



Daily Devotions

Monday January 7 to Sunday February 10

Spend about 15 minutes each day with God doing that day's study. Focus on the questions that are most important to you. Don't worry if you don't answer all the questions. The important thing is that you meet with the Lord and that He helps you grow in your relationship with Him.

As you read each day's Bible passage:



READ. Pray before you read, asking God to speak to you. Read slowly through the passage.



REFLECT. What is God saying to you? Is God asking you to:

- Trust His promise?
- Receive His encouragement?
- Obey His command?
- Stop a bad habit?
- Serve another person?

In a few sentences write what you think God is saying to you.



RESPOND

Write a short prayer to God thanking Him for ministering to you through this passage and expressing what you will do in response.

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach² until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen.³ After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.⁴ On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about.⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

⁶ Then they gathered around Him and asked Him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority.⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹ After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.”

¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.¹³ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)¹⁶ and said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.¹⁷ He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.”

¹⁸ (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.¹⁹ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰ “For,” said Peter, “it is written in the Book of Psalms: “‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’ and, “‘May another take his place of leadership.’

²¹ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us,²² beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

²³ So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

²⁴ Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.”²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Christ calls us to usher His kingdom into the world by being His witnesses in the power of His Holy Spirit. The key to reaching people for Christ is urgent united prayer.

1. What did Jesus do for His disciples in verses 1-5? Why was this important? Why was it necessary for Jesus to stop giving direct instructions to His disciples and ascend to be with His Father in heaven?
2. According to verses 6-8, explain in your own words what the disciples' role would be in building God's kingdom. What does it mean to be Christ's witness? What encouragement does Jesus give them for building God's kingdom?
3. How does verse 8 apply to you? What are some of the attitudes, priorities, or actions that this verse suggests for your life?
4. The apostles and others in the young church all gave themselves single-heartedly to prayer (verse 14). What do you think drove them to intense prayer at this time? What is the Lord saying to you through this passage about what He wants to do in your prayer life for the salvation of lost family and friends?
5. Considering the mission that Jesus had given His disciples (verses 4-8), what do you think that the first Christians prayed for in the upstairs room (verse 14). Pray your own similar prayer regarding Christ's mission for you in building His kingdom.

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was.

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for Him, ³⁷ and when they found Him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for You!"

³⁸ Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

1. What role do you think that Jesus' time in prayer played in His daily ministry?
2. What do you think that Jesus prayed for?
3. What does passage say about Jesus' authority?
4. In what ways can our prayer affect how Jesus uses His authority in our friends' lives?
5. Take time to be alone with Jesus and ask Him to use His authority to heal your friends spiritually and emotionally. Ask the Lord to free them from bondage to demonic powers.

17 After Jesus said this, He looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You. ² For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those You have given Him.

³ Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. ⁴ I have brought You glory on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began.

⁶ “I have revealed You to those whom You gave me out of the world. They were Yours; You gave them to Me and they have obeyed Your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. ⁸ For I gave them the words You gave Me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰ All I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine. And glory has come to Me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name, the name You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one.

¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name You gave Me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ “I am coming to You now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of My joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify Myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. ²² I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one—²³ I in them and You in Me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me. ²⁶ I have made You known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them.”

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from Him anything we ask, because we keep His commands and do what pleases Him. ²³ And this is His command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us.

1. According to this passage, what things do we need to do in order for God to answer our prayers? Why are these things important?
2. Ask God to show you how well you are doing at fulfilling these requirements for answered prayer.
3. Talk with God in prayer about what you will do to improve at fulfilling these requirements for answered prayer.
4. Pray for the two friends on your list that the Lord would draw them to Himself and use you as He desires as part of that. Jot down ideas that God is giving you as to how He would like you to serve them.

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "You made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against His anointed one. ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed. ²⁸ They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable Your servants to speak Your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

1. What motivated the disciples' prayer?
2. What does the Lord want you to do about your motivation to pray for lost neighbours and work mates / schoolmates?
3. In this passage, for what do the disciples pray? Why is it important to pray for these things?
4. Learning from the disciples' motivation and prayer requests, take time to pray for the two friends on your list.

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

1. What blessings is Paul praying for in this prayer? How would these blessings improve a person's life?
2. How have you experienced these blessings in your life? Thank the Lord for that.
3. In prayer thank God for using people to pray for God's blessings in your life.
4. Pray this prayer slowly and sincerely for one of your friends that you would like to know Christ.

