



LOVE**GOD**



LOVE**PEOPLE**



MAKE**DISCIPLES**

Sterling

CHRISTIAN CHURCH



ENCOUNTER**JESUS**



KNOW**CHRIST**



REFLECT**HIM**

Introduction

SCC Mission Statement & Vision Statement

How We Got Here:

We are excited to be walking through this study of the Sterling Christian Church Mission and Vision together. What you see is the result of a lengthy Elders' retreat in which we wrestled for hours seeking God's guidance and direction. Through much prayer, discussion, and thought this is where we landed. We know, and are excited with, the way "Love God, Love People" has been embraced and modeled by our congregation. Furthermore, as we talked we continued to agree that we don't want to lose this focus, it needs to be primary. However, we also saw a clear need to emphasize the command and priority of making disciples. It was agreed upon that our mission is now: *Love God, Love People, Make Disciples*.

The question that arises next is how do we accomplish this mission? There are many things that can be listed to answer this question, but we wanted to be clear and concise, with the hope that we as a congregation will embrace it the way we have the mission statement. We recognize that in order for us to Love God, Love People, and Make Disciples, we have to first *Encounter Jesus, Know Christ, and Reflect Him*.

It is our hope and prayer that individually and as a congregation we will continually Encounter Jesus, grow as we Know Christ, and increasingly Reflect Him. As we do this we will Love God, Love People, and Make Disciples, and the cycle will continue.

We look forward to this journey together and hope that you will find this devotional helpful as we study our mission and vision.



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SCC Mission Statement & Vision Statement

How to Use this Devotional:

This is designed to be used over the course of six weeks in conjunction with the teaching study through our mission and vision statements. The devotional is designed with five day weeks in order to give a couple flex days each week. Each of the ministers has contributed a devotion for each week.

It is our suggestion that you begin the devotions after having been through the sermon/teaching, so that the study can help us more deeply explore each statement. Every day will begin by reading the Scripture passage for the day, followed by the devotional thoughts from the minister. Accompanying each day are a few reflection questions designed to help us interact and create space for God to work at shaping us. It would be beneficial for you to take the time to answer these questions in writing, whether in this devotional or in a journal. Each day will end with a written prayer or some prayer prompts for you to pray through.

We are excited for the work that God is doing here at Sterling, and to partner with you in this work.

As we take the next six weeks to better understand our mission (*Love God, Love People, Make Disciples*) and vision (*Encounter Jesus, Know Christ, Reflect Him*), may we be open to the work that God is doing in us. May we be obedient and receptive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And may we cooperate with God's work to conform us to the image of Christ.



ENCOUNTERJESUS



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REFLECTHIM



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Monday

Gary Johnson

Matthew 9:9-13

This encounter happened at work.

In our society today telling others about Jesus is looked down on. May even be considered an interruption to performing your job. I want us to see there is a back story to this encounter. This is not the first time that Matthew has heard about Jesus. Matthew certainly had heard of the many miracles of Jesus. Jesus' reputation was already spreading through the nation and it's very possible that Matthew had been present at some of the teachings of Jesus.

Matthew Responded

Matthew followed Him. He left his job and followed Him. We know that Matthew not only left his collection booth; he actually quit his job and followed Jesus. He was a witness to the miracles of Jesus and he personally heard the teaching of Jesus. He would be a witness to His death, burial and to Jesus's resurrection.

Follow up encounter...at Matthew's house

Jesus questioned...Matthew was a recognized traitor to the Jewish nation. He was a Jew by heritage and by lineage. For whatever reason he had become a tax collector. That meant that he was collecting money from his fellow Jews, and giving it to the Roman government. He was seen as siding with the enemy. He was required to collect the allotment for the Romans and whatever he could "take" in addition to the above amount he was permitted to keep for himself. So he was taking people's money.

Jesus's reply

Jesus's reply was that it was about the heart and not the outward appearance. It was what God could see and that man could not see.



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Monday

Reflection Questions

Does Jesus hanging with sinners justify our seeking company with bad influences?

It seems to be significant to me that Matthew invited Jesus to eat with him. Why do you think that is?

How is your relationship with Jesus? Worship, bible reading and prayer. Rate each one 1-5.

Worship: 1—2—3—4—5

Bible Reading: 1—2—3—4—5

Prayer: 1—2—3—4—5

What will you do to improve your relationship with Jesus?

Prayer

Lord, I want to encounter You. To know Your heart for me and to live the way You want me to. I ask that You open my heart to Your spirit, that I may know You, not only Your word, but also Your presence.



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Tuesday

Derrick Jackson

Acts 9:1-19

A couple of years ago we had a game night at the church for the kids for the 4th of July. To end the night we set off fireworks and all was well. My wife and kids were helping me clean up after everyone was gone and it was getting to be about 10:00. I had pulled my truck around on the backside of the church so I could shine the headlights across the yard to see what we needed to pick up. After 10-15 minutes had gone by I noticed a couple of vehicles pull into the north parking lot. I couldn't tell who it was so I started walking over toward them. I very quickly realized who it was when the spot light was on me. The police had shown up to make sure everything was ok. I was very thankful that they had shown up to check on things but it definitely startled me a little bit when the spot light was on me.

I know the light the police use is bright, but I can only imagine how much brighter it must have been for Saul when he saw The Light. Saul was convinced that what Jesus had done was dangerous to Judaism, and he was willing to do whatever it took to take care of this problem. So he asked for letters to take to the synagogues in Damascus so he could imprison those who belonged to The Way.

While on his way however, Saul *Encounters Jesus*. Saul sees a light and hears a voice and he falls down with his face to the ground. Saul's encounter with Jesus was not one he was expecting. He had a plan for what his life was going to be like, but Jesus had other plans for him. And the only way for Saul to have a life change was to have a personal encounter with Jesus.

For someone to come to God they must first *Encounter Jesus*. Jesus says in John 14:6... "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." If we have any intention of getting to the Father we must go through the Son. *Encountering Jesus* is a must for you to have a relationship with the Father. After his encounter with Jesus, Saul's life was never the same. His name was changed and his life was changed.

Encountering Jesus is a life changing event. If you have *Encountered Jesus* then you know what Paul felt. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!"

If you have *Encountered Jesus* it is not only visible to God but also to those



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Tuesday

around you. Paul was able to help people *Encounter Jesus* because he himself already had.

Paul's life was forever changed, and because of that thousands of other lives have been forever changed as well, but more importantly than that, his and the many others' eternity has changed also.

Reflection Questions

Have you *Encountered Jesus*?

Can people see a life change in you?

Are people around you able to *Encounter Jesus* because of your relationship with the Savior?

Prayer

Lord I pray that my heart would be open to who You are and what You are doing. Help me to see where I'm to be serving You. I pray that I *Encounter Jesus* daily so I can better serve those around me and help show them who You are. Give me the willingness and boldness of Paul to show Your love to others so they too may encounter You. Amen



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Wednesday

Dave Sims

John 4:1-42

What an amazing story! As we pick up in verse 4, John says “now Jesus had to go through Samaria”. No Jesus you don’t, in fact any good Jew would not; any good Jew would walk miles out of the way to avoid Samaria... and Jesus knew this. He not only went through Samaria but he stopped at a well at high noon. Women would go to draw water in the cool of the morning or evening, the only person going at noon is the one trying to avoid everyone else. This Samaritan woman, who was avoiding everyone else (likely because of her reputation), is now talking to a Jewish man. It is the most unlikely of encounters and yet it was completely on purpose. Jesus wants her to encounter Him and change not only her life but her whole town. We see this pattern repeated in nearly every person who meets Him. It all begins when we meet Jesus and begin to have a conversation with Him.

I was baptized at age 12. I never had the luxury of not knowing who Jesus was. I was in church every Sunday from birth to age 18 except four Sundays for sickness. Before you give me the gold attendance star...I am not sure that I really *Encountered Jesus* until I was about 17. I had heard of Him, could tell you a lot of stories about Him, but I don’t know that I had really met Him before. Think of a celebrity or athlete; you can know their stories and watch games, you can know a lot about them and their stats, you can even follow them on social media. But everything changes when you have the chance to meet them in person...to encounter them. Suddenly they are a real person, your palms get sweaty, you are nervous that you might say or do something embarrassing, you fumble with excitement. I wonder how many of us *Encounter Jesus* this way? I think more often we know a lot about Him and like the idea that we are a fan, follower, or on His team somehow. Until you meet Him on a day when no one else is around, and He looks right through you and past every facade you put up...then He becomes real and everything changes. When I met Him He was no longer a storybook person or historical figure. He began to unfold layers of my story that I didn’t even understand; He told me everything about myself. It’s that moment that I had a brush with someone so much greater than myself that I had to come back for more. This Jesus who I had heard so much about was now at my well talking to me. You



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Wednesday

might think I am crazy, I probably am. Or it might mean you just haven't *Encountered Jesus* yet.

Reflection Questions

How, when and where have you *Encountered Jesus*?

What was the experience like? How did it change your perspective?

Whether you have *Encountered Jesus* or not... do you want to *Encounter Jesus* now?

Prayer

Think about the story of Jesus coming in the flesh to save us...thank Him for doing this. He promised to never leave us or forsake us...thank Him for that. Ask Him to make His presence known today, that you may *Encounter Jesus* and know that He is real. Be changed by Him.



