

Devotional Reflection

“Blessed are those who seek him with their whole heart” (Psalm 119:2). Seeking God and keeping His testimonies belong together. If we accept only what aligns with our preferences, we create a god who never contradicts us. But a relationship without correction is not real.

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). God speaks through His Word, and through it our wills are crossed and reshaped. Because Christ bore the cost of our resistance, we receive Scripture as the living voice of the God who desires fellowship with us.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do we resist Scripture because it challenges us?
2. How does accepting its authority deepen our relationship with God?

Prayer

Faithful God, give us humility to receive Your Word fully, and through it draw us into real fellowship with You in Christ. Amen.

Day 13 — The Word Made Flesh

Scripture: John 1:1, 14

Key Truth

The authority of Scripture is inseparable from Christ, the Word made flesh.

Devotional Reflection

“In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God” (John 1:1). “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). God expresses Himself through what He has spoken, and supremely through His Son. The written Word and the incarnate Word are not in competition; Scripture bears witness to Christ, and Christ fulfills what it declares.

Our confidence in the Bible rests in Him. When we read, we encounter God’s self-disclosure that finds its center in Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. How does seeing Christ as the Word made flesh shape our reading?
2. Where do we need to look beyond the text to the Person it reveals?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, as we read the Scriptures, open our eyes to see You more clearly and root our trust in Your faithful obedience and saving work. Amen.

Day 14 — Obedience Secured for Us

Scripture: Matthew 26:39, 54; Hebrews 10:7; Psalm 119:130

Key Truth

We trust and obey God's Word because Christ obeyed it perfectly in our place.

Devotional Reflection

"Not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). Even in suffering, Jesus submitted to the Father's will. "How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?" (Matthew 26:54). "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7).

Because He fulfilled the law completely, we are freed from condemnation and do not approach Scripture as those trying to secure acceptance, but as those already accepted because of Christ's faithful obedience. "The unfolding of your words gives light" (Psalm 119:130). From that assurance we return to the Word with gratitude and trust.

Reflection Questions

1. How does Christ's obedience reshape our response to God's commands?
2. How does assurance in His finished work deepen our desire to engage Scripture?

Prayer

Gracious Father, we thank You that our salvation rests on Christ's obedience. Teach us to walk in the light of Your Word with gratitude and confidence in Him. Amen.

Day 15 — Walk by the Spirit

Scripture: Galatians 5:16

Key Truth

The Christian life advances not by self-effort, but by walking in dependence upon the Spirit.

Devotional Reflection

“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). The command comes first. The promise follows. The Christian life is not passive. It involves movement — walking.

To walk by the Spirit is not to wait for a sudden experience, but to live daily in conscious dependence upon the Spirit whom Christ has given. Walking suggests direction, consistency, and progress over time. It is not a sprint. It is not perfection. It is steady reliance.

The Spirit has been given because Christ died and rose. We do not walk to earn His help; we walk because He has already been given to us through Christ. Our obedience flows from grace.

Reflection Questions

1. In what areas are we tempted to rely on self-effort?
2. What might daily reliance on the Spirit look like in ordinary life?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, teach us to walk in dependence upon You. Guard us from self-reliance and lead us in steady obedience rooted in Christ’s finished work. Amen.

Day 16 — The Conflict Within

Scripture: Galatians 5:17

Key Truth

The ongoing struggle between flesh and Spirit is a normal part of the Christian life.

Devotional Reflection

“The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit” (Galatians 5:17). The Christian life is marked by opposition. The flesh refers not merely to the body, but to the old pattern of self-centered desire that remains even after we’re converted.

We want what honors God, yet feel the pull of what does not. That struggle is not proof of failure, but evidence that the Spirit is at work. Christ has secured the decisive victory over sin through His death and resurrection. The presence of conflict reminds us that sanctification unfolds over time.

Reflection Questions

1. How do we interpret spiritual struggle?
2. How does remembering Christ’s victory steady us?

Prayer

Father, in the midst of inner conflict, remind us that Your Spirit is at work within us. Help us trust the victory secured by Christ and continue walking in dependence upon You. Amen.

Day 17 — Led by the Spirit

Scripture: Galatians 5:18; 3:13

Key Truth

Those who are led by the Spirit are no longer under the law as a condemning authority.

Devotional Reflection

“If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (Galatians 5:18). To be under the law is to stand beneath it as a standard we must satisfy in order to be accepted. Under that arrangement, it condemns because we cannot keep it perfectly. But those who belong to Christ are no longer under it in that way.

Christ bore the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). We are already accepted. The Spirit leads us not away from obedience, but into it as the fruit of belonging to Him.

Reflection Questions

1. Do we still relate to God as though under condemnation?
2. How does knowing we are accepted reshape obedience?

Prayer

Gracious Father, thank You that through Christ we are no longer under condemnation. Teach us to live as those led by Your Spirit in grateful obedience. Amen.

