



ROOTS

A 12 Week Bible Study for DEEPER DISCIPLESHIP in JESUS

INTRODUCTION

“...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” **Eph. 3:17-19 (ESV)**

Just as every young plant needs to find its nourishment and a foundation for growth through a root system, so do Christ followers. After we have made the choice to follow Christ, trusting Him to forgive our sin and give us a new life, we need to be nourished in the truth of God’s Word and grow as disciples whose foundation is in Christ. This foundation will provide an understanding of what the Bible teaches about who God is and will give us structure or a template for how we should live our lives.

Each week’s study will be taken from Jesus’ teaching on how to live a life that honors God, as well as the teaching of the apostles to early church believers. They called this understanding of who God is the Proclamation, or the *Kerygma* (in Greek) and the Teaching, or the *Didache* (in Greek). Their intent and ours, is that every believer in Jesus should be established in the faith through these truths.

It’s important to understand, that information about God alone is not enough for us to be disciples of Jesus. We should have an understanding that leads to obedient wisdom. Please take seriously this study about knowing Jesus and His way and seek to live your life in a way that aligns with what the Bible teaches us as followers of Christ.

Our prayer is that this study will give you the Biblical foundation you need for a dynamic life in Christ for the rest of your life. From here, you can build upon your knowledge of God and His story to an even deeper knowledge of the truth of God. May your faith in Jesus and His Word grow deep into the “good soil” of your heart and life and produce 100x over for His glory. (Luke 8:8)



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Kerygma - (The Proclamation) - We Believe:

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- Wk 2 - The Gospel of Jesus was prophesied in the Scriptures and realized in His incarnational reality, life, death and resurrection. He is seated at the right hand of the Father.
- Wk 3 - Mankind has fallen short of God's glory and is in need of salvation for life and eternity. Jesus is our only hope, the only way to salvation and our perfect, holy sacrifice.
- Wk 4 - Belief in this Gospel, confession and repentance gives us forgiveness of sin. The Holy Spirit indwells and seals us, giving us the power to live a life in Christ.
- Wk 5 - Christ will come again to make all things right, to judge and recreate the earth.

Didache - (The Teaching) - We Believe:

- Wk 6 - Each believer is a transformed disciple instructed to turn in repentance from his old life, to the life of a Christ follower as prescribed in Scripture, by renewing his mind and conforming his life to that of the will of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Wk 7 - Each believer should grow, by exemplifying attributes of the Spirit of God, valuing spiritual disciplines, and by submission to a family of believers (the church) seeking to hold him accountable to a life of godliness.
- Wk 8 - Each believer is to be connected to a community of other believers called the church. This is where God's truth can be known, sound doctrine learned and the mission of Jesus to make disciples realized. As they grow, believers should love one another by serving and seeking to do the work of the ministry until all have reached the fullness of the maturity of Christ.
- Wk 9 - Individual households must be ordered by the truths and prescription of God's design for marriage between a man and a woman. Husbands are to love and serve their wives as Christ loved the church, and wives are to submit to their husbands with love and respect. Children are also to submit to their parents.
- Wk 10 - The household of God is the Church. It is the pillar and support of truth and is to be ordered by God's design as delivered and administered by Paul in Scripture. God promises to show His manifold wisdom to the world through His church when it is properly ordered for effective witness.
- Wk 11 - Each believer should live lives of sober responsibility, diligently working to provide for their families through honest, hard work with a vigilant awareness of the enemy's attack against us.
- Wk 12 - Each believer must respect the authority of the government and officials over him. He should seek the peace and prosperity of that city through serving his neighbors and those in need, and in doing so, honor Christ.



God's Holy Word is the foundation for all we believe, how we live and how we worship Him.
Our God is three in One (Father, Son, Spirit). He is Holy and requires perfect holiness.

Text: *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

Talk: There are several ways we can know that the Bible is not only true and trustworthy but that we can live our lives by its instruction and direction. These evidences can give us full confidence that it is God's holy Word, that He has revealed Himself to us through it, and wants the best for our lives. The first way we can know its true, is that it was foretold in scripture. Through different prophets and writers, God is telling the most amazing story of all time. Only God as THE author could give the details of that story hundreds, or even thousands of years before they happen in history.

Secondly, as followers of Jesus, we trust that since He and His apostles all spoke of and taught from the Old Testament, we too can trust its validity. Concerning the New Testament, we have eye-witness accounts and an overwhelming number of manuscripts (nearly 6000). Other ancient documents that are trusted from antiquity may have as few as 5 or 10. Thirdly, it was worth dying for. Jesus, 11 of His 12 disciples, and countless thousands since, have all been willing to give up their lives for the Truth. Also, the death of Christ changed the world, altering how we address time itself (from B.C to A.D). We have prophetic, historical, literary proof. We have eye-witness testimony, the testimony of martyrs and dramatic shifts of time, culture, and religion. But most of all we have experiential proof.