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Thursday

Jason Davis

John 1:29-34

There are few in Scripture that are as bold as John the Baptist and have the privilege of being called to such a great mission. And what was his mission? The answer is found just a few verses before this section in John 1. The Jews asked if John was the Messiah...no, Elijah... no, the Prophet...no. Then who are you, John, and why are you here? His message is clear and it's the same as Isaiah, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, make straight the way for the Lord." His message is simple. He has come to prepare the way for the Messiah.

This passage is not the first encounter that John had with Jesus. In fact, they were relatives of some nature, according to Luke 1:36. When Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John, the baby "leaped in her womb." However, it doesn't sound like the two spent little time together, if any, growing up because John was from the desert area having been raised in seclusion. John was described as one who wore camel's hair and ate locusts and wild honey, a true man of the land. Jesus on the other hand was raised in the region of Galilee, to the far north, and was the son of a carpenter. Nevertheless, John knew when he laid eyes on Jesus who He was. John likely had heard some of Jesus' teachings before this Jordan encounter, but nothing solidified his claim more than vv.32-33. It was after John witnessed these things that he makes his claim in v.34, "I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." John 3:22-35 is a further detailed explanation of the identity of Jesus according to John the Baptist.

We have a lot we can learn from John. When he encounters Jesus, he boldly proclaims Christ's identity. However, there is something else about John the Baptist that we Christians reflect far too often. In Luke 3:19-20, John is thrown into prison because he calls king Herod to account for a sexually immoral relationship with his brother's wife, whom Herod eventually takes as his own. After John had done so much "preparing the way" he now finds himself sitting in a prison cell awaiting his fate, death. It was at this time that doubt began to creep in. In fact, in Luke 7 John sends servants to Jesus from prison to ask whether he "was the one they were waiting for" or if they should be "looking for another." I wonder what was going through John's mind as he sat in prison



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Thursday

while the One for which he had “prepared the way” was going about His ministry.

Isn't that the case though? Everything's good until we experience a little opposition, or the plan in our head doesn't match the path God is having us walk. I think Jesus knew this would happen which is why He reminds His disciples in John 15, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

Reflection Questions

Have you genuinely *Encountered Jesus*? If so describe some of those encounters.

Where is He pushing you beyond what you think you can bear?

Prayer

God, help me to have faith in You, regardless of my surroundings, showing it by my actions. Amen



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Friday

Kevin Wildman

Luke 18:18-30 & Luke 19:1-10

Here we have read of two different men who *Encounter Jesus*, the rich ruler and Zacchaeus.

The rich ruler, having encountered the “Good Teacher,” responds in a way that I imagine many of us might. He asks Jesus a question that I have heard asked in a variety of ways through the years. Sometimes it is simply “What must I do to be saved?” Other times it is “How much can I, as a Christian, sin before I have sinned too much for God’s forgiveness?” Jesus answers him, “Keep the law.” The ruler, like the prodigal’s older brother, says “I have.” But Jesus, as always, takes it a step further saying, “Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor.” Don’t miss the heart of what Jesus is getting at; He is commanding a selfless self-sacrificing love for others. Jesus illuminates that we can get so lost in the letter of the law that we forget to love.

Jesus then explains that it is harder for a rich person to enter heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. I have heard the meaning of “eye of the needle” argued by so many people, and I realize that as we argue that we miss the point. What Jesus is saying is that it is hard for rich people because the more we have the harder it is for us to let go. However, do not be misled, God can achieve this kind of heart change!

In stark contrast to this encounter is Zacchaeus’ Jesus Encounter. Luke tells us two key pieces of information about Zacchaeus; he is a tax collector and he is rich. Zacchaeus doesn’t ask Jesus the bare minimum to escape judgment upon meeting Him. Instead, Zacchaeus’ first words to Jesus reveal the way in which his encounter is changing him. He pledges to give half of his possessions to the poor and to repay fourfold anyone he has defrauded.

In response Jesus pronounces blessing and salvation upon Zacchaeus. This is not an instance of purchasing salvation. Rather, Zacchaeus, by his response to Jesus, reveals his heart, just as the rich ruler’s response to Jesus reveals his heart.

When we *Encounter Jesus* we must make a choice. One cannot *Encounter Jesus* and not make a choice, either embrace and obedience or rejection and



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Encounter Jesus: Week 1: Friday

disobedience.

Furthermore, I can't help but wonder how many others had the opportunity to *Encounter Jesus* because of the obedience of Zacchaeus. Imagine the conversation as he goes from house to house, "Remember when I taxed you \$6,000, it should have only been \$1,000. Here is \$20,000 to make up for my wrong. I'm doing this because I met Jesus." I can't help but wonder how many could have *Encountered Jesus* if the rich ruler would have followed.

Reflection Questions

How have you responded to your Encounter with Jesus?

Do you find yourself relating more to the rich ruler or Zacchaeus?

Prayer

Thank God for His repeated provisions for you to *Encounter Jesus*. Ask Him to show you the ways in which you respond like the rich ruler, where you need to let go. Ask for strength to follow in obedience. Commit to obedience, no matter what. Thank God that as you follow in obedience that He will use you to help others *Encounter Jesus*.



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Know Christ: Week 2: Monday

Dave Sims

John 15:1-17

You are the Vine, Jesus...I am a branch. You are the source of life, strength, health, nourishment. I am an extension of You, growing because of You, only as You enable me, and bearing fruit that represents You. This is for Your Father's glory...my Father's glory, because I am in You and You are in me. Please don't cut me off or I am dead. Shape me, prune me, hurt me when You must, and help me as You can. I am Yours.

Is this the prayer of your life? Knowing about Christ is a good thing, but it is wildly different than *Knowing Christ*. I would take you back to my last devotion when I explained that I knew a lot about Jesus and then I encountered Him and everything changed. The next natural step is not just to encounter the living Christ but to get to *Know Christ*. Like any relationship there are no shortcuts...this takes time. You may have encountered a lot of people in your life but how many people do you truly know? How did that relational process happen? *Knowing Christ* is similar to that process. Rarely at this point do I have a day that I am not thinking about how I am connected to Jesus and how He is working through me, with me, and sometimes in spite of me. I am far from getting this right all the time, however somewhere along the way as I have grown in my relationship with Him, I stopped asking what I want and started asking what He wants. So when any situation in life occurs there may be my initial reaction but it is followed immediately with "what do you think about this Lord?" Getting to *Know Christ* this way has taken me to places I would have not expected...being in the ministry is one of those places. Catch me and I'll tell you the full story, but this is the only job I swore I would never do...then I got to know Him. I have been able to love people who I did not want to love. It's not that I am a good man, I would have destroyed some of those people with words or other physical means of retribution...but then I got to *Know Christ*. I used to want all kinds of "things" for myself (selfish)...but then I got to *Know Christ*. I love nothing more today than to grab a Bible and a journal, head off into the woods and disappear for hours, or days if I could, and just be alone with Him. They are some of the best times, also many of the hardest times, as He works on me. I love how knowing Him is changing me, and I pray it never stops until I am dead. Jesus You are the Vine!



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Know Christ: Week 2: Monday

Reflection Questions

Do you *Know Christ*? How do you know?

If you were left alone with nothing but Jesus, would He be enough for you?

What percent of your life is completely run by Jesus? How much is still you?

How would you define *Knowing Christ* to someone else?

Prayer

You are the Vine Jesus...I am a branch. You are the source of life, strength, health, nourishment. I am an extension of You, growing because of You, only as You enable me, and bearing fruit that represents You. This is for Your Father's glory...my Father's glory, because I am in You and You are in me. Please don't cut me off or I am dead. Shape me, prune me, hurt me when You must, and help me as You can. I am Yours.



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REFLECTHIM

Know Christ: Week 2: Tuesday

Jason Davis

John 20:24-31

Seeing is believing, right? At least that's true for most of us. In fact, if we were honest, Missouri wouldn't be the only "show me" state. I believe the scene in John 20 accurately describes how most of us would react if we were in the same situation. Even today, if you tell me a dead man came back to life, I would want to see the evidence, because the truth of the matter is, dead people don't come back to life. Jesus tells Thomas, "You believe because you have seen; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." But for me, it's the next two verses that are the heart of this passage. In the middle of this narrative John inserts a reminder as to why he undertakes this task of recording the events of Jesus' life. Jesus did many other miracles "but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."

I don't think it's a coincidence that John refers to Jesus as the "Word" all throughout the first chapter of his Gospel account. Not only is He the Word, but the Word was God. Then in verse 14 he makes a bold claim. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us." John makes no bones about it. He writes so that the reader may know with certainty that Jesus is the Christ. He also reminds us that all Scripture before Jesus' grand entrance, where He was placed in a feeding trough in Bethlehem, bears witness to Jesus' claim to be the Son of God. He is the "Word become flesh."