Day 18 — The Works of the Flesh

Scripture: Galatians 5:19–21

Key Truth

The works of the flesh reveal the destructive fruit of a life governed by self rather than by the Spirit.

Devotional Reflection

“The works of the flesh are evident” (Galatians 5:19). The list is representative, not exhaustive. These works are visible expressions of a deeper problem — a heart turned inward on itself rather than outward toward God and others.

A life consistently governed by the flesh reveals allegiance to something other than Christ (Galatians 5:21). Yet Christ bore the judgment our flesh deserved. Where repentance is present, grace is active. The warning presses us toward dependence, not self-salvation.

Reflection Questions

1. Which works of the flesh most subtly influence us?
2. How does remembering Christ’s atoning work guard us from despair?

Prayer

Holy God, expose in us what does not reflect Your Spirit. Grant us repentance without despair and lead us again to the mercy secured in Christ. Amen.

Day 19 — The Fruit of the Spirit

Scripture: Galatians 5:22–23

Key Truth

The Spirit produces a unified pattern of Christlike character in those who belong to Him.

Devotional Reflection

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...” (Galatians 5:22–23). The word fruit is singular. The Spirit produces a unified character shaped by His presence.

Fruit grows from life within; it cannot be forced into existence. In the same way, these qualities arise from the Spirit’s indwelling presence and gradually appear as we walk by Him. Christ embodies this fruit perfectly, and the Spirit conforms us to His character over time.

Reflection Questions

1. Which aspects of the Spirit’s fruit seem underdeveloped?
2. How does remembering that fruit grows from life steady us?

Prayer

Spirit of God, form in us the character that reflects Christ. Guard us from striving in our own strength and cultivate Your fruit in us by grace. Amen.

Day 20 — Crucified with Christ

Scripture: Galatians 5:24

Key Truth

Those who belong to Christ have decisively broken with the rule of the flesh through union with Him.

Devotional Reflection

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh” (Galatians 5:24). To belong to Christ is to be united to Him in His death and resurrection. The flesh still resists, but it no longer rules as master.

This does not mean temptation disappears or struggle ends. It means the believer fights from a position of belonging, not uncertainty. The victory has already been won by Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. Do we live as though the flesh still reigns?
2. How does union with Christ reshape temptation?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank You that through Your cross the rule of sin has been broken. Teach us to live as those who belong to You and walk in the freedom You have secured. Amen.

Day 21 — Keep in Step with the Spirit

Scripture: Galatians 5:25–26

Key Truth

The Christian life requires ongoing attentiveness to the Spirit in personal and communal life.

Devotional Reflection

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). To keep in step suggests ordered movement — not hurried striving, but attentive alignment. We do not create spiritual life; we respond to the life already given as the Spirit sets the pace and we follow.

“Let us not become conceited” (Galatians 5:26). Life in the Spirit is not private. The evidence of His work appears in humility, patience, and love within the church. Christ walked humbly and gave Himself for His people. Because we live by His Spirit, we mirror that humility together.

Reflection Questions

1. How might pride disrupt our walk with the Spirit?
2. How does remembering that we already live by the Spirit shape our relationships?

Prayer

Spirit of God, teach us to keep in step with You. Guard us from pride and form in us humility and love that reflect Christ within His church. Amen.

Day 22 — Why Worship Is Necessary

Scripture: Psalm 95:1–2

Key Truth

Worship bridges the gap between what we believe and how we live.

Devotional Reflection

Psalm 95 calls us to sing, give thanks, bow down, and listen. These actions engage the whole person. Worship presses truth from the mind into the affections and will.

Through repeated practice, belief is formed into character. Without such formation, our lives drift into inconsistency. Worship is not an optional activity; it is one of the ways God shapes His people.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do we notice a gap between belief and conduct?
2. How might regular worship reshape our character?

Prayer

Lord, press Your truth deeply into our hearts and shape our character by Your grace.
Amen.

Day 23 — What Worship Is

Scripture: Psalm 95:3, 6–8

Key Truth

Worship is ascribing ultimate value to God with mind, heart, and will.

Devotional Reflection

Psalm 95 shows us a better hope. “For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (Psalm 95:3). Worship is the result of reflecting on who God is and what He has done. As we think about Him, our hearts respond.

True worship is not merely singing or listening. It is the mind considering God’s greatness, the heart responding with affection, and the will bowing in submission.

Reflection Questions

1. What do we treat as ultimately valuable?
2. Does our worship engage mind, heart, and will?

Prayer

Great God, engage our whole selves in worship and draw our hearts to Your greatness. Amen.

Day 24 — What We Already Worship

Scripture: Exodus 20:3; Psalm 95:3

Key Truth

All sin flows from giving ultimate value to something other than God.

Devotional Reflection

“You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). We rarely name idols openly. Instead, they quietly become necessities. We tell ourselves that if we lose them, we lose ourselves. When that belief settles in, our decisions begin to orbit around protecting or securing them.