If you believe Christ died for your sins, have repented of those sins and believe that He has forgiven you, then you know in a very intimate, personal and intangible way that God is real. The truth of His Word has revealed Him and His grace to you and changed your life in a way that is consistent with His story found in His Word. In that Word, there are many places where we see that God is a Triune God. Uniquely 3 different persons and positions (Father, Son, and Spirit), yet all unified as One. He is holy, meaning He is "other", perfect, set apart and cannot remain in the presence of evil. Therefore, Jesus, our perfect and holy sacrifice, makes it possible for us to know God.

Q&A:

- How do we know we can trust the Bible to be true? How should my life change in light of that?
- Why would we follow or obey the Bible in our lives?
- Can I believe some of the Bible and not believe all of it?
- What if I have an opinion about something that's contrary to what the Bible teaches?
- Do I have to follow all the Bible teaches in order to be a Christian?
- Is there such thing as Right and Wrong? Based on what?
- Is there a danger in not believing Jesus is God? Are there other concerns for not believing in the Trinity?
- Why is it important to know that God is Holy? How could that affect my life or understanding of God?



God's Holy Word is the foundation for all we believe, how we live and how we worship Him.
Our God is three in One (Father, Son, Spirit). He is Holy and requires perfect holiness.

Monday:

Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.
Proverbs 28:26 (ESV)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Proverbs 1:7 (ESV)

Tuesday:

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.
Titus 3:3-5 (ESV)

Wednesday:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.
1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV)

Thursday:

Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV)

Friday:

Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him.
1 John 2:4-5 (ESV)

Mentor Connection - (I've connected with my mentor this week).

S.O.A.P - Bible Study Method (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

S. (Scripture - read it) **O.** (Observation - what jumps out at me?)

A. (Application - how should it affect my life?) **P.** (Prayer - talk with God about it)



The Gospel of Jesus was prophesied in Scriptures and realized in His incarnational reality, life, death and resurrection. He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Text: *But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.*
Acts 3:18 (ESV)

Talk: Life at times can seem disconnected, haphazard or just simply out of control. There are also moments that seem other worldly. Like there IS a plan, or a Creator who not only made us but is reaching out to us. Sometimes through the beauty of a sunset or the overwhelming love of a child, we sense there's more to this life than making ends meet, and trying to survive. For those of us who have made a decision to follow Jesus as our Savior and to live our lives for Him. We know that the Bible teaches us that God is that Creator and that He does love us. All throughout the story of God, we see Him pursuing relationship with His creation. He gives direction and warns of consequence when we disobey, yet He forgives us when we repent and turn back to Him.

Like any good story we see that in the greatest story, the Author has a plan, He gives hints to that plan through foreshadowing and He always keeps His promises, making Him faithful in all His ways. Only God could write such an incredible story over thousands of years, remaining faithful to His storyline fulfilling every prophecy. Before the world was made and before He created us, God had a plan to redeem us. He shows prophetically in Genesis 3 that one day Jesus would come to "crush the enemies head", putting an end to all evil. Through the use of foreshadowing, God spills first blood in the garden in order to "cover the sin and shame" of Adam and Eve. Through the books of the law, He institutes the sacrificial system, helping the nation of Israel to remember that every sin has a consequence. It reminds them that God is holy and requires perfect sacrifice and that only through death and the shedding of blood can forgiveness be given.

After 1500 years of requiring sacrifices and rigid rule-following, God keeps His greatest promise. He sends Jesus just as He foretold, in the way He foretold. And Jesus fulfills every prophecy concerning Himself. Jesus came as a holy child, lived a sinless life yet died a sinners death. But after 3 days, God raised Him in victory over sin, death and the grave, and He now stands at the right hand of the father in Heaven (which was also prophesied). God has a plan, keeps His promises, and is in control.

Q&A:

- How do we explain that every prophecy in scripture has come true a part from God as the author?
- Does knowing that God has fulfilled every promise over millenia, give you faith in Him?
- Do you see the consistency in the story of sacrifice and forgiveness? Can you share it back with us?
- Why don't we still offer sacrifices for our sins? In some ways do we still try to pay for our sin?
- Is it important that Jesus was born of a virgin or lived a life without sin? Why? What difference does it make?