So Jesus is the Word become flesh...the living embodiment of the Word of God? How in the world can we expect to *Know Christ* apart from the Word of God. The very reason John gives for writing in John 20:31 is why the other Scriptures exist. They are there so we would recognize the Messiah, yet so many during Jesus' day rejected him. John also reminds us in John 1:11-13 that Jesus "came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

Thomas got the opportunity to see Christ and place his fingers in the nail holes. We don't have that luxury. What we do have though, is the story of Christ being fleshed out in Genesis 22 when Abraham is told to sacrifice his



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Know Christ: Week 2: Tuesday

son, Isaac, but instead sacrifices a LAMB with its head caught in THORNS in his son's place. We also have the account of Joseph, who was hated by his brothers and sold into slavery for pieces of SILVER by his brother JUDAH (Judas). Then there's PASSOVER that screams Christ in the pages of Exodus 12-13. There are hundreds of other examples just like these that introduce us to the heart of God and reveal "the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14b). What we have is the testimony of the Word. If you want to *Know Christ*, seek Him there!

Reflection Questions

Do you *Know Christ*? Does your life seek Him?

Do you try to *Know Christ* apart from knowing the Word?

Prayer

Father, help me not only to hear Your Word, but to put it into practice like the wise man building his house on rock. Help me that I may become better acquainted with You and know Your heart. Amen



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REFLECTHIM

Know Christ: Week 2: Wednesday

Gary Johnson

Matthew 16:13-26

Jesus asks a couple powerful questions:

...who do men say that I am? Some say,

John the Baptist ... great prophet to their age

Elijah... great prophet of past age

Jeremiah ... the weeping prophet

Or one of the other prophets

...who do you say that I am?

“You are the Christ the Son of the living God.” We call this the good confession. We here at Sterling use this response as a way of expressing that we know Christ. Jesus tells Peter that this knowledge of who Jesus was did not come from his own thinking. Rather it was given or revealed by His heavenly Father.

If we *Know Christ* we should:

Expect death: Jesus knew He was sent to die for our sins.

Deny self: life is about Jesus not us.

Take up our cross: we must be not only willing to sacrifice, we must expect to sacrifice. It should be expected, not come as a surprise.

Follow me: Philippians 2 ff.

We seek after every thing but *Knowing Christ*. We want to know people, know places, so we take trips, cruises and vacations. While these things in and of themselves are not wrong, we substitute all kinds of things for our opportunity to *Know Christ*.



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Know Christ: Week 2: Wednesday

Reflection Questions

Who is Jesus to you?

Have you taken up a cross to follow Jesus?

Explain the answer above. What does it mean to you?

Prayer

Lord I want to *Know Christ*, not just about Him. I want to know Your heart for me, for the lost, for the hurting, for the less fortunate. I want to know You. I want to know Your love as demonstrated by Your Son's life on this earth and by His death on the cross.



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REFLECTHIM

Know Christ: Week 2: Thursday

Kevin Wildman

Genesis 2:16-17; 3:21 & Ephesians 3:14-19

We all know there is a difference between knowing about somebody and actually knowing them. Many of us know about our favorite athlete or band, but that doesn't mean we know them. There is even a difference in meeting somebody and knowing them. It is very possible that not only do you know about your favorite athlete or band, but that you have even met them, yet you still don't *know* them. The same is true for Jesus, many have Encountered Jesus, yet only those who have an intimate knowledge *Know Christ*. Maybe you have Encountered Jesus, but you still don't *Know Christ*. We see it in the lives of the religious leaders, the rich ruler, and friends and family in our lives.

For a long time I have loved that one of the first glimpses we have of who Christ is in Genesis 3. As you read, Adam was instructed by God not the eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God tells him from the start, "the day you eat of it you shall surely die." We fast forward to Genesis 3, Eve is tempted by the Serpent, and she and Adam both eat the forbidden fruit. And much like God said, they fall over dead that day, right...no. Instead we see God's grace.

God's grace here is bigger than I can even fathom. When I tell my kids not to do something, explain the natural consequences of said behavior, and they do it anyway my tendency is to rub their nose in it. Even if there is no punishment from me, I shame them. Yet, we see that God does the opposite, yes there are consequences, however, not nearly like we would expect when death had been promised. What amazes me is that God, in His love and grace, offers a sacrifice of an animal in order to cover the nakedness and shame of Adam and Eve.

So Paul prays, and at the heart of his prayer is that the Ephesian Christians would know the vastness, the extent of the love of Christ (vs. 18-19). What is the extent of Christ's love? What is the breadth, length, height, and depth of God's love? We see a foreshadow to the answer in Genesis 3:21. In His love for you, God allowed His Son Christ to carry your punishment.

In the Garden of Eden the shame of sin was covered by the skins of a



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Know Christ: Week 2: Thursday

sacrificed animal. On the Cross of Calvary the shame and punishment of sin was covered with the blood of God's Sinless Son, Jesus the Christ. To *Know Christ* isn't being able to recite facts or memory verses, no, it is experiencing, responding to, living in, and living from the love and grace of God given through Christ on the cross and shown in full completion in His resurrection.

Reflection Questions

How do you react to God covering the shame of Adam and Eve through a sacrifice?

How do you feel knowing He has done the same for you on a much more costly scale?

How can you begin to live life in and from the love and grace of God more appropriately?

Prayer

Thank God that He and His love and grace are the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Thank Him for His grace in the garden. Thank Him for the ultimate grace through the Cross. Pray that you would not just know about Christ, but that you would intimately *Know Christ*. Commit to living in obedience to God because you *Know Christ*.



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REFLECTHIM

Know Christ: Week 2: Friday

Derrick Jackson

John 10:1-18

Can you hear me now? All of us at some point have probably seen that cell phone commercial where the guy walks around asking that question. If you are my age...or older...you can remember what it was like to have poor reception just about everywhere you went. Antennas needed adjusted, walking in a circle trying to find a good spot to hear the other person was almost second nature. So much has changed over the years and having good reception isn't just something we hope for anymore, it's something we demand. We have grown dependent on having it to stay connected to the world. Where ever we go we seem to have to be "plugged in" to what is going on. Yet at the same time our being connected to Christ seems to be fading away.

In John 10 Jesus tells His disciples that He is the good shepherd and that when He brings out His sheep He goes before them calling them by name (vs 4). The shepherd calls to the sheep and they follow because they hear and recognize his voice. Interesting...sheep follow the shepherd because they know him.

Growing up on a hog farm you learn really quick that if you want a pig to go a certain direction...you don't get in front of it. You get behind them and force them to go the way you want them to. Pigs will go whatever direction they feel like because they don't have a leader guiding them so it's up to them. Sheep will do the same without leadership and like pigs, sheep don't always go the correct direction all the time either. That's why the role of the shepherd is so important. He's not only there for guidance, but for protection as well.

So how well do you *Know Christ*? Have you heard His voice? Are you willing to go where He is leading? If you are not following Christ, then you really don't *Know Christ*. As I said earlier, being "plugged in" to the world is only distracting us from who we really need to be connected to.

Paul tells us in Romans 12 to not conform to the pattern of the world but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. James 4:4 says, "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hated toward God?"



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Know Christ: Week 2: Friday

Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” We live in a place that demands our attention and our hearts, but at the same time we read about, worship, pray to, and follow the One who says if we put anything above Christ, that we don’t even know Him.

For the sheep, being close to the shepherd meant they knew him and would follow him anywhere. The further away they drifted the harder it was to hear him, and to know him. So how close are you to the Shepherd? How well do you *Know Christ*? Can you hear when He calls? Can you see where He is leading you? Or is His voice being drowned out by the noise of the world?

In John 17 Jesus prays for the future believers...us...He says, “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. Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me. 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.”

Reflection Questions

How close are you to your shepherd? How well do you *Know Christ*?

Is His voice being drowned out by the noise of the world?

Prayer

Lord I pray that You would give me the eyes to see and the ears to hear so that I may know You more. Lord empty my heart of all other things and fill me with a desire to know You more. Protect and guide my heart so that I can withstand the desires to drift away. I want to *Know Christ* more and more each day. Speak to me Lord, for your servant is listening. Amen.



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REFLECTHIM



REFLECTHIM

Reflect Him: Week 3: Monday

Kevin Wildman

Matthew 16:13-26

Last week we read through this same passage. I am amazed at the difference between all the masses that Encountered Jesus, and those like Peter who Knew Christ. One of the incredible things about Scripture is the way in which there are so many lessons, even in a single passage. Today I want to look at this passage through a different lens. The call on the lives of those who Know Christ is a call to *Reflect Him*. The impulsive hot-head Peter is going to serve as our example and study of what it looks like to *Reflect Him*.

Immediately after Peter's great confession acknowledging Jesus as the Christ, Jesus says (my paraphrase), "You are blessed Simon. I tell you that you are Peter." (Matthew 16:18). Jesus renames him Peter, which sounds similar to "rock," you could say that He nicknamed him Rocky. This nickname, like many nicknames, reveals his character. In his life and ministry for Christ he is going to be a rock, solid and stable...ish. While this meaning is debated and not all would agree with my conclusion, I believe that Jesus is saying to Peter that he is going to use Peter as a key player in building His Church. This is evident in the rest of the New Testament.

Jesus tells Peter that this Church that he is going to be instrumental in building is going to be so powerful that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (16:18). He is telling Peter that the Church is not going to be some fortress from the world, rather it is a battering ram made for invading and occupying enemy territory. Christians are not to be afraid of the powers of hell, the reality is that we are united with the power that has defeated the powers of hell, and we are called to be gaining ground conquering the strongholds of hell for our King.