Until our hearts are reordered, our behavior will not truly change. When God becomes our highest good, lesser gods lose their hold.

Reflection Questions

1. What do we most fear losing?
2. Where might misplaced worship be shaping our choices?

Prayer

Lord, reveal the lesser things that have taken Your place in our hearts and turn us back to You. Amen.

Day 25 — Worship Together

Scripture: Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7

Key Truth

Worship is practiced corporately because God is more fully known among His gathered people.

Devotional Reflection

“Let us sing... let us worship and bow down” (Psalm 95:1, 6). Worship is something God’s people do together. We are “the people of his pasture” (Psalm 95:7).

A finite person cannot be fully known in isolation. In corporate worship, others help us see aspects of God’s glory we might overlook. Corporate worship is not about preference or convenience. It is about formation.

Reflection Questions

1. How does gathering enlarge our understanding of God?
2. How might isolation diminish it?

Prayer

Shepherd of Your people, shape us together through worship and enlarge our vision of You. Amen.

Day 26 — The Order of Worship

Scripture: Psalm 95:1–8

Key Truth

Biblical worship follows an order that engages praise, confession, and listening.

Devotional Reflection

Worship is not random expression. There is an order. We begin by declaring who God is. We bow before Him. Then we listen for His voice.

This order trains the heart. As we rehearse God’s greatness, confess our need, and receive His Word, our lives are reshaped.

Reflection Questions

1. Which part of worship do we most easily neglect?
2. How does this order form us over time?

Prayer

Lord, order our worship according to Your Word and shape our hearts through it.
Amen.

Day 27 — Do Not Harden Your Hearts

Scripture: Psalm 95:7–11; Exodus 17:1–7

Key Truth

Worship requires a soft heart that listens rather than resists God's voice.

Devotional Reflection

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Psalm 95:7–8). The issue was not lack of evidence. It was hardness of heart.

Worship requires responsiveness. A hardened heart hears but does not yield. True worship includes humble attentiveness to God's voice.

Reflection Questions

1. Where might we be resisting what God says?
2. What would a softened heart look like?

Prayer

Lord, guard us from hardness of heart and grant us humility to listen and yield. Amen.

Day 28 — Entering His Rest

Scripture: Psalm 95:11; Hebrews 4:9–10; Isaiah 53:11

Key Truth

True worship flows from resting in the finished work of Christ.

Devotional Reflection

“There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9). We are burdened when we try to secure our worth through achievement. There is always more to prove.

Christ suffered and was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11). Because we are His treasured possession (1 Peter 2:9), we no longer worship to secure worth. We worship because we are accepted.

Reflection Questions

1. Where are we still striving to prove ourselves?
2. How does resting in Christ transform worship?

Prayer

Gracious Savior, free us from striving and teach us to worship from the assurance that we are accepted in You. Amen.

Day 29 — Why Community Matters

Scripture: Romans 12:9–10

Key Truth

Christian beliefs are formed into lived character through the practices of life together.

Devotional Reflection

Many people believe that God exists and that He loves them. Yet their lives often look no different from those around them. The beliefs of the Christian faith promise security, humility, and joy, but those qualities do not automatically appear just because we affirm certain truths.

Beliefs do not transform us by themselves. They transform us through practices that shape our lives over time. The New Testament repeatedly places those practices within the life of a community.

Christian community is one of the ways God presses the truths of the gospel into our lives. Through shared worship, mutual care, encouragement, and correction, belief is formed into character.

Reflection Questions

1. Where might we be attempting to live the Christian life without meaningful community?
2. How might shared practices within the church shape our character?

Prayer

Father, form us through the life of Your people and use our shared community to shape us into the likeness of Christ. Amen.

Day 30 — We Are a Family

Scripture: Romans 12:10

Key Truth

Through the saving grace of Christ, believers are joined together as a spiritual family.

Devotional Reflection

Paul writes, “Love one another with brotherly affection” (Romans 12:10). Christians are not merely members of an organization or participants in a shared activity. We are brothers and sisters.

In the ancient world, this idea was startling. Early Christians spoke of one another as family because everyone who had received the saving grace of God in Christ belonged to the same household.

Because we share the same Father and Savior, we are called to love one another with the affection of family.

Reflection Questions

1. How does thinking of the church as family change the way we view other believers?
2. In what ways might we still approach church relationships like a club rather than a family?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for bringing us into Your family through Christ. Teach us to love our brothers and sisters with genuine affection. Amen.

Day 31 — A Family That Does Not Choose Itself

Scripture: Romans 12:10

Key Truth

Christian love reflects a family bond that extends even to people we would not naturally choose.

Devotional Reflection

When Paul calls believers to love one another with brotherly affection, he describes a bond like the natural love found in a household.

Family love is not selective. We do not choose our brothers or sisters; they are simply given to us. Because of this, family relationships often unite people who might otherwise have little in common.