The Gospel of Jesus was prophesied in Scriptures and realized in His incarnational reality, life, death and resurrection. He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Monday:

*...written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.
Revelation 13:8 (ESV)*

...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. Ephesians 1:4 (ESV)

Tuesday:

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh.
Romans 1:1-3 (ESV)*

Wednesday:

*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
Romans 15:4 (ESV)*

...without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness or sins. - Heb. 9:22 (ESV)

Thursday:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures - I Corinthians 15:3-4 (ESV)

Friday:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-4 (ESV)

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Mankind has fallen short of God's glory and is in need of salvation for life and eternity.
Jesus is our only hope, the only way to salvation and our perfect, holy sacrifice.

Text: *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

Acts 4:12(ESV)

Talk: If you ask most people if they're a good person or a bad one, we'll nearly always say good. But if you qualify your definition by saying a good person is someone who has never sinned, they begin to change their tune. Many even then will still say "I'm not that bad, I've never...". But the truth is that if you've ever sinned at all - any sin, any lie, any deception, ever done anything that God calls sin, then you are a sinner. Once we understand that everyone is a sinner, that sin came into the world as a result of the fall of man with Adam and Eve, then we can begin to see our need for a savior.

The Bible says that "we are conceived in sin". That means before we even have the capacity to sin, just by being born, we're infected by it. Many people think that if we can just live lives of good that outweigh our bad, then somehow on some cosmic scale, we'll be OK when we die. That concept is nowhere to be found in the Bible, and I'd rather not trust my eternity to my own feelings or opinion. The Bible is clear when it says, we're all sinners, "all have fallen short of God's glory", that "no one is righteous, no not one".

So where does that leave us? Unless we know Jesus, the only One righteous, who came to be our sacrifice for sin, we will die and go to Hell. There are no exceptions. The Bible says "the only way to the Father is through Jesus". No other religions, gods, or opinions matter. Jesus is the only "Way, the Truth and the Life". God sent His one and only Son to lay down His life for us so that we might believe in Him, surrender to Him and live for Him as His disciples. Jesus is the only way to the Father... there is no other way. God accepted His Son's holy sacrifice in our place. Jesus' holiness satisfied the righteous wrath of God. He took our place and our punishment. Even "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us". We can enter into a relationship with God only because of Jesus' death given for us, and by nothing we've done.

Q&A:

- Is there such a thing as a "good" person?
- Is it possible to get to Heaven without Jesus? What about other religions, opinions?
- What if I sin after I've asked Jesus to forgive me, after I've been saved?
- Once we've been saved, do we still sin? How should we live if so?
- What if I disagree? Whose opinion is correct? How do we know for sure?
- Is God a loving God, if He would allow someone to go to Hell?
- What is my role in telling people the truth about knowing the Gospel?
- Am I grateful to know the Truth of the Gospel? Does that understanding change how I live or worship?



Mankind has fallen short of God's glory and is in need of salvation for life and eternity.
Jesus is our only hope, the only way to salvation and our perfect, holy sacrifice.

Monday:

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
Romans 3:23(ESV)*

"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." - Romans 3:11-12

Tuesday:

*...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." / For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
Romans 10:9-11, 13 (ESV)*

Wednesday:

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me..."
John 14:6 (ESV)*

Thursday:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." . . . Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." . And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." - Matthew 25:31-34,41,46 (ESV)

Friday:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. - Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

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Belief in this Gospel, confession and repentance gives us forgiveness of sin. The Holy Spirit indwells and seals us, giving us the power to live a life in Christ.

Text: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

John 3:16-18(ESV)

Talk: According to the dictionary, belief is an acceptance that a statement is true or that something exists. To believe in God is not a blind faith however. It's not just a hope that He exists, but an educated, logical and spiritual decision. It's a decision to trust the validity of the Bible, the evidence of our creation and to realize that there's more to this life than random accidents. To believe in the story of God is to accept that there is an author and that He's writing us into a phenomenal story of innocence lost but grace found. To believe in the Gospel story is to see that from before the beginning of time God has had a plan to redeem His people from their sin. God has spoken through His prophets concerning this plan through the Scriptures for thousands of years. God loved us and knew we needed a Savior, so He sent His son Jesus to earth as the Son of God (holy, conceived by the Holy Spirit), and yet Son of Man (born of a woman, human). Jesus lived a sinless life and died a sinners death in our place, as our sacrifice. Jesus provided a way for a fallen humanity to know the Holy One.

When we believe and trust this Gospel we accept it as truth. When we believe the Gospel, we understand that only God is holy and we are sinners. As the Holy Spirit of God convicts us of our sin, we confess that sin and our need for God's provision in Jesus. As we believe, we turn away from the lives we lived as sinners and turn towards a life in Christ. But we're not left alone to try and change. The Holy Spirit of God comes to indwell us. He comes to live in us and to lead us to all truth, helping us to become all that God wants us to be. His presence in us gives us power to live for Him and not just for ourselves. He seals us as His adopted sons and daughters for all eternity. Where sin once separated us from God, Jesus has reconciled us back to God, and every man and woman has to choose this gift of salvation in God.