It doesn't take long for Churchleader Rocky to lose focus, shortly after being told that the gates of hell cannot stand, Peter finds himself speaking for Satan. This is why I love this impulsive hot-head, he gives me hope. Not only does Peter fail to *Reflect Him* in this statement, we know that later he will deny ever Knowing Christ, yet Jesus still uses Rocky to accomplish His mission on earth.

Using the unstable Rocky as an example, Jesus reminds the disciples that a



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Reflect Him: Week 3: Monday

life following Him is a life that *Reflects Him*. To *Reflect Him* one must live a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

In summary as I look at Peter I am reminded that to *Reflect Him* I need to be solid and stable in my faith, I need to be advancing the territory of my King, and to keep my focus on my King so that I don't inadvertently serve the enemy with my words and life.

Reflection Questions

In what ways do you see that your faith struggles to be solid and stable?

In what ways are you advancing the territory of your King?

What could you do to further advance His territory?

In what moments are you prone to serve the enemy with your words and life?

Prayer

Thank God for His willingness and desire to use you to expand His Kingdom. Ask the Holy Spirit to make it clear to you where you are failing to *Reflect Him*. Repent of any unfaithfulness, and commit to obedience. Ask God what He wants you to be doing to advance His Kingdom.



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REFLECTHIM

Reflect Him: Week 3: Tuesday

Gary Johnson

Philippians 2:1-11

Who do you look like? Your mother, your father or maybe a combination. I look like my mother's side of the family. I look like my grandpa Cook and my uncle Ronnie. I have some characteristics of my Dad's family but it's really easy to see that I look like a "Cook". I'm on the short side, I have thinning hair, I'm a little pudgy around the middle. I Have blue eyes and brown hair, what there is of it. Also I am a Kentucky basketball fan.

Who do you look like? Which parent or grandparent do you look like? Make a list of the similar characteristics you have with your family.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

More importantly who do you look like spiritually? Do you *Reflect Him*? Reread this passage, circle the words that describe you. If you are really brave ask your spouse or close friend to underline the words that describe you as well as Christ.

Philippians 2:1-11 (NIV)

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.



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Reflect Him: Week 3: Tuesday

And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Reflection Questions

How well are you reflecting Christ in your life? Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10. 10 being the highest's rating.

In this passage from Philippians, which words did you circle?

Which words did you not circle?

Prayer

Lord I can easily get caught up on looking like Satan much more than I look like You. Give me wisdom in knowing what I should do and be, give me the desire to change to become more reflective of You. Lord help me to actively be in the change process. Of becoming more and more like You each day.



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REFLECTHIM

Reflect Him: Week 3: Wednesday

Derrick Jackson

Matthew 12:33-37

Throughout His ministry Jesus was questioned about things He did and when He did them. Here in Matthew 12 the Pharisees were at it again. According to verse 1 we read that it is the Sabbath and Jesus is being questioned and criticized by them for the things He did on that day. The Pharisees were so legalistic that they couldn't see what God was doing through His Son at the time. Their hearts were hardened so much that when God showed up and His mercies were poured out on the sick and the broken they took it as evil and they missed the Messiah.

In verse 33 Jesus tells us that we can recognize a tree by its fruit. If the tree is good, it will have good fruit. If the tree is bad, then bad fruit. For me it's easy to see why the Pharisees missed the Messiah...their hearts were bad. In Matthew 15 Jesus calls the Pharisees hypocrites when he quoted Isaiah 29 to them. He said to them, "These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

Jesus knew what was in their heart. The Pharisees cared more about making themselves look good instead of caring for those around them. When Jesus said, in Matthew 20, that He came to serve, not to be served, that was totally foreign to the leaders of the day because of the condition of their heart. Their actions were a reflection of their heart condition. "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks." Jesus goes right to the source of the problem.

When people looked at the Pharisees they saw religious leaders who had no compassion for anyone other than themselves. When people looked at Jesus they could see the love of a father...a heavenly father.

Jesus was reflecting the love of God on those around him, thus illuminating or showing God's love to everyone. The Pharisees were only concerned with making themselves look good. "Their hearts were far from him."

So how near or far is your heart from God? Our actions, words, and attitudes reflect the condition of our heart. Are we reflecting the love of God, or are we



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Reflect Him: Week 3: Wednesday

reflecting the love of ourselves?

Mike Baker in his book *Walk: Our Journey Toward Christlikeness* says, “If we want to look like Jesus we are invited to love like Jesus. If we want to think like Jesus we are invited to trust like Jesus. If we want to stand like Jesus we are invited to serve like Jesus.” The goal of every Christian is to reflect Jesus, to live as He lived, and be a living example for those who are around us each day. So the question isn’t are you reflecting, because we all are. The question you need to answer is, Who are you reflecting? Are you *Reflecting Him*?

Reflection Questions

Who are you reflecting in your life?

What are you going to begin doing to make strides toward *Reflecting Him*?

Prayer

Lord, give me a heart that *Reflects Him*. Guide my thoughts and give me the insight to see people as You see them. God, forgive me for where I have fallen short and only reflected myself. “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Amen.



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REFLECTHIM

Reflect Him: Week 3: Thursday

Jason Davis

Ephesians 5:1-17

We all use pet names or nicknames to address those we love. We call our spouses/children “honey” or “darling”, or if you’re in the south “sweetie” or “sugar”. I’m sure you get the point, however, there are often times we overlook the places in Scripture in which God uses those types of terms to refer to His people. When God commissions Moses to go back to Egypt, He refers to Israel as His “firstborn son” (Ex. 4:22) which was a place of honor and blessing. Before entering the promised land, Moses reminds the people that God had chosen Israel from among all the nations to be His “treasured possession.” But there is another place in which God uses one of these terms of endearment that we should take note of, especially since Paul reminds us that the Gentile believers (non-Jews/Israelites) are ingrafted branches into the tree that is Israel, God’s firstborn, His treasured possession.

Recorded in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43), God refers to Israel as Yeshurun, which is another term of endearment. Yeshurun means “upright one” and refers to the same people God calls his treasured possession, but we should take note of how it’s used: Yeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior (Deuteronomy 32:15).

There is much more that follows in the subsequent verses. You should read them. Moses saw this day coming and actually predicted what would happen when the people had all they “needed.” They forsook the LORD and forgot all about Him. Judges 2:10 reminds us that after Joshua died, the next generation “knew neither the LORD nor what He had done for them.” How? How could God’s firstborn, His treasured possession, the upright one turn away from his Father? Maybe its a slow drift. Maybe it looks something like the prodigal son. Or maybe we just become so “self sufficient” that we don’t think we need the LORD.

I think its ironic how the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, left His throne to become a servant, calls fishermen to follow him and not princes, eats with sinners and tax collectors and not the religious elite. Then He reminds all who listen to him that it is the “poor in spirit” that will be blessed,



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Reflect Him: Week 3: Thursday

and that following Him will most assuredly draw persecution of some kind which requires His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. If we are God's treasured possession, His firstborn, created in his image, then we must *Reflect Him*, bearing His traits. If we are His sons and daughters, then we, along with Jesus, must be doing the things we see the Father doing as stated in John 5. In doing so, people can't help but be drawn to Him.

You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Sonship, and by Him we cry "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:15-16)

Reflection Questions

What godly traits are you reflecting in your life?

What is one trait that you have allowed to mar the image in which you were created?

How can you begin to bring glory to the Father in this area?

Prayer

Father, my prayer is that the world may see You in me...through the words I speak, the way I love, the faith I have, and the manner in which I live. Amen.



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REFLECTHIM

Reflect Him: Week 3: Friday

Dave Sims

Exodus 34:29-34

Moses...what a guy!!! Cover your face, you're all shiny again! This is one of the greatest examples in the Bible of a person who was intimate with God to the point that everyone could see it...even physically. What would it be like to spend 40 days on a mountain top with God? Sounds awesome to me. Moses I am sure would have liked to stay there but God always sends us back down to the valley to deal with the demon possessed world (Oswald Chambers). In the darkness of humanity the radiance of God is obvious and blinding. John says about Jesus that "the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it".

So what does it mean to reflect Him? Am I reflecting Him? Well no one has ever asked me to cover my face...at least not because it was radiant. Have you ever been around a person who you could tell had been in the presence of Jesus? One who comes to my mind immediately is a lady named Linda, who was one of my professors at Johnson. She was one of the greatest influences on my relationship with Jesus. I had encountered Jesus, and was beginning to know Christ. Having a front row seat and seeing Jesus' reflection in her is what caused me to want to know Him more. This may surprise you but much of Bible college is purely academic. The Bible becomes a text book for answers, we polish arguments about theology, we prepare for the mechanics of ministry. Little of the experience has much to do with your relationship with Jesus. It was never this way in Linda's class. I remember many days that she would shut the door and go "off script" and in those moments it was as though the room was illuminated with the very presence of Jesus. She had an unbelievable ability to look right through you and speak to the deeper needs in your life and also to call out the deeper problems. What I love about her most is she didn't leave you wanting more time with her, but wanting more time with Him.