Christian community carries this same character. Through the grace of Christ, we are joined to people who differ from us in personality, background, and experience.

Reflection Questions

1. Are there people in the church we struggle to love because they are unlike us?
2. How might God use those relationships to shape our character?

Prayer

Father, teach us to love our brothers and sisters with patience and humility, reflecting the grace You have shown us in Christ. Amen.

Day 32 — Sharing Life Together

Scripture: Romans 12:9, 13

Key Truth

Christian community involves shared responsibility for one another's lives and needs.

Devotional Reflection

In many areas of life we relate to others like members of a club. We gather around a shared interest, but our lives remain largely separate.

Christian community is different. If believers truly are brothers and sisters, then our lives cannot remain entirely private.

Paul calls believers to “abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good” and to “contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality” (Romans 12:9,13). These commands assume a life of shared concern.

Such involvement requires humility and trust, but it is one way God strengthens His people.

Reflection Questions

1. Where might we resist the shared responsibility that comes with Christian community?
2. How can we grow in generosity and loving accountability?

Prayer

Lord, help us share our lives with one another in humility and grace, caring for the needs of our brothers and sisters. Amen.

Day 33 — Sharing Joys and Sorrows

Scripture: Romans 12:15

Key Truth

Christian community calls us to enter deeply into the joys and sorrows of one another's lives.

Devotional Reflection

Paul writes, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." These words describe the emotional life of Christian community.

Weeping with those who weep often comes naturally. Rejoicing with those who rejoice can be harder, especially when others receive blessings we desire for ourselves.

Christian love refuses to compete. Instead, it celebrates the good God gives to others and shares the burdens they carry.

This kind of involvement is costly, but it reflects the love of Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might rejoicing with others sometimes be difficult?
2. How can we grow in genuine participation in the lives of others?

Prayer

Lord, soften our hearts so we may truly rejoice and weep together in love. Amen.

Day 34 — A Community of Grace

Scripture: Romans 12:14,17–18

Key Truth

Christian community responds to hostility not with retaliation but with grace.

Devotional Reflection

Paul writes, “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.” Christian community is revealed not only in how believers treat one another but also in how they respond to opponents.

Christians hold firm convictions about truth, yet they are called to respond to disagreement and hostility with humility and respect.

The gospel frees believers from retaliation. Instead of seeking revenge, we seek peace and the good of others.

Reflection Questions

1. How do we tend to respond when others oppose our faith?
2. What might it look like to bless rather than retaliate?

Prayer

Lord, teach us to respond to hostility with grace and reflect the mercy You have shown us in Christ. Amen.

Day 35 — The Source of Our Community

Scripture: Hebrews 12:24; Mark 3:35

Key Truth

Christian community is made possible through the redeeming work of Christ.

Devotional Reflection

Scripture often tells the story of broken families, reminding us that human relationships cannot provide the perfect love our hearts long for.

Jesus announced a new family: “Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

Hebrews speaks of the blood of Christ that “speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” Abel’s blood cried out for justice; Christ’s blood speaks forgiveness and grace.

Christian community grows from the gospel. The love we share with our brothers and sisters flows from the love God has first shown to us in Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. How does remembering Christ’s sacrifice shape the way we view other believers?
2. How does the gospel free us to love others with patience and grace?

Prayer

Father, thank You for bringing us into Your family through Christ. Teach us to love one another as Christ has loved us. Amen.

Day 36 — Friendship as a Spiritual Discipline

Scripture: Galatians 5:26–6:2

Key Truth

Spiritual friendship is one of the ordinary ways God uses the church to shape our lives.

Devotional Reflection

Many Christians believe the truths of the gospel, yet they often find that those beliefs do not reshape their daily lives. We may affirm that God loves us and that Christ has redeemed us, yet our words and relationships sometimes remain unchanged.

Scripture teaches that God forms these truths deeply within us through practices that shape our lives. We have seen how reading Scripture, prayer, and the Lord's Supper help root the gospel in our hearts. Yet another practice is often overlooked: friendship among believers.

Jesus said to His disciples, "No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends" (John 15:15). Friendship in the church is not merely sentimental. It is one of the ways believers strengthen one another in faith.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might we think of friendship as optional rather than essential in the Christian life?
2. How might God use friendships within the church to shape our character?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for placing us among brothers and sisters who walk with us in the Christian life. Help us value spiritual friendship and care faithfully for one another. Amen.

Day 37 — Bearing One Another's Burdens

Scripture: Galatians 6:2

Key Truth

Spiritual friendship involves sharing burdens others cannot carry alone.

Devotional Reflection

Paul writes, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). The word burden describes a heavy weight someone must carry for a long distance.

Every believer carries burdens—struggles with sin, illness, grief, or hardship. These burdens can feel overwhelming when carried alone.

Christian friendship addresses this reality. God has not designed His people to endure hardship in isolation. Instead, believers come alongside one another and help carry the weight.