Q&A:

- Is believing alone enough to be a Christ follower? What does repentance look like? (Ja. 2:19)
- How can you tell if someone has become a Christ follower? Is it possible to fake it?
- Can you be forgiven if you're not a Christ follower?
- Is it possible to know the Holy Spirit lives within us? How?
- Have you experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in your life? Can you explain?



Belief in this Gospel, confession and repentance gives us forgiveness of sin. The Holy Spirit indwells and seals us, giving us the power to live a life in Christ.

Monday:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9 (ESV)

Tuesday:

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.
Acts 3:19 (NIV)

Wednesday:

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
Romans 10:10 (ESV)

Thursday:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
Romans 8:9 (ESV)

Friday:

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
Ephesians. 1:13-14 (ESV)

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Christ will come again to make all things right, to judge and recreate the earth.

Text: *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*
Revelation 11:19 (ESV)

Talk: At every funeral my soul feels unsatisfied and if I'm honest, angry. When we consider any injustice in the world, our hearts ache for God to punish those who would hurt the innocent and bring justice where there is brokenness and devastation. We know down deep in the core of our souls that death, sin, tears and pain, don't seem to belong in the same narrative as the beauty of Heaven and the Gospel of grace. Yet they are. The Bible tells us that one day, known only to the Father, Jesus will return to the earth. This time however, He won't come as the Suffering Servant, but instead as the Conquering King. He will wipe every tear from our eyes, right every wrong and put an end to sin, death, demons, and Satan, sending them to a place of eternal torment called Hell. When He comes again, He will judge the living and the dead for their deeds. For anyone not "in Christ," they will be held accountable for their sin and separated from God for all eternity in a torturous place meant for Satan and his angels.

But for those of us who have trusted Christ as our Savior, Jesus' death on the cross and His blood shed for us will be our substitute. Christ has already been punished for that sin when He died on the cross in our place, for us, so that we might be saved. He was even willing to go to Hell Himself and take the keys of sin and the grave from the enemy, rising in victory over it all on the third day. The Bible also tells us that one day He will recreate Heaven and Earth and that at some point that will be our eternal home, where we will live with Him forever. We can't even fathom for a moment how wonderful and perfect, beautiful and holy it will all be. No more pain, no more tears, no more worry fear or doubt. When Jesus comes again, He will make all things new!

Q&A:

- How can we know when He will come?
- What do I have to do to be ready?
- Will my loved ones know me, will we have the same relationship as we did on Earth?
- Who will Jesus "war" against?
- Will Jesus bring justice to evil people?
- Will we hear a trumpet?
- What will it mean to be "caught up in the sky" for those alive when He returns?



Christ will come again to make all things right, to judge and recreate the earth.

Monday:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left...”
Matthew 25:31-33 (ESV)

Tuesday:

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.
Isaiah 9:7 (ESV)

Wednesday:

His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. Revelation 19:12-16 (ESV)

Thursday:

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Matthew 24:30-31 (ESV)

Friday:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Revelation 21:1-5 (ESV)

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Each believer is a transformed disciple. Instructed to turn in repentance from his old life, to the life of a Christ follower as prescribed in Scripture, by renewing his mind and conforming his life to that of the will of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Text: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Talk: We have spent the last 5 weeks talking about the Gospel, the proclamation that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Scriptures. He came to earth to rescue us from our sin, paying the penalty of that sin with His death on a cross. God raised Him from the dead three days later and He now sits at the right hand of the Father, always praying for us. Through the Holy Spirit, His presence is always with us. He promised He would never leave us or forsake us.

For those of us who have chosen to follow Jesus and trust Him with all that we are, we're not the same. We've been made new by His grace - literally a new creation. What can often be confusing, however, is that we tend to still think the same ways we did before knowing Christ. Or we're tempted to do the same things we did or were addicted to before Christ. It seems like it would be easier if God would just take all those temptations and past lifestyles away from us, but usually He doesn't. That means it's up to the power He has given us through the Holy Spirit and some disciplined lifestyle changes that we need to make. Just because we believe all the things we've discussed the last 5 weeks, doesn't mean we've become perfect Christians over night. The word *didache* is Greek for "the teaching." These are the truths of God taught by Jesus during His ministry on earth and passed down through the apostles to the early church.

As Christ followers, it's our response to God's saving grace in us to live our lives in obedience to Him. We have to literally turn our lives from the direction we were going, and toward how God would have us live according to His Word. This is not an easy process, but we can be confident that God is with us, helping us and encouraging us as we seek to love Him with our lives. We have to learn that every thought, action and intent is to be lived in a way that honors God. We WILL fail and fall, but God's grace is greater than any sin we will ever struggle with. His Spirit will comfort and guide us and He will be faithful to forgive us. God gives us the power to become that new creation He wants us to be.