If we truly get to know Christ, like Moses, we will likely be unaware that we are glowing. But being shiny people is the result of spending time in His presence. Reflecting Him is a natural reaction to this relationship. The world around us should be asking "what is different about you"? If they aren't maybe we should



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Reflect Him: Week 3: Friday

be asking ourselves “what is missing”? Am I Reflecting I Am?

Reflection Questions

In what ways are you different because of your relationship with Jesus?

Do people see something different in you? How do you know?

Who is a person you see this reflection of God in? How can you spend more time with them to stretch yourself?

What things diminish or dim Jesus’ reflection in you?

Prayer

Spend a moment thanking God for giving us Jesus, a perfect human reflection of Him. Ask Jesus for His presence and to make you more like Him. Try to take at least a half an hour to spend in His presence today...set up a “tent of meeting” if needed.



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Love God: Week 4: Monday

Derrick Jackson

Daniel 3

If you are an Indiana Jones fan you can easily remember the scene near the end of "The Last Crusade" where Dr. Jones has found the room where the 'Holy Grail' is. The story goes that if you drank from the 'Holy Grail' you would receive eternal life, but if you drank from the wrong cup, you would lose your life. So in the room were many cups that he must choose from. The Knight who was there guarding it told him that he must choose wisely. Choose wisely and live or choose poorly and die.

In Daniel 3 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were faced with this very question. Not about what cup to drink out of, but as to whether they were going to worship a golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had instructed everyone to bow down to. In a sense the king told them the same thing that Dr. Jones was told...choose wisely. These 3 young men had a choice to make. Did they make the right choice? Absolutely, but why?

From an early age they had been raised and taught the importance of loving God, and that nothing was to be above that. It was to always be first. Their love of God trumped all things, including life threatening situations. For them the decision they were faced with seemed to be an easy one to make because they had prepared properly from a young age for this time. A life lived loving God was their goal, and a powerful king wasn't going to change that. So they chose.

Our love for God isn't based upon a feeling or words that we say, it's proven through our actions. To say that I *Love God*, is great, but if your actions say otherwise, then you're just fooling yourself. Your love for God must be shown. If someone were to accuse you of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? The 3 young men in Daniel 3 pass this test with flying colors because their actions match what they have been saying.

But why should we love God and show that to others? According to 1 John 4 we are to show our love for Him because He first loved us. 1 John 4:9 & 10 says, "This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we



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Love God: Week 4: Monday

loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” God proved His love by sending us His son to take our place on the cross. Daniel’s friends lived many years before Jesus came to earth but they still knew what the wise choice was. *Love God*, because He has loved me.

Reflection Questions

Is *Loving God* a priority in your life?

In what ways are you showing that you *Love God*?

Can others see your love for God in your attitude and actions?

In what ways could you prove your love for God?

Are you willing to make the wise choice in *Loving God*?

Prayer

God may Your name be praised because of the great love that You have so graciously shown me. May my life be a living example of how great You are. Guard my heart against the pull of this world to love other things more than You. May my life be a living sacrifice for You because of the physical sacrifice You made for me through Your Son Jesus. May I forever love and praise You. Amen.



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REFLECTHIM

Love God: Week 4: Tuesday

Gary Johnson

Colossians 3:1-17

First, we set our hearts/mind on things above v.1-4. We need constant reminders of what we are but also Whose we are. Satan tries to pull our attention away from God. Satan wants us to lose focus on the fact that we are overcomers in Christ. Satan wants us to lose sight of the ultimate outcome. However we need to make certain we focus on the love God has for us. We need to be reminded of why we *Love God* and why we say yes to some things and no to other things. Why we turn the T.V. at times and why we watch some shows and not others. We are doing things that increase our capacity and ability to *Love God*.

Second, put to death our earthly nature v.5-11. We need to remove things that would steal our love for God. Focusing on the things of our earthly nature pulls us away from *Loving God*. We are limited in our ability to focus on things and we can fill ourselves with so much that we push out the good stuff. You have heard the phrase, “garbage in, garbage out.” If we don’t take “garbage” into our lives, if we protect what we see, and what we do we remove the things that will pull us away from our love of God.

Third, clothe ourselves v.12-14. There are things that we can put on that will increase our love for God. Things that will enable us to have the characteristics of God. When we live like Him, we find it easier to act like Him, which in turn enables us to *Love God*. The choice is ours, just like choosing which clothes we put on each morning. We have work clothes and dress clothes and relaxing clothes. We have clothes we play in. Although it’s being seen less often, we have church clothes. We can say we put on things to *Love God*.

Fourth, let the peace of Christ rule your hearts v.15-16. Peace...it’s what everyone wants. We all want peace. We want peace in our personal lives. We want peace in our families. We want peace in our state. We want peace in our nation. Really we want peace in our world. We must place the importance of peace in our lives.

“What ever you do, in word or deed, do it in the name of Jesus” v.17-18



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Love God: Week 4: Tuesday

Reflection Questions

What are you going to add to your personal characteristics (words or deeds), that will let your love for God increase? List three of them.

What are you going to remove from your personal characteristics (word or deeds) that will let your love for God increase? List three things.

How will I do things to *Love God*?

Prayer

Lord, I want to love You. I need to change some things to enable that love to increase. Help me to have the guts to add things that will increase my love for God and to remove things that will decrease my love for God. Father, I need Your help in this.



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REFLECTHIM

Love God: Week 4: Wednesday

Kevin Wildman

Exodus 15:1-21

When I think about how to *Love God* one of the first things that comes to mind is worship. While there are many ways we worship, one of the primary is through song. As I think about worship through song, I love to look at and study this song of worship in Exodus after God delivers Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea.

One of the first things I notice about this song of worship is that without a doubt the focus is on God. If your translation is like mine you see the word "LORD," it is important to know that this word is a substitution for the translation of God's name "Yahweh." In this song there are 49 mentions of God, by name, pronoun, or "God." Not only does this song praise God, it would be used to teach future generations about what God did for Israel, it would shape their theology.

The theological content of this song is also striking, it doesn't take long to realize that this is not the shallow end of the theological swimming pool. Take a little time and make a list of the things this song teaches about God.

As I have studied this song there were a few questions/observations that I have not been able to escape. In his commentary on Exodus, Peter Enns writes, "Does worship really happen when stanza after stanza of a hymn or other type of song focuses on the personal status of the worshipper rather than the nature, character, and acts of God?" We need to be consistently examining the content of our worship.

If we are to *Love God*, it also has to be a daily choice to always put Him on the throne. Peter Enns continues, "Our natural tendency throughout the week is to focus on ourselves." We cannot *Love God* if we are constantly focused on ourselves. We must intentionally turn our focus from ourselves to God.



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Love God: Week 4: Wednesday

Reflection Questions

Does your worship tend to focus on the character and acts of God, or your personal status?

If someone were to list your theology based only on what you sing when you worship, what would they say you believe?

In what ways do you focus on God throughout the week?

In what ways do you still struggle with focusing on yourself?

Prayer

Using this song of praise from Exodus 15, and even Psalm 136, as a model, write out your own song/prayer of praise to God thanking Him for all that He has done.



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REFLECTHIM

Love God: Week 4: Thursday

Dave Sims

Psalm 27

I really like David, and not just because we share the same name. There are so many things about his life that resonate with mine. He has the simplicity of a shepherd, the heart of a warrior, a love for worship and music, a struggle with purity. But above everything else he has this constant internal drive to pursue God. He is described as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). I cannot think of a way I would rather be described than as a man who relentlessly pursues God. Not just to know about Him, or to have served Him well, or to have helped others come to salvation. Above all those things I want God Himself. To *Love God* personally, intimately, completely. As Matt Redmond put it... "to know both the friendship and fear." As you read Psalm 27 we see this same desire in the heart of David.

Much of humanity is concerned with knowing who God is and how to make sure we are "OK", that is wanting to know that we will make it into heaven. While this is an important question to find the answer to, I believe it is a very basic and infant approach to our relationship with God. I see all over the pages of Scripture people whose story is about so much more than knowing if they are saved. Often times we think of love as a feeling or emotion toward someone. It goes like this, "God saved me and it makes me feel good so I love Him...or feel good toward Him." This is not at all what real love is; real love is a decision of the will, followed by action, and yes, there are emotions that come with all of that. As a human example, if my love for my wife is based on my feelings, then what happens if my feelings change? Do I fall out of love? Maybe this is why so many human relationships struggle and maybe why we struggle in our relationship with God? Instead I love my wife because I choose to love her. I picked her from all the women in the world, she is special to me and nothing will change that. Because I choose her that leads my actions and my emotions to only increase my love for her. Jesus reminds us in John 15:16 that He chose us, we are secure because God chose us long before we ever chose Him. My love for Him is a choice I make as a response to His love for me. I choose Him above everything else and desire Him above everything else. The natural next step is that choice affecting my actions, my emotions, my pursuits, my relationships, in short everything that touches my life is



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Love God: Week 4: Thursday

changed by my love for God. No one chooses God perfectly every time. We see in David's life his failure with Bathsheeba (2 Samuel 11) and yet we see him return to God. I also have had more human moments than divine in my life. However every day I must choose again... "am I a man after God's Heart?"

Reflection Questions

Are you a person after God's Heart?

List some things in your life that would be evidence that you *Love God*? Time, attention, actions, service, etc.

What are things in your life that compete with your love for God?