When we bear one another's burdens, we reflect the care Christ shows to His people.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might we hesitate to share our burdens with others in the church?
2. How might God be calling us to help carry the burdens of someone else?

Prayer

Father, teach us to care for one another with humility and compassion. Help us bear the burdens of our brothers and sisters in love. Amen.

Day 38 — Friendship That Stays

Scripture: Galatians 6:2; Proverbs 17:17

Key Truth

True friendship remains steady even when caring for others becomes costly.

Devotional Reflection

Proverbs says, “A friend loves at all times” (Proverbs 17:17). A true friend does not withdraw when circumstances become difficult.

Caring for another person’s burden may require emotional energy, time, or sacrifice. At times it means allowing another person’s hardship to affect us as well.

This steady presence is one of the ways God strengthens His people. Through patient friendship, believers remind one another that they are not alone.

Reflection Questions

1. Why can it be difficult to remain consistent in caring for others?
2. How might steady friendship strengthen someone carrying a heavy burden?

Prayer

Lord, give us hearts that remain faithful in caring for others. Teach us to love with patience and perseverance. Amen.

Day 39 — The Courage of Spiritual Friendship

Scripture: Galatians 6:1

Key Truth

Spiritual friendship includes the courage to restore a believer caught in sin.

Devotional Reflection

Paul writes, “If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness” (Galatians 6:1).

Paul does not encourage constant criticism. Scripture teaches that love is patient and willing to overlook many offenses (1 Peter 4:8; 1 Corinthians 13:5–7).

But when someone becomes trapped in a pattern of sin that harms themselves or others, loving friendship does not remain silent. It seeks restoration.

Such care requires courage and humility, seeking the good of another rather than avoiding discomfort.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might we hesitate to speak honestly when a friend is struggling?
2. How can humility shape difficult conversations?

Prayer

Father, give us wisdom and humility in our relationships. Help us seek restoration for our brothers and sisters with gentleness and love. Amen.

Day 40 — Friendship and Humility

Scripture: Galatians 6:1,3

Key Truth

True spiritual friendship requires humility that recognizes our own weakness.

Devotional Reflection

Paul warns believers, “Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted” (Galatians 6:1). He adds, “If anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself” (Galatians 6:3).

Pride produces harshness and judgment. But humility remembers that we depend on God’s grace just as much as others do.

When we approach others with humility, restoration becomes possible. Friendship then reflects the grace God continually shows to us.

Reflection Questions

1. How does pride make it difficult to help others who are struggling?
2. Why is humility essential for relationships that encourage spiritual growth?

Prayer

Lord, guard our hearts from pride and help us care for others with humility and gentleness. Amen.

Day 41 — The Barrier to Friendship

Scripture: Galatians 5:26; 6:3–4

Key Truth

The desire for approval and comparison can prevent honest friendship.

Devotional Reflection

Paul writes, “Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another” (Galatians 5:26). When we hunger for recognition, relationships become centered on ourselves.

Sometimes this produces pride. Other times it produces envy. Either way, comparison keeps us from caring for others freely.

When our identity rests in God’s grace rather than the approval of others, we are freed to love without rivalry or fear.

Reflection Questions

1. How can the desire for approval affect our friendships?
2. How does resting in God’s grace free us to care for others?

Prayer

Father, free us from comparison and pride. Help us rest in Your grace so we may love others with humility. Amen.

Day 42 — The Friend Who Bore Our Burdens

Scripture: Galatians 6:2; Isaiah 53:4–5; John 15:13

Key Truth

Christ's sacrifice is the foundation that makes true friendship possible.

Devotional Reflection

Paul calls believers to bear one another's burdens, but Jesus has already borne the greatest burden for us.

Isaiah writes, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... he was pierced for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:4–5). On the cross Christ carried the full weight of our sin.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Because Christ has borne our greatest burden, we are freed to help carry the burdens of others.

Reflection Questions

1. How does Christ's sacrifice shape the way we think about friendship?
2. How might remembering what Christ has done help us care for others?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for bearing the burden of our sin. Help us reflect Your love as we care for our brothers and sisters. Amen.

Day 43 — Forgiveness as a Practice of the Christian Community

Scripture: Matthew 18:15

Key Truth

Forgiveness is not merely a private feeling but a discipline that preserves the unity of Christ's people.

Devotional Reflection

Many people think of forgiveness as something quiet and internal—an emotional process that happens within the heart. But the Bible describes forgiveness differently. It presents forgiveness as a discipline practiced within the community of believers.

In Matthew 18, Jesus speaks about what to do when a relationship between believers has been damaged. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone” (Matthew 18:15). His instruction assumes that relationships among Christians matter deeply. When sin creates distance, believers are not meant to withdraw or ignore the problem. Instead, they move toward one another in pursuit of restoration.