Q&A:

- Is it possible to say you believe, yet live like you don't and still be a Christian?
- What does it mean to "examine the fruit" of someone's life?
- How is obedience to God's commands connected to how I love Jesus? (Jn. 14:15,21; 15:10)
- Does God really care if I follow His commands? Why does it matter?
- If I live that way God has said to in the Bible, will my life really be better? How?
- How do I renew my mind? What does it mean to conform my life to the will of God? What's His will?



Each believer is a transformed disciple. Instructed to turn in repentance from his old life, to the life of a Christ follower as prescribed in scripture, by renewing His mind and conforming his life to that of the will of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Monday:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

Tuesday:

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”

Luke 9:23-25 (ESV)

Wednesday:

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galations 2:20 (ESV)

Thursday:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. Romans 8:9-11 (ESV)

Friday:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.*

*In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

Mentor Connection - (I've connected with my mentor this week).

S.O.A.P - Bible Study Method (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

S. (Scripture - read it) **O.** (Observation - what jumps out at me?)

A. (Application - how should it affect my life?) **P.** (Prayer - talk with God about it)



Each believer should grow, by exemplifying attributes of the Spirit of God, valuing spiritual disciplines, and by submission to a family of believers (the church) seeking to hold him accountable to a life of godliness.

Text: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
Galatians 5:22-23(ESV)

Talk: We can know that our commitment to Christ and His salvation in our lives is real when we begin to see some fruit. As the Spirit of God is refining our lives we'll notice that the things that didn't bother us before choosing Christ, begin to drive us crazy now. The sin that was once an everyday occurrence is now something we're actively trying to stop. Your friends and family will notice that you're changing and hopefully the fruit of our lives looks like that of the Holy Spirit. When we're maturing in Christ we will begin to increase in the areas of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Some growth will be natural and clearly of work of the Holy Spirit, while other issues won't be so easy to change. It's no secret - sin is fun, addictive, and invigorating, but it's all temporal, ultimately leaving us empty and full of shame. When we struggle with sin, it's usually in the moment.

But God has a desire to bless our lives for the long haul. He's not some killjoy or party pooper. God loves us. He created our bodies and desires and knows how they work best and He longs for us to have the greatest pleasure and most lasting joy. The only way to know that kind of life is in Him. To see substantive change in our lives we have to change our habits. We have to introduce new rhythms like prayer, fasting, silence, sabbath, etc... It's only after we're committed to a real change that lasts, and see the results of knowing Him more, that we will value those disciplines. The family of God is His gift to us to help us see what matters most when we don't. They challenge and hold us accountable when we don't have the strength to endure, and they encourage us when we're at our greatest point of need. We can't be the people God intends for us to become without the relationships that are created and cultivated in the church.

Q&A:

- Have you noticed any of those "fruits of the Holy Spirit" in your life? Have others noticed?
- Only you and God know the content of your soul - are you growing in conviction to your sin?
- How are you doing with Spiritual disciplines in your life? Are you being intentional to grow?
- Who in your life do you submit to? Is submission a problem for you?
- Have you ever been a part of a church family? One that is really close and helps you in your walk?
- Have you ever tried confessing your sin to another person so that you will have accountability? (Ja. 5:16)



Each believer should grow, by exemplifying attributes of the Spirit of God, valuing spiritual disciplines, and by submission to a family of believers (the church) seeking to hold him accountable to a life of godliness.

Monday:

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:5-8 (ESV)

Tuesday:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (ESV)

Wednesday:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (ESV)

Thursday:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

Friday:

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

Mark 1:35 (ESV)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

James 5:16 (ESV)

Mentor Connection - (I've connected with my mentor this week).

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S. (Scripture - read it) **O.** (Observation - what jumps out at me?)

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Each believer is to be connected to a community of other believers called the church. This is where God's truth can be known, sound doctrine learned and the mission of Jesus to make disciples realized. As they grow, believers should love one another by serving and seeking to do the work of the ministry until all have reached the fullness of the maturity of Christ.

Text: *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people.*

Acts 2:42-47a (ESV)

Talk: There's an old poem from the 1600's that says "No man is an island". Since then different artists have used that phrase and idea for everything from movie titles to song lyrics. It resonates with us because its foundational message is true. We were never intended to be alone. Our lives, our work, and our faith should all be done within the context of community.