How can you stretch yourself to *Love God* more? List some action steps.

Prayer

List ways that God has loved you, thank Him for His love. Talk to Him about how you want to *Love God* more...ask for His help. Confess any sin that gets in the way. Thank Him for His presence.



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REFLECTHIM

Love God: Week 4: Friday

Jason Davis

John 21:15-19

I love reading the accounts of the heroes of Scripture because almost each one has a time of intense struggle to which the rest of humanity can relate. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc. all have some sort of blot on their legacy in which we sit back and say, "Really...HE did THAT?!" John 21 is one of those places in which we are reminded that the guys who played those significant roles in the redemption story were just as human as we are.

We first meet Peter, originally called Simon, in Luke 5. Jesus gets into his boat after Peter had been out all night fishing and hadn't caught anything. Jesus tells Peter to put out into deep water and let down the nets. Peter obeys and they catch so many fish that the nets begin to break. Then Jesus calls him to be a fisherman...literally, a fisher of men. Peter is given a mission then and there and continues to grow in his faith. Peter is the one who makes the Great Confession in Luke 9, and is also one of three invited on a mountain when Jesus met with Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration in Matthew 17. Peter was one that was outspoken and seemed to be a quick learner. He was also the one who was picking up on the fact that Jesus sounded like he was in danger in John 13 and Peter quickly reminded Jesus that he was ready to follow the Messiah anywhere and would even lay down his life for Him.

Have you ever been there? Things are going great...your relationship with Christ couldn't seem to be better...you can hear His voice and seek His face daily...Then "it" happens. For Peter, "it" was the fact that his Master just told him that before morning comes Peter was going to deny knowing Jesus three times. And he did. Doubt creeps in, not doubt in God, but doubt in yourself... You question whether anything you felt or experienced up to this point was genuine... You begin to wonder if you've been living a lie... And you wish you could just go back in time... then Jesus comes to meet us exactly where we are... broken, battered, and bruised.

At the beginning of John 21, have you noticed how Jesus called to the disciples? The disciples were...on a boat...on the sea of Galilee...fishing. Sound familiar? When they get to shore Jesus and Peter have a conversation in which Jesus just has one question, "Do you love me." He asks him three



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Love God: Week 4: Friday

times and then tells Peter to FOLLOW HIM.

Though this is not a license for foolish living, it comforts me because I am reminded of the forgiveness that is on display in Christ and just how our struggle makes us stronger (James 1).

This account also reminds me that my relationship with Christ is not dependent on my actions, but His. Though Peter says three times that he didn't know Jesus...Jesus knew Peter and had mercy on Him.

Reflection Questions

From your study thus far, what have you learned *Loving God* looks like?

Do you *Love God*?

How are you following Him?

Prayer

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13)



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Love People: Week 5: Monday

Gary Johnson

1 John 4:7-21

“Love one another” What does that mean? More specifically what does that mean to you?

By *Loving People* we are demonstrating the love of God. God loved man, so much so that first God created man (Genesis) and gave him a beautiful, fulfilling place to live. With all the thousands of possibilities of what man could do the only “do not do” was to not eat the fruit of one tree in the entire garden. We know the outcome is that man sinned and was thrown from the garden because of his disobedience. We are still paying the consequences for that moment in history.

By loving others we are demonstrating the love Jesus had and has for us. Jesus came to this earth to live, die and resurrect because of our sin. He paid the price for man’s disobedience. He lived a perfect life, died a criminal’s death and resurrected a victorious Savior. We see again in broad brush strokes God’s love for us.

So God tells us to love one another. Again I ask, what does that mean?

It means we need to ask ourselves what would Jesus do in this situation? If asked, would He provide food for the hungry, clothes for the destitute, transportation for those without it? I believe the answer is yes, with one expectation and that is that during the time of “loving others” we would tell them our motivation for “loving them”. That motivation is found in the text this morning. Verse 19 “we love others because He (God) first loved us. What we do for others is a direct result of God loving us. Remember God’s love is a pure love. It is based on God’s heart not ours. His heart is perfect and pure and without division. Ours is not. So we act as if we were God in loving others.



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Love People: Week 5: Monday

Reflection Questions

Name three people that you can demonstrate God's love to.

The first one is to be someone in your immediate family

The second one is to be someone who is a friend

The third is to be someone you do not know.

Some suggestions on how to *Love People*:

Provide a ride to store, doctor, family member.

Provide a meal for their family, home cooked preferably.

Invite them to church, better yet pick them up and bring them.

Invite someone out to eat, maybe after church.

Give a gift, baked goods are always a good choice.

Know from the beginning that it will seem harder than it is. Satan does not want you to demonstrate God's love and he will oppose it.

Know that good will come from it. Isaiah 55:11 "so is my word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Prayer

Lord I want to *Love People* because You loved me. It's while I'm loving them that I am most like You and Jesus. I'm giving of myself without expectation of a physical return. Help me to see others as You see them and help me to love others because You are love and as Your followers we are to love also.



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REFLECTHIM

Love People: Week 5: Tuesday

Dave Sims

1 John 3:11-24

Love God, *Love People*...Jesus lays out these two things as the greatest commandment, notice that His commandment is singular. I often say "Love God...easy, *Love People*...not so easy!" Why is it that loving God is easy? Simple, He is perfect and loves us...what's not to love about that? But people on the other hand are not so perfect, and sometimes not so nice let alone loving toward us. We are not commanded to *Love People* who love us, it is not conditional, we are to love everyone, even our enemies according to Jesus.

Why is *Loving People* connected to loving God? Personally I have found that as I have learned to love some unlovable people that it grows my understanding of God's love for both myself and them. I have to constantly remind myself that love is not just a feeling but a decision that is followed by action. So when I don't feel so loving toward someone the best thing I can do is decide to love them with my actions and then watch as my heart changes. John makes this abundantly clear in chapter 3 verse 16..."this is how we know what love is, that Jesus Christ laid down His life for us". You see that Jesus made a decision about us and followed it up with action, laying down His life for us. Then John says we should lay down our lives for our brothers. I contest, "John, wouldn't it be easier if we just all went to church together and sing songs, serve an hour or two, and maybe give some money at offering time?" Laying down our lives for each other sounds a whole lot messier and like a much bigger commitment than the above idea. So much of what we have defined as "the church" in our culture comes dreadfully short of what we are actually called to be and do as Christ's followers.

When I am confronted with this idea of *Loving People* I begin to squirm a little. As a minister there are at least 50 hours a week of being a professional Christian. Hours for which it should be easy to account whether I was loving God and/or people. But what about the other hours of the week? Am I *Loving People* during those hours? All of us are tempted to compartmentalize our lives and only let the religious things be accounted for in the religious boxes. But Jesus speaks to all of our life when He gives the command to Love God and *Love People*. People at work, at home, at school, in the store, in traffic, ones who insult or annoy us...all people. And real love is an action where we



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Love People: Week 5: Tuesday

lay down ourselves for the sake of others.

Reflection Questions

What evidence is there that you *Love People*?

Who are the easiest people for you to love?

Who are the hardest people for you to love?

For the next couple days try exchanging how you treat the easy people to love, for how you would treat the hard ones...see what happens.

Prayer

Think of people you are thankful are in your life, thank God for them. Think of people you struggle to love, ask God to help you love them. Tell God about the cross and the way you see that He loved you. Ask Him to help you *Love People* the same way.



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REFLECTHIM

Love People: Week 5: Wednesday

Jason Davis

John 13:1-17

There are multiple times in which Jesus states that He has come to do the will of the One who sent Him, the Father. One of my favorite places Jesus makes this claim is in John 5 when Jesus says, “The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.” This is a lesson that Jesus is seeking to pass on to His disciples.

If Jesus is Immanuel (GOD with us), you would think that the fact that Jesus is God in the flesh would be accompanied by an attitude of entitlement because, after all, He was the one that spoke the universe into existence (John 1). But with Jesus, it is quite the contrary. In fact, Mark 10 records discussion that Jesus has about being first in the Kingdom, and Jesus reminds them, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” This is something that has been modeled to the disciples and something Jesus regularly reiterated in His conversations. The account in John 13 was not a new subject, but one they should have been familiar with.

In this upper room scene, Jesus has His 12 closest earthly friends together in the same place, celebrating one of the most important festivals of the year, Passover, on the night He was to be arrested. Because the Jewish day begins at sundown, this is actually the same day He stands trial and is killed. In the next 24 hours the disciples were going to witness the man they had left everything to follow for three years while He taught and performed miracles like nothing they’d ever seen or heard be brutally tortured and nailed to some form of cross on public display. Jesus knows what’s going to happen but the disciples don’t, which is why He takes the time, beginning in John 13 and running through John 17, to give them the most important words He will ever speak to His disciples. And how does He start? He washes their feet. At first, some resisted. When He had finished, He returned to His place and gave the lesson on which the Gospel stands, humility. In fact, this attitude of humility is the launching point that Jesus uses to convey to His disciples that the world would know them by their ability to LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

We call Jesus...Master, Savior, Lord, Christ, etc. He is those things, and just



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as the Son can only do what He sees the Father doing, we too must be about our Master's business. We serve a Savior that left His throne, was made a man, was obedient to death on a cross, and then exalted by God. We serve a Savior that is the epitome of humility and Philippians 2 reminds us that we should have the same attitude of Christ Jesus. If we truly want to *Love People* we must humble ourselves and serve, loving others as Christ loved us.