Monday January 14 Show your friend how much God loves them 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1. Before you became a Christian, what role did the love you experienced from Christian family members and friends play in helping you to decide to follow Christ?

2. Describe each aspect of love in verses 4-7. Why do we need to experience this aspect of love from God and from people?

3. Where are you the strongest in giving these different aspects of love? Thank the Lord for helping you to grow in love these ways.

4. Ask the Lord to show you where you need to grow in love. Commit to work at these aspects of love with God's help.

⁵ As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”

³⁸ He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

³⁹ Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to Him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹ “What do you want Me to do for you?”

“Lord, I want to see,” he replied.

⁴² Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” ⁴³ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

1. What do you learn from the way that Jesus listened to people?
2. Who is a person who listens well to you? Why would you say they listen well?
3. Ask God to bring to mind a person that He would like you to listen to more carefully.
4. How well do you know that person’s worries, dreams, and needs?
5. Talk with the Lord about what you will do to listen to their worries, dreams, and needs.

¹⁷ Three days later Paul called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. ¹⁸ They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death.

¹⁹ The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. ²⁰ For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

²¹ They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. ²² But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.”

²³ They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. ²⁴ Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. ²⁵ They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

²⁶ “Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.” ²⁷ For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

²⁸ “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”

³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. ³¹ He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

1. According to Paul in verses 25-28, what can keep people from really listening to God?
2. How well would God say that you listen to Him? Why is that?
3. What are the biggest barriers that really keep you from listening to people?
4. How could learning to listen to God better help you to learn to listen to other people better?
5. Talk with God about how you will improve at listening to Him and to people.

- ¹ *In You, LORD my God, I put my trust.*
- ² *I trust in Y; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.*
- ³ *No one who hopes in You will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.*
- ⁴ *Show me Your ways, LORD, teach me Your paths.*
- ⁵ *Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long.*
- ⁶ *Remember, LORD, Your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.*
- ⁷ *Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to Your love remember me, for You, LORD, are good.*
- ⁸ *Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in His ways.*
- ⁹ *He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way.*
- ¹⁰ *All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of His covenant.*
- ¹¹ *For the sake of your name, LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.*
- ¹² *Who, then, are those who fear the LORD? He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.*
- ¹³ *They will spend their days in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the land.*
- ¹⁴ *The LORD confides in those who fear Him; He makes His covenant known to them.*
- ¹⁵ *My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only He will release my feet from the snare.*
- ¹⁶ *Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.*
- ¹⁷ *Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish.*
- ¹⁸ *Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins.*
- ¹⁹ *See how numerous are my enemies and how fiercely they hate me!*
- ²⁰ *Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in You.*
- ²¹ *May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, LORD is in You.*
- ²² *Deliver Israel, O God, from all their troubles!*

1. What needs does David express in the Psalm?
2. Which of these needs have you had in your life? How did God minister to them? Thank the Lord for serving those needs.
3. Think about one of your two friends on your list. Which of David's needs do they have? What other needs do they have?
4. Pray to God asking Him to minister to your friend's needs. Ask the Lord to show you how you can empathize with your friend and serve their needs.

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

1. What is James teaching us about genuine faith? Why is this so important for faith to be genuine?
2. Think about a friend on your list who has a serious need. Put yourself in their shoes. What help would you like to receive from other people. Brainstorm all the ways that someone could help you if you were in your friend's situation.
3. Ask God in prayer to show you which one of the ways of helping which you brainstormed in question # 2 above that He would like you to act upon for your friend. Work at that with God's enabling power.

Jesus said,

⁷ *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

⁹ *“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! ¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”*

1. How can Jesus' instruction in verse 12 help us to listen to others better?
2. Ask God in prayer to help you to listen this way today.
3. Most people are driven to meet their needs in life. Many people do not realize that the Lord wants to meet our deepest needs through a personal friendship with Him. Think about your deepest needs for a moment. How does Jesus' counsel in verses 7-11 encourage you as you consider your unmet needs? Take a few moments to follow His advice in these verses.
4. Think about one of your friends on your list. What deep needs do they have? Pray that the Lord would show them His desire to meet those needs. Ask the Lord to enable you to listen to their needs; share your empathy; and serve those needs as God guides you.

4 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am He."