From the garden of Eden, God decided that "man should not be alone." So the Lord made Eve: a helper for him, a friend, a confidant, and a partner. Only then did God smile upon His creation of humanity and say, "this is good". God's plan for every human being is connectedness with others. Some of us are extroverts and can't wait to get to the party, while many are the opposite and would be happy to just sit in the corner and count the minutes until we can leave. Yet, we all benefit from community. Regardless of our personality type, God knows that we need each other.

As believers in Jesus, we are commanded in Scripture to value, nurture and develop loving relationships with other believers. The Greek word for "church" is *Ecclesia*; it means, people gathered together in faith. We gather to encourage one another in our faith, to help develop each other in our faith, hold each other accountable, and to love one another with a self-less, serving and committed kind of love. Our gathering however, is not just about us and our needs. Together we exalt the name of Jesus and worship Him by being obedient to all that He's commanded of us. Together we learn His word, encourage each other to live by it and seek to find ways to share it with the rest of the world. While some have been given the charge of leadership in the church, all of us are called to maturity in Christ and to discover our place in serving God and each other in ministry. The Greek word for "love another" is seen 100 times in Scripture, over two-thirds of which talk about being unified, loving and caring for one another, and being humble. The church is made up of individual families making it a beautiful mosaic. A family of families; God's family.

Q&A:

- Why is it important for us as Christ followers to be "devoted" or committed to other people?
- What does that look like in real life? Do we have a right to be concerned about other people's lives? (1 Cor. 5:12, Ja. 2:12)
- How do we submit ourselves to other people in a culture of self-centeredness?
- Why would it be important to know "sound doctrine"? What are some examples of "unsound doctrine"?
- Does every believer have a role to play in the Great Commission? What's one way I can start today?
- What are your natural gifts? How do you think they might be used to serve the Lord and His church?



Each believer is to be connected to a community of other believers called the church. This is where God's truth can be known, sound doctrine learned and the mission of Jesus to make disciples realized. As they grow, believers should love one another by serving and seeking to do the work of the ministry until all have reached the fullness of the maturity of Christ.

Monday:

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
Colossians 3:16 (ESV)*

Tuesday:

*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.
1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV)*

Wednesday:

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy:
1 Peter 2:9-10 (ESV)*

Thursday:

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)*

Friday:

*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly; since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
1 Peter 4:8-11 (ESV)*

Mentor Connection - (I've connected with my mentor this week).

S.O.A.P - Bible Study Method (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

S. (Scripture - read it) **O.** (Observation - what jumps out at me?)

A. (Application - how should it affect my life?) **P.** (Prayer - talk with God about it)



Individual households must be ordered by the truths and prescription of God's design for marriage between a man and a woman. Husbands are to love and serve their wives as Christ loved the church, and wives are to submit to their husbands with love and respect. Children are also to submit to their parents.

Text: *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body; and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

Ephesians 5:22-24 (ESV)

Talk: I love to watch the classic, "The Andy Griffith Show". Watching it now seems like it's from another time or planet, so far removed as it is from how we live today. In almost every way, the show's themes and its language all seem "old fashioned." In fact, that can sometimes be what draws you in; to see how different life was in Mayberry compared to the culture that we live in today. It's true there are things that can fall out of style. Sayings that were once used that now have a different meaning all together. Technology that has become so antiquated will never be used again. But when it comes to the institution of marriage, that's one thing that should never grow old fashioned.

As the chaos of our society flies by, we as believers need to hold fast to the prescribed truth of God's word when it comes to how relationships and families were designed to function. The word submission has become a dirty word in our culture and many define it differently than God's Word does. Many people see submission as being forced to do something you don't want to, or begrudgingly agreeing to follow someone you don't believe in. But what we see in the Bible is a beautifully designed order of how loving relationships should work. We all submit to someone. Men should submit to God and to other men for accountability. Their example for how to love is in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. They are to love sacrificially, laying their lives down to serve their families. Women should submit to their husbands, yet loving and respecting them. Children should submit to their parents, and in doing so honor the Lord. The apostle Paul even speaks to working relationships. We're to care for those we work for, as well as those who work with and for us, serving them in return and honoring their work and reminding us there is no partiality with God. When we see dysfunction in families, it's usually because this order has been ignored or undervalued. God's way is always the best way.

Q&A:

- How do you feel about the word submission? Do your feelings represent a godly attitude?
- Does it matter that much if we don't follow God's design for relationships, marriage, and family?
- People are sinful and can manipulate and use others. How do we honor God in submission if we feel this is going on?
- Does God's Word address homosexuality as right or wrong? Is the Bible just being "old-fashioned?"
- Do you see God's prescription for marriage and family hijacked in society? What are the consequences?
- Is it possible to be a Christ follower and not obey God's plan for sexual purity and marriage?