Reflection Questions

How much of your life is spent looking to your own interests?

According to Christ's example, how do we effectively *Love People*?

How/where is Christ calling you to serve?

Prayer

Christ, open my eyes to see the world as You do. Help me to remember who I am in You. Amen



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REFLECTHIM

Love People: Week 5: Thursday

Derrick Jackson

Matthew 25:31-46

Growing up on a hog farm we did a lot of sorting each week as to which pigs were ready to go to market. Several people were involved in getting the pigs that were ready on the trailer. The one who had the most important decision and job was the one operating the gate that sent the pig back to the pen or up the chute to the trailer. It was their judgment as to whether or not a pig was good enough to go to market.

Now I know the judgment that Jesus is talking about here in Matthew 25 is not like sorting hogs. On the farm we were only judging a pig by how it looked. God doesn't judge us like that (1 Samuel 16:7). God isn't concerned with how we look, He is concerned and cares about what we do with what He has given us. We have been created in the image of God and with that He has also created us to do good works. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We have been created to *Love People*, but not just for ourselves, we have been created to do good to others. Paul tells us in Philippians 2 that we are not just to look out for our own interests, but that we are to look out for the interests of others.

Loving People is exactly that. We see people in need everyday, but how often do we show them love by helping them out? *Loving People* is exactly what we have been called to do, but more than that, it's what we have been shown to do. Jesus lived His life perfectly in line with this way of thinking. He wasn't one to just say something and not do it, He proved His love for people by showing it. James 4:17 says, "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." That's exactly why Jesus pointed this out to disciples here in Matthew 25. It's not about showing up on Sundays looking and talking the part. It's living it out daily with those around us.

God is going to give eternal life to those who live out the Word by showing love to those around them. Likewise, He is going to eternally punish those who do not (vs 46).



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Love People: Week 5: Thursday

Reflection Questions

How aware are you of the needs that others have around you?

Have you been purposefully withholding from doing good to someone because of what they have done?

What is holding you back from helping others and what do you need to do to change your perspective?

Prayer

Lord I pray You give me a heart like Yours. That I can not only see who is in need but be willing and able to help in whatever way possible. God forgive me for the times that I have ignored those in need. Give me a servant's heart and attitude like Your son Jesus displayed for those He encountered. God I thank You for the many blessing that You have so graciously given me. None more important than Your Son, Jesus Christ. It's in His name I pray. Amen.



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REFLECTHIM

Love People: Week 5: Friday

Kevin Wildman

1 Corinthians 13

To be honest this is a passage I have struggled with for many years, which is fitting because I have also struggled to *Love People* for many years. You may be familiar with this passage because it is one that is often read at weddings, which is part of my struggle with it. It seems like it is read and quoted without paying attention to what Paul was writing about when he penned the words. The reality though, I've learned, is that these words are packed with relevance for us today.

Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians as a letter to the Christians in Corinth. If you are unfamiliar with this congregation, you need to know that they were very dysfunctional. There were divisions over which spiritual leaders to follow, a man sleeping with his step-mom, Christians suing each other, more sexual immorality, marriages falling apart, idolatry, worship wars, the abuse of spiritual gifts, denial of the resurrection, and the list could go on. Doesn't this sound familiar? When I read this list, I begin to wonder if Paul was writing to a congregation in Corinth or to one in America. With problems like this, is there any need to explain why I struggle to Love People?

In the conversation around the need and the ways to *Love People*, care and service are almost always discussed. Paul addresses this issue a little differently. He tells the Corinthians, and in turn us, that spiritual gifts, knowledge, and personal sacrifice are worthless apart from love. In short, Paul says that motives matter. It is possible for us to give sacrificially, to the Church, to our neighbors without being loving. It is possible for us to visit the sick and hurting without being loving. We can donate time, money, and resources to others without being loving.

The problem is that we easily deceive ourselves into thinking and believing that we are being loving because of our actions. It is important to remember that Jeremiah warns us that, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). If our own hearts deceive us, how are we ever to know if we are being obedient to *Love People* or not? One option is to keep doing what we are doing and hope for the best. However, Paul presents a better, albeit painful, way to evaluate whether or not



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Love People: Week 5: Friday

we Love People.

Take a minute and reread 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. We know that “God is love.” (1 John 4:8), and that being the case in these verses we could change every occurrence of “love” (and the pronouns that refer to love) to “God” and the passage would be just as true as what Paul wrote. If you want to know if you *Love People* or not, try to replace “love” (and its pronouns) to your name. Does the passage remain true?

If you are anything like me, you are fairly frustrated right now. It is a difficult task to *Love People*, but that is what we are called to. There are a couple things that help me to *Love People*. 1) I need to remember, even remind myself, that the person I struggle to love is God’s Image bearer. Like me they are broken and sinful, but God created them in His image. 2) I need to remember that they are someone who God loved enough to allow His Son to die for them. It was their brokenness, along with mine, that Christ died to redeem. This does not make love easy, but it does make it possible, and easier.

Reflection Questions

Which of the characteristics of love from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 do you see that you are weak at?

Ask a trusted friend, co-worker, your spouse, or one (or more) of your kids which of these characteristics you struggle with. What did they identify?

What can you do to address this weakness?

Prayer

Thank God for creating you and all other people in His image. Thank Him for loving us all enough to allow the Sacrifice of His Son to redeem us. Thank Him for being the embodiment of love. Pray for the strength to love in the way described in 1 Corinthians 13. Ask God to help you remember His love for people, so that you are able to *Love People*.



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Make Disciples: Week 6: Monday

Jason Davis

2 Kings 2:1-18

What if the person/persons most influential in leading you to Christ had not been obedient to God's call? Where might you be?

1 Kings 16-19 chronicles the life of Elijah the prophet and his interaction with an evil king of Israel, Ahab, and his even more evil wife, Jezebel. Elijah had been commissioned by God to be His mouthpiece in dealing with Ahab, Jezebel, and all Israel. Ahab had erected a temple to Baal at the prompting of his wife because she was a Baal worshipper. In doing so, he led the nation further from God and did more evil in God's eyes than all the kings before him. As if this weren't enough, Jezebel considered it her personal mission to put a stop to the worship of God of the Israelites by killing all of His prophets. Elijah was one of the only ones left. Perhaps you are familiar with the story. If not, go back and read those chapters.

After a showdown on Mt. Carmel, Elijah chases the 450 prophets of Baal to the Kishon Valley and slaughters them there. Once Jezebel hears what Elijah had done, she puts a price on his head and vows to kill Elijah. Now overcome with fear...Elijah flees...lays down under a broom tree...and gives up. He tells the Lord that he wants to die. Elijah is led to Horeb (Sinai) where the Lord confronts him and reminds Elijah that his work is not done. It is then that the Lord tells Elijah to go and anoint Elisha and make him his understudy. Elisha was at Elijah's side for somewhere between 7 and 10 years. He watched his every move...what he drank...what he said...how he slept...how he prayed...who he healed... What if Elijah had given up? What if Elijah hadn't been obedient?

Now, what do you see in the scene in 2 Kings 2? Elisha clings to Elijah and won't leave his side because he knows that somehow, someday Elijah is being called home by God. What is even better is the answer to Elijah's question. Elijah asks Elisha, "What is it you want?" I love Elisha's answer, "I want a double portion of your spirit." This is the way that we should be influencing the world around us, especially those that God has entrusted to us to disciple. However, if Elisha is going to receive what he asks, what will be the evidence? If Elisha gains a double portion of Elijah's spirit, he will be doing



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the same things you see Elijah do. Just as soon as Elijah is swept up into heaven, Elisha picked up the cloak that is left and walks up to the Jordan River and the rest is history. I encourage you to do a character comparison between the two. Much of Elisha's life mimics that of Elijah.

So what's the point? If we are to be disciples, we need to reflecting the one we are striving to be like...Christ. If we do, others will follow. If we fail to heed our call, there are generations that miss out on eternity. We never know all the eyes that are watching, but they are there, seeing how you walk, how you react, where you put your trust, and who you are pointing to. Don't give up. Keep walking. Seek His face!

Reflection Questions

Who was most influential in leading you to Christ?

What are some of their godly characteristics you would like to display in your own life?

Who are you discipling?

Prayer

God, help me to walk in Your ways, on paths You have prepared for me. Help me to do that which Christ calls all His followers, "Follow." Amen



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REFLECTHIM

Make Disciples: Week 6: Tuesday

Kevin Wildman

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

Everything that we have discussed and studied to this point builds into the process of *Making Disciples*. Everything in our Mission and Vision is cyclical, but the reality is that we cannot make disciples if we are not first disciples ourselves. We do not have to be fully developed, if so none of us would be able to disciple, but it is necessary that we have and continue to Encounter Jesus, Know Christ, Reflect Him, Love God, and Love People if we are to successfully *Make Disciples*. Our ability and capacity in these areas will be ever increasing, so long as we cooperate with God's work, but we cannot lead people where we haven't been ourselves. If we are to *Make Disciples*, we must Be Disciples.

That being said, I am convinced that these words of Paul offer several insights to discipleship.