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

⁹ "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

¹⁰ He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there."

¹³ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ When the hour came, Jesus and His apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷ After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

¹⁹ And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you."

1. What do you suppose that it meant to the disciples to eat the Last Supper with Jesus? Why?
2. What can sharing a meal with unbelieving friends mean to them?
3. How could eating a meal with your neighbour give them a taste of Jesus?
4. How can you be more intentional about sharing meals with your neighbours and workmates? Talk with the Lord about what you would like to do about this.

³¹ When Judas was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him. ³² If God is glorified in Him, God will glorify the Son in Himself, and will glorify Him at once.

³³ "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for Me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."

³⁶ Simon Peter asked Him, "Lord, where are You going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

³⁷ Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You."

³⁸ Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for Me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times!

1. What new command does Jesus give here (verses 34-35)? What is the motivation for this command? Thank Christ for ways that He has loved you in your life.
2. Why is our obedience to this command important to God? To our neighbour? To us?
3. What are some of the barriers that keep you from eating with people for the purpose of building relationships? What are the reasons for these barriers?
4. How can you overcome these barriers? Talk with God in prayer about the specific steps that you will take to overcome the barriers to eating with neighbours.

³ We know that we have come to know Jesus Christ if we keep His commands. ⁴ Whoever says, "I know Him," but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.

⁵ But if anyone obeys His word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in Him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did.

⁷ Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. ⁸ Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

⁹ Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.

¹⁰ Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. ¹¹ But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

1. What are four benefits that come to us when we obey Christ (verses 3-6)?
2. Talk with the Lord about how you plan to enjoy these benefits more.
3. What command is John emphasizing in verses 7-11?
4. Think about one of the two people on your list. What would it mean to really love them as a brother or sister in God's family?
5. Talk with the Lord in prayer about practical ways you will love them this week.

9 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see Him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed Him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

1. How do you suppose Zacchaeus felt when Jesus came to his home for dinner?
2. Why do you suppose that Zacchaeus says what he does in verse 8?
3. How could the act of eating a meal with a Christian friend help an unbeliever see themselves as God does? How could it help them to see their need for God?
4. Plan to eat with one of the people on your list. Pray that the Lord would use your friendship and the meal to help your friend see Christ in you and their need for Christ.

¹⁵ *When one of those at the table with Jesus heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”*

¹⁶ *Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’*

¹⁸ *“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’*

¹⁹ *“Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’*

²⁰ *“Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’*

²¹ *“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’*

²² *“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’*

²³ *“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”*

1. What is Jesus teaching here about the Kingdom of God?
2. How could inviting a neighbour or workmate to eat with you give that person a foretaste of God’s kingdom?
3. Who are the forgotten people in your life that could be similar to those Jesus mentions in verse 21? How could these people be affected if you invited them to eat with you? Why?
4. What is God saying to you through today’s study? How will you respond?

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: ² "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, ³ and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴ "The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. ⁵ They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. ⁶ And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. ⁷ This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. ⁸ Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

⁹ "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

¹² "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

¹⁵ "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

" 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. ¹⁶ 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

¹⁹ "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. ²⁰ First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. ²¹ That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. ²² But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— ²³ that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

²⁴ At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

²⁵ "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. ²⁶ The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

²⁹ Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

³⁰ The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. ³¹ After they left the room, they began saying to one another, “This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment.”

³² Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

Paul shares with Agrippa and Festus the story of how Jesus Christ changed his life. Paul shares:

- What his life was like before he trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord (verses 1-11).
 - How he came to accept Christ and gave Him complete control of his life (verses 12-19).
 - What happened after he trusted Christ (verses 20-32).
1. What was Paul’s life like before he trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord (verses 1-11)?
 - What were Paul’s attitudes, needs and problems?
 - What did Paul’s life revolve around? What was most important to Paul?
 - Where did Paul look for security, peace of mind and happiness?
 2. How did Paul come to accept Christ and give Him complete control of his life (verses 12-19).
 3. What happened after Paul trusted Christ (verses 20-32)
 - What changes do you see in Paul’s attitudes?
 - What changes do you see in Paul’s goals and actions?