Christians are not simply individuals who happen to attend the same gatherings. We are members of the same spiritual family. Because of this, the condition of our relationships matters.

Forgiveness, then, is not optional. It is part of the life believers share together. God intends for His people to pursue reconciliation rather than allowing wounds to quietly grow into lasting divisions.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might it be easier to avoid conflict rather than pursue reconciliation?
2. How does Jesus' instruction shape the way we think about relationships within the church?

Prayer

Father, thank You for placing us within a community of believers. Teach us to pursue peace and reconciliation with humility and patience. Help us reflect Your grace in the way we treat one another. Amen.

Day 44 — Why Forgiveness Is So Important

Scripture: Matthew 18:32–35

Key Truth

An unforgiving heart reveals that the grace of God has not yet taken root within us.

Devotional Reflection

At the end of the parable in Matthew 18, Jesus gives a warning that is difficult to ignore. The servant who refuses to forgive is judged by the king. Jesus concludes by saying, “So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:35).

Jesus is not saying that forgiveness earns salvation. Instead, He is showing that forgiveness reveals the condition of the heart.

In the parable, the servant had been forgiven an enormous debt. Yet when he encountered someone who owed him a small amount, he refused to show mercy. His actions revealed that the king’s mercy had never truly changed him.

In the same way, the gospel transforms the heart. When we recognize the depth of God’s grace toward us, it reshapes the way we respond to others. Forgiveness becomes a natural expression of the grace we have received.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the parable connect forgiveness with the condition of the heart?
2. Why does remembering God’s mercy toward us shape the way we treat others?

Prayer

Lord, help us understand the depth of Your mercy toward us. Let Your grace soften our hearts so that we may extend forgiveness to others. Amen.

Day 45 — The Debt We Have Been Forgiven

Scripture: Matthew 18:23–27

Key Truth

Forgiving others begins with recognizing the immeasurable grace God has shown to us.

Devotional Reflection

In Jesus' parable, a servant owes his king an enormous debt—ten thousand talents. The amount is intentionally overwhelming. It represents a sum so large that the servant could never repay it.

When the servant pleads for mercy, the king responds with compassion. Instead of demanding repayment, he cancels the debt entirely.

This moment reveals the heart of the gospel. Our sin creates a debt before God that we could never repay. Yet through Christ, God shows mercy and freely forgives.

The forgiven servant should have left that encounter deeply changed. Having received such extraordinary grace, we would expect him to become a person marked by compassion. Yet the story shows the opposite when he refuses to forgive someone else.

Reflection Questions

1. Why does Jesus describe the servant's debt as impossibly large?
2. How does remembering God's mercy reshape the way we respond to others?

Prayer

Father, remind us daily of the mercy You have shown us in Christ. Let that grace shape the way we respond to those who have wronged us. Amen.

Day 46 — Having Compassion on the One Who Hurt Us

Scripture: Matthew 18:27

Key Truth

Forgiveness begins when we learn to see the one who wronged us with compassion rather than superiority.

Devotional Reflection

The turning point in Jesus' parable comes when the king "took pity" on the servant (Matthew 18:27). This compassion moved the king to cancel the debt.

When we are hurt by someone, our natural instinct is the opposite. We focus on the differences between ourselves and the person who wronged us. We magnify their failure and minimize our own.

Forgiveness begins when we resist this instinct. Instead of viewing the other person as entirely different from ourselves, we remember that we share the same human weakness and dependence on God's grace.

Recognizing this truth softens our hearts. It does not excuse wrongdoing, but it allows compassion to replace pride.

Reflection Questions

1. Why does pride make forgiveness difficult?
2. How does remembering our own need for grace shape our response to others?

Prayer

Lord, guard our hearts from pride. Help us remember our own need for mercy so that we may show compassion to others. Amen.

Day 47 — Canceling the Debt

Scripture: Matthew 18:27

Key Truth

Forgiveness means absorbing the cost of the wrong rather than demanding repayment.

Devotional Reflection

When the king forgives the servant, he cancels the debt completely. The loss does not disappear; instead, the king absorbs it himself.

This illustrates the true nature of forgiveness. Whenever someone wrongs us, a real loss occurs. Something has been taken—trust, opportunity, reputation, or peace.

Because of this loss, we naturally feel that the person owes us something. We may try to collect that debt through anger, coldness, gossip, or retaliation.

Forgiveness chooses a different path. Instead of making the other person pay, we release the debt and entrust justice to God.

Reflection Questions

1. Why does forgiveness involve real personal cost?
2. How does understanding the nature of forgiveness reshape our expectations?

Prayer

Father, give us the strength to release the debts others owe us. Help us trust Your justice and walk in the freedom of forgiveness. Amen.

Day 48 — Granting Forgiveness Before We Feel It

Scripture: Mark 11:25

Key Truth

Forgiveness is first an act of the will, and over time the heart follows.

Devotional Reflection

One of the most difficult truths about forgiveness is that it often must be granted before it is fully felt.