Individual households must be ordered by the truths and prescription of God’s design for marriage between a man and a woman. Husbands are to love and serve their wives as Christ loved the church, and wives are to submit to their husbands with love and respect. Children are also to submit to their parents.

Monday:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word... In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.

Ephesians 5:25-26; 28-29 (ESV)

Tuesday:

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:1-2,7 (ESV)

Wednesday:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-4 (ESV)

Thursday:

Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Ephesians 6:5-8 (ESV)

Friday:

Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Ephesians 6:9 (ESV)

Mentor Connection - (I've connected with my mentor this week).

S.O.A.P - Bible Study Method (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

S. (Scripture - read it) **O.** (Observation - what jumps out at me?)

A. (Application - how should it affect my life?) **P.** (Prayer - talk with God about it)



The household of God is the church. It is the pillar and support of truth and is to be ordered by God's design as delivered and administered by Paul in Scripture. God promises to show His manifold wisdom to the world through His church when properly ordered for effective witness.

Text: *If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*

1 Timothy 3:15 (ESV)

Talk: I grew up going to church. Not just Sundays but every time the doors were open. There were times I remember rolling my eyes and wishing I were any other place. I now cherish the church as an adult. Though I didn't understand it as a kid, I'm learning the incredible importance of the church in the scheme of God's plans for the world. It's not a building, or an event; it's a people. Through those people God wants to accomplish His mission to reveal His wisdom to the world around us. The church is supposed to uphold the truth of God's word, standing on its authority in our lives and giving us a firm foundation that will never be shaken.

The apostle Paul was given a unique and incredibly important task by Jesus to establish the church and organize its administration. He would spend the rest of His life trying to fulfill this assignment. He preached the Word while suffering persecution, established believers in the faith, started churches, appointed elders and helped those churches live on mission. He repeated the whole cycle over and over advancing the Gospel to the known world until his imprisonment and death in Rome. Through Paul, God gave the direction for how to order the church. It's not an institution - it's a family. He gave Timothy and Titus direction for how it should be organized. His direction was that godly fathers of those families were to be the leaders. They weren't to lord over the church, but rather serve it with utmost humility and deference. God's plan is to allow the entire world, physical and spiritual, to see His plan to redeem mankind. Through the church of Jesus men and women share the Gospel to the world and in Him, all things are made new.

Q&A:

- What is your experience with the church? Do you have a good or bad history with it?
- Is there such a thing as "absolute" truth? Can I have my "truth" and you have yours?
- Have you experienced churches that are led differently than with Elders? Is that Biblical?
- Is it OK for a woman to be an elder of a church? (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6)
- Is the Bible just out-dated or did God order His church for all time with male leadership?
- Why do you think it's important to follow God's design for His church? What if you don't?



The household of God is the church. It is the pillar and support of truth and is to be ordered by God's design as delivered and administered by Paul in Scripture. God promises to show His manifold wisdom to the world through His church when it is properly ordered for effective witness.



Monday:

Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

1 Timothy 3:2-5 (ESV)



Tuesday:

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you — if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Titus 1:5-9 (ESV)



Wednesday:

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 3:8-10 (ESV)



Thursday:

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 14:23 (NIV)



Friday:

As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Acts 16:4-5 (NIV)



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Each believer should live lives of sober responsibility, diligently working to provide for their families through honest, hard work with a vigilant awareness of the enemy's attack against us.

Text: *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*
1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

Talk: Have you ever known someone that you would characterize as “clueless?” They’re the one asking where their phone is, while holding it in their hand. It seems at times that they are completely unaware of the world around them. They may not recognize how loud they’re talking or how their presence in public is being received. They are the one who can seem totally self-absorbed, or doesn’t notice subtle cues or suggestions. They wouldn’t “know a snake if it had bitten them,” as the saying goes.

We too can live our lives without awareness. At times we can be so self-absorbed with life and work and all the things vying for our attention that we forget our responsibility to live for Christ. We’re called as believers to honor Him with our decisions and actions in every aspect of our day. But if we’re only concerned about ourselves and things immediately in front of us, we’ll never recognize the deceptive and seductive lure of sin or the attack of the enemy.

God calls us to be mindful of how we live, how we treat others and to the world around us. Peter even warns us to be watchful and ready for the coming attack of the devil. One way the enemy cripples us is to make us so self-absorbed that we’re lazy, unconcerned about anyone else. However, for those of us who are married and have families, we’re called to place them above ourselves. We are to serve them, providing for their needs through honest work and diligence. God is honored when we work. Even in the garden, work was a “pre-fall” expectation, and He’s pleased when we live with purpose and passion in our work.