Wednesday January 30 Share how Christ can improve your friend's life John 8:1-11

¹ *Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.*

² *At dawn He appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around Him, and He sat down to teach them.* ³ *The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group* ⁴ *and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.* ⁵ *In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do You say?"* ⁶ *They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing Him.*

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with His finger. ⁷ *When they kept on questioning Him, He straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."* ⁸ *Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

⁹ *At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.* ¹⁰ *Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"*

¹¹ *"No one, sir," she said.*

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

1. What needs of the woman did Jesus meet through the way that He served her?
2. What can you learn from Jesus in this?
3. Who do you know that has made a mistake? How are they affected by their mistake? What do they need?
4. Ask God to show you how He wants you to serve them. What are some practical ways that you can show them God's compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance?
5. Share with them how Christ ministered to you when you made a mistake.

13 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸ "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹ "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

1. Why do you think that Jesus acted out this teaching rather than just simply preach it?
2. What is Jesus saying to you personally through this passage?
3. Who are some of the best "servants" you've met in your life?
4. What can you learn from them?
5. Talk with the Lord about what you will do with what He is teaching you in today's study.

24 Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

² Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. ³ But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac, ⁴ and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt.

⁵ "Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out. ⁶ When I brought your people out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea. ⁷ But they cried to the LORD for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time.

⁸ "I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land. ⁹ When Balak son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam son of Beor to put a curse on you. ¹⁰ But I would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand.

¹¹ "Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands. ¹² I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. ¹³ So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.'

¹⁴ "Now fear the LORD and serve Him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

¹⁶ Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! ¹⁷ It was the LORD our God Himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because He is our God."

¹⁹ Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, He will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you. He has been good to you."

²¹ But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the LORD."

²² Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD." "Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.

²³ “Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God and obey Him.”

²⁵ On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. ²⁶ And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.

²⁷ “See!” he said to all the people. “This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.”

²⁸ Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance.

1. According to this passage, how did the Lord serve His people (verses 1-13)?
2. How has God served you? Thank Him for what that means to you.
3. According to this passage, how does the Lord want His people to respond to the way that He serves us (verses 14-28)? Why?
4. Talk with God about the connection between your serving and your relationship with God and your spiritual growth.
5. How are serving God and serving others in your life connected to each other? How will this affect how you will live from now on?

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.

1. How does God want us to serve our families (verses 1-4)? Why?
2. Talk with God about how He would like you to serve your family.
3. How does God want us to serve in the workplace (verses 5-9)? Why?
4. What are the biggest barriers that keep you from serving other people?
5. Talk with the Lord about how you can overcome these obstacles with His help.

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. ² As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵ But they will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. ⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1. What motivation to serve does God give us in this passage? What motivates you the most?
2. In what ways does the Lord urge us to serve (verses 7-11)?
3. Think about one of the people on your list. In what practical ways listed in verses 7-11 is God leading you to serve that friend this week? Commit in prayer to serve them that way in the power of Christ's Spirit.

Monday February 4 Share how your friend can know your best Friend, Jesus Acts 2:14-36

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him. ²⁵ David said about Him: “‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope,

²⁷ because You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, You will not let your holy one see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence.’

²⁹ “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that He was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did His body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.””

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

In the first part of Acts chapter 2, the Holy Spirit came with a visible manifestation on Pentecost so that the disciples would know that the invisible Holy Spirit had come as Jesus had promised. A crowd of God-worshippers gathered to hear what this supernatural event was all about. In Acts 2:14-36, Peter’s message leads many people to trust in Christ.

1. How does Peter's use of Joel's prophecy (verses 14-21) explain:

- What was happening and who was behind it?
- What God wants to do by His Holy Spirit?
- What people need to do in order to live in God's kingdom?

2. What is Peter teaching the people about Jesus? Why are these things important?

verse 22

verse 23

verse 24

verses 25-28

verse 32

verse 33

verse 36

3. How could you use the insights from this passage to explain to a friend who Jesus is and how He can improve our lives?

Tuesday February 5 Share how your friend can know your best Friend, Jesus Acts 2:37-41

³⁷ *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”*

³⁸ *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

⁴⁰ *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

1. What does verse 37 indicate about how the listeners were affected by Peter’s message? Why do you suppose that they were affected that way?
2. What is Peter encouraging his listeners to do? Why is it important that they do these things?
3. What will happen if Peter’s listeners do what he encourages them to do? How could that impact their lives?
4. How do verses 40-41 affect your desire to share your faith with your friends?
5. Pray that the Lord would work in your friends’ hearts when you share with them how a friendship with Christ can make their life better, both now and forever.