Jesus teaches this when He says, “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone” (Mark 11:25). The command assumes that forgiveness begins with a decision.

Many people believe they must wait until anger fades before forgiving. But if we wait for our feelings to change first, forgiveness may never come.

Instead, forgiveness begins when we choose to release the offense and refuse to nurture resentment. Over time the heart begins to soften.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might waiting for our feelings make forgiveness difficult?
2. How can repeated choices of forgiveness reshape the heart?

Prayer

Lord, help us release resentment even when forgiveness feels difficult. Shape our hearts through obedience so that we may experience the freedom Your grace provides. Amen.

Day 49 — The Compassion of the King

Scripture: Matthew 18:27; Isaiah 53:4–5

Key Truth

We learn to forgive others when we remember the compassion Christ has shown to us.

Devotional Reflection

The compassion shown by the king in Jesus' parable points beyond the story itself. It reflects the heart of Christ.

On the cross, Jesus bore the full weight of our sin. Isaiah writes, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). He absorbed the debt we could never repay.

Through His sacrifice, the King became the Servant. He took upon Himself the judgment we deserved so that we might receive mercy.

When this truth settles deeply into the heart, it changes the way we see others. We begin to recognize that we live every moment by grace, and we are freed to show mercy to others.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the cross shape our understanding of forgiveness?
2. Why does remembering Christ's sacrifice help us forgive others?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for bearing our sin and canceling our debt. Help us remember Your mercy and extend that same grace to others. Amen.

Day 50 – Hospitality as a Christian Practice

Scripture

Hebrews 13:1–2

Key Truth

Christian hospitality is the practice of welcoming strangers because God has first welcomed us.

Devotional Reflection

When many people hear the word hospitality, they imagine entertaining guests, decorating homes, or preparing a carefully arranged meal. Yet the Bible uses the word in a much deeper way.

Hebrews 13 begins with a simple command: “Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.” The word translated hospitality literally means love for strangers. It describes an attitude and practice of welcoming those who do not yet belong.

In the early church, hospitality was not merely a social courtesy. It was a way of turning strangers into friends and, over time, into brothers and sisters in Christ.

This means hospitality is not primarily about personality or preference. It is not reserved for those who are naturally outgoing or those who enjoy hosting. It is a command rooted in the very nature of the gospel. To belong to Christ is to become a person who makes room for others.

When hospitality is practiced in this way, it becomes more than an event—it becomes a posture. It reshapes how we see people, not as interruptions or inconveniences, but as those whom God may be drawing into fellowship.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might we think of hospitality as optional rather than essential?
2. Who in your life might feel like a stranger who needs welcome?

Prayer

Father, thank You for welcoming us through Your grace. Help us open our lives and homes to others. Amen.

Day 51 – The Gospel Principle Behind Hospitality

Scripture

Hebrews 13:3–5

Key Truth

The gospel reshapes how we view what we possess. Our lives and resources are gifts meant to bless others.

Devotional Reflection

Hebrews 13 places several instructions side by side: care for the mistreated, honor marriage, and live free from the love of money. At first these commands may seem unrelated, but together they reveal an important principle.

The gospel changes how we think about ownership. Modern culture often teaches that our resources exist primarily for personal fulfillment. Scripture teaches that everything we have ultimately belongs to God.

When believers practice hospitality, they are living out that truth. Homes, meals, time, and resources become instruments through which God builds community.

This reorientation is not natural to us. We tend to think in terms of control and security —what we have, we want to protect. But the gospel reminds us that our security is not found in what we hold, but in the God who provides.

As that truth takes hold, generosity begins to replace anxiety. Hospitality becomes less about what we might lose and more about what God might do through what we are willing to share.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the gospel challenge the idea that our possessions belong solely to us?
2. In what ways could your resources become tools for building community?

Prayer

Lord, teach us to hold our possessions with open hands and to use them for the good of others. Amen.

Day 52 – Loving the Stranger

Scripture

Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 18

Key Truth

Hospitality intentionally welcomes those who are unfamiliar or different.

Devotional Reflection

Hebrews tells believers not to neglect hospitality because some have entertained angels without knowing it. This refers to Abraham welcoming three strangers in Genesis 18. Only later did he discover they were messengers from God.

The point is not that believers should expect to meet angels, but that God often works through simple acts of kindness toward strangers.

Hospitality moves us beyond our usual circles. It invites us to notice those who feel unseen or excluded.

This requires intentionality. Left to ourselves, we gravitate toward what is familiar—people like us, conversations that are easy, relationships that are already established. Hospitality pushes against that instinct.

In doing so, it reflects the heart of God. He does not remain distant from those who are far off. He moves toward them. And when we do the same, we become participants in that same pattern of grace.

Reflection Questions

1. Why can it be difficult to welcome those who are unfamiliar?
2. How might God work through simple acts of kindness toward strangers?