There’s also an aspect of awareness as believers that we should know the only intent of the enemy is to “kill, steal, and destroy” our lives (Jn. 10:10). But Jesus offers us a life of joy and abundance. To embrace that life, we must live with intentional awareness and diligence to honor God with how we live, how we work, how we stand up for what we believe, and who we want to be in the face of the enemy and anything he brings against us.

Q&A:

- Do you live your life day to day with an awareness that you’re a Christ follower? If so, what does that look like?
- What does the word “sober” mean in this passage? Can this apply to use of alcohol, drugs or medication?
- What is Christian responsibility? What would irresponsibility look like?
- Have you ever considered that your work can bring glory to God?
- How does it make you feel to know that Satan is seeking to destroy your life as a believer of Jesus?
- Do we need to be afraid? (1Jn. 4:4, 1 Tim. 1:7) How can we be ready for his attack? (Eph. 6)



Each believer should live lives of sober responsibility, diligently working to provide for their families through honest, hard work with a vigilant awareness of the enemy’s attack against us.

Monday:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Ephesians 6:10-13 (ESV)

Tuesday:

For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers.

1 Thessalonians 2:9-10 (ESV)

Wednesday:

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV)

Thursday:

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

1 Peter 2:11-12 (ESV)

Friday:

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:31-32 (ESV)

... so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

2 Corinthians 2:11 (ESV)

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Each believer must respect the authority of the government and officials over him. He should seek the peace and prosperity of that city through serving his neighbors and those in need, and in doing so, honor Christ.

Text: *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.*

Romans 13:1-2 (ESV)

Talk: Sovereignty is sometimes hard to understand. It simply means that God is in control. When we face difficulty, sickness, abuse, or many other struggles, it's extremely hard to trust that God is in control. Does that mean God causes the pain and circumstances in our lives? We know that God cannot sin, but somehow in His sovereignty or control, He does use those broken circumstances, issues and pain in our lives to lead us to Him and mold us into His image. We all walk through incredible difficulties in life as a result of the fall of man. Yet God is always faithful to not only forgive us, but to provide healing through those seasons of pain. He even gives us purpose to help us make sense of how He might want to use our past struggles to help someone else who might now be walking through the same thing.

In our increasing politically divided world, God saw fit for us as believers to know definitively that regardless of who is governing over us, He is in control. Whether we agree with our political leaders, laws or institutions over us, the Lord has made it clear that we are to submit to them, to pray for them and to be obedient to their governance, as long as it doesn't contradict with His Word. The apostles are not encouraging us to support every political initiative of leaders in office or to never disagree with a stance or proposal. They are, however, encouraging us to respect those in authority over us. To know that in His sovereignty, God has allowed them to be in that position to ultimately be used of Him for His purposes. In the same way that God uses our broken and difficult seasons in life, God can use even the most sinful and wicked leaders for His ultimate purposes. Knowing that, we can rest in assurance that whoever sits in the White House can be respected, obeyed and prayed for as they will answer to His ultimate authority. Like the Jews in Babylonian captivity, we too are to find ways to bless our communities and neighbors, because His sovereignty has placed us here, and in serving them, we bring glory to Him.

Q&A:

- Has God ever shown you how He wanted to use some struggle in your life for good or His glory? When?
- Have you ever felt like God was nowhere to be found, later to realize He was there all along?
- Have you ever felt hate or disgust with someone in political authority over you?
- Have you ever prayed for a political figure you didn't support politically?
- How does loving our city, neighbors or community bring God glory?
- Is respect for authority hard for you? Is it an option to not respect authority for Christ followers?



Each believer must respect the authority of the government and officials over him. He should seek the peace and prosperity of that city through serving his neighbors and those in need, and in doing so, honor Christ.

Monday:
And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28 (ESV)

Tuesday:
For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.
Rom. 13:6-7 (ESV)

Wednesday:
But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
Jeremiah 29:7 (ESV)

Thursday:
Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.
1 Peter 2:13-17 (ESV)

Friday:
In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.
Ephesians 1:11-12 (ESV)

Mentor Connection - (I've connected with my mentor this week).

S.O.A.P - Bible Study Method (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

S. (Scripture - read it) **O.** (Observation - what jumps out at me?)

A. (Application - how should it affect my life?) **P.** (Prayer - talk with God about it)



CONCLUSION

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:1-8 (ESV)

We pray that this study of God's Word has helped to establish your relationship and walk with Jesus. These statements and supporting scriptures are only the "tip of the iceberg" when it comes to knowing and exploring the truths of God's Word. May God continue to use His Word in your life to fully develop in you the heart, mind and image of Christ to maturity (Eph. 4:13-14). May God continue to reveal to you the treasure of who He is and to develop the deposit of His Word in you. Soli Deo Gloria (glory to God alone).

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