¹¹ While the crippled man who had been healed held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus. You handed Him over to be killed, and you disowned Him before Pilate, though he had decided to let Him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised Him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him that has completely healed Him, as you can all see. ¹⁷ "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what He had foretold through all the prophets, saying that His Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must receive Him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets. ²² For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything He tells you. ²³ Anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from their people.' ²⁴ "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. ²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' ²⁶ When God raised up His servant, He sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

In Acts chapter 3 verses 1-10, the Lord worked through Peter's prayer to heal a crippled beggar. In verses 11-26, Peter explains the good news about how people can have eternal life with Christ.

1. Explain what Peter says about Jesus in these verses and its significance to our salvation:

- Verse 13
- Verse 14
- Verse 15
- Verse 16
- Verse 18
- Verse 21
- Verse 22-23

- Verse 24-26
2. What does Peter say to his audience about their spiritual condition and the consequences they face:
 - verse 14?
 - verse 15?
 - verses 22-23?
 3. Describe what Peter says they need to do in order to avoid the consequences of their spiritual condition:
 - Verse 16
 - Verse 19
 - Verse 23
 - Verse 26
 4. Using your answers from the previous three questions, how could you share with your friend our spiritual need and how Jesus can satisfy our spiritual need.
 5. Share those insights in your answer to question # 4 above with an unbelieving friend who is interested in knowing if there is life after death.

Friday February 8 Share how your friend can know your best Friend, Jesus Acts 8:26-40

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Candace (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth.

³³ In His humiliation He was deprived of justice. Who can speak of His descendants? For His life was taken from the earth.”

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

In Acts 8:1-25, the Jerusalem church was persecuted and scattered. The Christian witness expanded to a greater area as Christ had predicted in Acts 1. Philip went to Samaria, where in Christ’s name he performed miracles and spoke convincingly about Christ so that many people believed.

In Acts 8:26-40, the Holy Spirit guides Philip to share the good news of Christ with a non-Jew who is searching for the truth.

{Note: The first non-Jew to come to faith and baptism in Acts is a black man from Africa. The Ethiopian eunuch was chief finance minister to the queen Candace. It is virtually impossible that he was Jewish or a proselyte to Judaism. He was an outsider to the Jewish system, but there was something about the Jewish God and the Jewish way of life that attracted him}.

1. How does God guide Philip in the process of sharing the gospel with the Ethiopian eunuch?

- Verse 26
- Verse 27
- Verse 28
- Verse 29
- Verses 30-31
- Verse 35

2. How is God guiding the eunuch to Christ?

- Verse 27
- Verse 28
- Verses 30- 31
- Verses 32-34
- Verse 35
- Verse 36

3. What is the outcome of the conversation in the chariot (verses 36-40)? Why?

4. Do you know anyone who is searching for truth about how to live a better life? How do they show that they are searching for and perhaps are even open to God? Pray that the Lord would guide that person to Christ. Ask God to guide you in sharing your faith and the gospel with them.

Saturday February 9 Share how your friend can know your best Friend, Jesus Acts 9:1-19

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?"

⁵ "Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is My chosen instrument to proclaim My name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for My name."

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Christ converts a persecutor of Christians into a Christian.

1. Saul of Tarsus had been an active and approving witness to the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1). He was a highly intelligent, superbly educated, supremely biblically literate young man. Put yourself in the place of Saul on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians (verses 1-2). What shocking things do you see and hear (verses 3-6)? How would you feel?

²⁴ The following day Peter arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

³⁰ Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him.

³⁹ “We are witnesses of everything He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter witnesses Christ saving Gentiles by faith in the good news.

1. Peter's speech to this Gentile household differed in several ways from what he said to Jewish audiences. What key points did he make in verses 34-43?
2. What happened in the middle of Peter's speech (verses 44-46). What did this signify? Why were Peter's fellow Jewish believers astonished? Why was it necessary to baptize the Gentiles in water in addition to their experience (verses 47-48)?
3. Write out your presentation of the gospel for people who aren't Christian based upon Peter's points in his message.
4. Ask God to open your eyes and your heart where you have been closed to outsiders. Pray that you will see people as God sees them, as beloved by God and in need of the gospel. This week, share with a person in your life who is not a Christian the gospel that you wrote down in question # 3 above.