Prayer

Father, give us eyes to notice those on the margins and hearts ready to welcome them. Amen.

Day 53 – Remembering God’s Hospitality

Scripture

Deuteronomy 10:17–19

Key Truth

We welcome strangers because God first welcomed us.

Devotional Reflection

God commanded Israel to love the stranger because they themselves had once been strangers in Egypt. Their own story of rescue shaped their responsibility toward others.

Christians share a similar story. Through Christ we were brought near to God when we were far away.

We who were once outsiders have been welcomed into God’s household.

This remembrance is not meant to be occasional—it is meant to shape our identity. The more clearly we see what God has done for us, the more naturally we begin to reflect that same grace to others.

Forgetting this leads to pride or indifference. Remembering it produces humility and compassion. Hospitality flows most naturally from hearts that are deeply aware of the mercy they have received.

Reflection Questions

1. How does remembering God’s mercy toward you shape the way you treat others?
2. Why is gratitude a powerful motivation for hospitality?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for receiving us when we were far from You. Help us extend that same grace to others. Amen.

Day 54 – Hospitality in Ordinary Life

Scripture

Hebrews 13:2; Luke 24:28–32

Key Truth

God often works through simple acts of welcome.

Devotional Reflection

Hospitality rarely appears dramatic. Often it happens through simple moments—sharing a meal, listening to someone’s story, or inviting someone into conversation.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus invited a stranger to stay with them. Only later did they realize the stranger was the risen Christ.

God frequently works through ordinary acts of kindness.

This reminds us that we do not need extraordinary circumstances to practice hospitality. We do not need perfect homes, elaborate plans, or ideal conditions. What is required is a willingness to make room.

Over time, these small acts accumulate. Conversations deepen. Relationships form. And through these ordinary means, God accomplishes something far greater than we might initially see.

Reflection Questions

1. Why might small acts of hospitality have great spiritual impact?
2. How can everyday moments become opportunities for welcome?

Prayer

Father, help us see ordinary moments as opportunities to reflect Your kindness. Amen.

Day 55 – Christ Cast Out for Us

Scripture

Hebrews 13:12–13

Key Truth

Jesus was cast out so that we might be welcomed into God’s family.

Devotional Reflection

Hebrews reminds us that Jesus suffered outside the gate. In ancient cities, to be outside the gate meant exclusion.

Jesus experienced that rejection on the cross. He bore the exile that our sin deserved so that we could be brought near to God.

The cross is not only about forgiveness—it is about restoration. Those who were once distant are now brought near. Those who were outside are now welcomed in.

This has profound implications for how we live. If Christ has welcomed us at such cost, then we cannot treat others with distance or indifference. Hospitality becomes a reflection of the cross itself.

Reflection Questions

1. What does Christ’s rejection reveal about God’s love?
2. How does remembering the cross shape the way we treat others?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for bearing rejection so that we could be welcomed. Help us reflect Your grace. Amen.

Day 56 – The City That Is to Come

Scripture

Hebrews 13:14

Key Truth

Because our true home is the city God is preparing, we are free to live generously now.

Devotional Reflection

Hebrews reminds believers that this world is not our lasting city. We are waiting for the city that God is preparing.

That future hope frees us to live generously. Hospitality becomes a small preview of the welcome that awaits God's people in His kingdom.

When we hold too tightly to this world, we become guarded and protective. But when we remember that our true home is secure, we are freed to open our lives to others.

In that sense, hospitality is not only about the present—it is about the future. It points forward to the day when God will gather His people fully and finally into His presence.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the hope of God's kingdom shape your priorities today?
2. How can hospitality point others toward the coming kingdom?

Prayer

Father, thank You for the home You are preparing. Help us live with hope and generosity. Amen.

Dear Church Family,

If you have worked through these readings, you have spent several weeks reflecting on the practices that shape the Christian life.

We have considered prayer, worship, obedience, forgiveness, friendship, community, and hospitality. Each of these practices reminds us that the Christian life is not only about what we believe but also about how those beliefs shape the way we live.

The goal of spiritual disciplines is not perfection. The goal is transformation.

God uses ordinary practices—reading Scripture, praying, serving others, welcoming strangers, forgiving those who wrong us—to reshape our hearts over time. Through these practices the gospel moves deeper into our lives.

You may have discovered areas where you need to grow. You may also have experienced moments where God used His Word to encourage or strengthen you. Both are part of the work God is doing in His people.

Most importantly, these practices continually point us back to Christ.

Every discipline ultimately reminds us that Jesus has done for us what we could never do for ourselves. He welcomed us when we were strangers, forgave us when we were guilty, and brought us into the household of God.

Because of Him, we now live as people who belong to a new kingdom.

My prayer is that the truths in this guide will continue to shape your life long after the readings are finished. May God help us become a church marked by love, humility, generosity, and faithful obedience.

And may everything we do point others to the grace of Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace,

Chris Ruwaldt