First, Disciples seek the good of others over their own good (vs 24). This is a difficult thing for us to get a handle on, we are self-centered beings. One of the first words a baby learns is "mine." We see kids very early in life scream and cry when things don't go their way. If we are honest we must admit that we are prone to similar behavior. We may not throw a tantrum, but we pout, we hold grudges, we become bitter. Paul spends a significant amount of time in this passage illustrating what this looks like in the life of the Corinthian Christians' lives. If we are to progress in our conformity to the image of Christ, we must strive to die to ourselves, to consider others more important than ourselves.

Second, Disciples do everything for God's glory (vs 31). This too is a difficult task in our self-centeredness. I'm reminded of a conversation Nathan Foster has with his dad Richard in *The Making of an Ordinary Saint*, on the issue of fasting. Nathan explains that he struggles with the mixed motives he sees in himself as he fasts. Richard responds, "No one approaches the disciplines with anything but jumbled motives." While Foster is looking at a more specific area, we find the truth that even in our best efforts to glorify God, we have mixed motives and can still seek our own glory. We must be diligent about opening ourselves up to and inviting examination from the Holy Spirit in



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regards to who's glory we are truly seeking.

Lastly, Disciples Disciple others. This is where we often get intimidated, we don't feel qualified to disciple (train and equip) others. Paul explains discipleship in a nutshell, it is imitating the one who is discipling. To *Make Disciples* you are to live a life that when imitated leads people further in their journey towards Christlikeness.

Reflection Questions

Who's good do you seek most, your own, or that of your neighbor?

Can you say that you do everything that you do in order to glorify God?

What needs to happen for you to seek God's glory in everything?

To what extent would a person be imitating Christ if they were to imitate you?

Are you living a life worth imitating?

Prayer

Thank God for the people who have modeled the Christian life for you. Ask God to show you some people you need to be discipling. Commit to follow through in obedience.



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Make Disciples: Week 6: Wednesday

Derrick Jackson

Deuteronomy 6

Deuteronomy is the last book of the Torah, the law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Pentateuch. From chapters 5-28 Moses gives us principles for Godly living. This section of Scripture was a review for the Israelites because they had already received the law, but they needed reminded, much like us.

I can remember from an early age that reading and studying God's word wasn't just something you did at church once or twice a week. It was modeled at home daily as if it were important. Well it was, and is! Moses makes it very clear about how often we are to keep God's Word around. In verses 4-9 he tells us that God's laws aren't just for a 1 hour service on Sunday, but are for every single minute of every day, and that they are not just for us to keep, they are to be passed down to our children so they can know them as well.

Verses 10-19 give us an example of what the Israelites would have if they lived their lives according to God's law. God had promised a land where they would be blessed if they would stick to the plan. The plan started with loving God with all that you have (vs 5). Moses gives pretty clear instructions on how to live according to God's laws in verse 18..."do what is right." That doesn't seem that hard does it?

The majority of the junk that is on the news is all about people who chose not do what was right. Now we may think in our minds we are right when we act but we know that if we act out the desires of our heart, which we have all done, the result of those actions are not always good. Moses tells us to do what is right. Not in our eyes or our friends or families eyes, but in God's eyes. "Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you..." To say that this was preached to me as a kid...as well as today... would be an understatement. The older I get the more I see the importance of this chapter and why Moses emphasized it so much.

Diligently teach your children God's commands. Talk about them all the time. Write them in places you will see them a lot. God's words are to be with us at all times so that we can *Make Disciples*. We may all have different earthly



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Make Disciples: Week 6: Wednesday

jobs, but we all have the same heavenly job...*Making Disciples*. But how can we *Make Disciples* if we aren't following the teacher himself? Regardless of whether you feel qualified or not, we all have been called to *Make Disciples*. Whatever your position or wherever you work, *Making Disciples* should be at the top of the list.

Verses 20-25 give us the why. When your son asks...when your daughter, parent, co worker, neighbor, enemy asks...you can tell them the reason for your faith. God's Word isn't to be just hanging out on a shelf 6 days a week. It's to be living in and through us so that our kids and whoever we are around may see God at work in us. God's word is useful and it is to be used to *Make Disciples*; to pass the love of God to those who don't know it.

Reflection Questions

Are you reading and studying God's Word daily?

Is His Word with you at all times?

Do you talk about it with your kids?

Is it being lived out so that others can see God working through you?

Prayer

Lord I pray that Your words would be with me at all times. God may I love You above all things in my life, so much as to be willing to share Your love with those who You have put around me. Especially my kids Lord, may I be able and willing to teach them how great You are. God thank You for Your Words and how they can change even a sinner like me. May Your name be praised. Amen.



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REFLECTHIM

Make Disciples: Week 6: Thursday

Dave Sims

2 Timothy 3:10-17

In order to *Make Disciples* we have to be a disciple and have a disciple. This is why I love this passage of Timothy. We get such an intimate look at Paul and Timothy and the relationship they had between them. Paul had been preaching for years at this point. He had been through countless struggles and multiple moments of persecution, beatings, prison and the like. As he gives this charge to Timothy he recounts some of these most difficult trials to remind Timothy of his faithfulness. Then he challenges Timothy to a life of the same challenges and to be faithful. He also reminds him that God's Word is the anchor that we return to, giving us guidance and correction when we need it. In short Paul says to Timothy, "See what I have done! Do it this way, do it Jesus' way".

Have you had a Paul in your life? One of mine is a man named Greg. I have known him since I was fairly young. I have watched him for 35 years as he has remained faithful through highs, lows, and some of the darkest moments people ever have to walk through. He was a youth coach when I was young, and Elder of the church, I also served under him as a youth intern, He was one of the men in my ordination. More than that he has been a dear friend and brother. He taught me about God's Word and His work and yet I can't remember any particular teaching that comes to mind. I can, however, tell you about countless moments and lessons that were learned with few to no words ever spoken. He has been a living reflection of Christ's life. We all need a Greg or a Paul.

Do you have a Timothy in your life? Who are you pouring out your life into? As you live and move and have your being in Christ, who are you intentionally helping in their journey of faith? We are always influencing people for good or bad. I am afraid sometimes of "what things" I made disciples of in my youth ministry years. Hopefully they saw Jesus more than anything. I have several men who I have been very intentional to disciple over several years. The amazing thing about those relationships is that over time the ones you disciple begin to disciple you back. How amazing is Jesus that His plan is one that not only *Makes Disciples* but even strengthens those who made them. It is a self replicating process...change that...a Jesus replicating process. It only stops if



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Make Disciples: Week 6: Thursday

you don't do it. So do it! If you need help, ask.

Reflection Questions

List the people who have helped disciple you.

What are the traits you see in them? What have they taught you?

What is the evidence that you are a disciple of Jesus?

Who are you intentionally passing your faith on to? How are you helping them live it out?

Prayer

Tell God about the example that Jesus set for you. Thank God for the people you listed that disciplined you. Pray about your own following of Jesus. Pray about people you are discipling or that the Holy Spirit would lead you to those you could disciple.



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REFLECTHIM

Make Disciples: Week 6: Friday

Gary Johnson

Colossians 1:9-12

How do you *Make Disciples*? You don't, God does. We do our part with a recipe. The first ingredient of that recipe is continuous prayer. Not just a one time deal, not even a first thing in the morning prayer. Although I suspect that would be better than most of us are doing presently. I'm referring to those arrow prayers that we launch at the spur of the moment all through the day and night.

Prayer for knowledge from the Spirit. We are to ask for knowledge, not miraculous knowledge, rather the ability to recall what we have studied and to be able to repeat it in a rational way.

Prayer for worthy life of pleasing God. We are to pray for our life that we act and speak in a way that God will be pleased to have His name associated with it. The words and deeds will be a sweet aroma to God.

Prayer for fruit: we need to ask God to give a result. To produce a harvest.

Prayer for growth: this is not about reaching new people, as much as it is personal growth in Christ. Am I growing in the word of God, is my life becoming a life of prayer? Am I spending time with other Christians in worship and in fellowship?

The second ingredient in this recipe is joyful thanks

Thanks to be on the team

There are three steps in the process; there is the introduction to Jesus. There is the decision to submit to Jesus. There is the growing up into the likeness of Jesus. Ask yourself these questions:

Have I met Jesus? This must be done first. Have I heard and understood the message of the gospel?

Have I surrendered to Jesus? Do I recognize that I'm a sinner and need forgiveness? Have I followed Jesus's example of baptism?



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Make Disciples: Week 6: Friday

Have I placed myself in a position that will enable me to receive knowledge from God's Word, am I living a life that is pleasing to God, am I seeking to produce fruit, new Christians, am I seeking growth in my Christian life?

There are people who work in the sports industry that are called scouts. Their job is to check out the other team to prepare a plan for defeating them. Also they are often charged with the responsibility of finding and evaluating new talent. We need to be scouts for God. Consciously looking for people who need the gospel, and for those on the team who need to grow in their ability. Be a scout for Jesus.

Reflection Questions

Am I giving thanks for what God has done and is doing in my life?

Who am I planning on introducing to Jesus? Write a list of three people.

Which of the three do I plan to talk to first? Encourage them to not only respond to the gospel but also to the growth process.

How can you help those who are in your life as a disciple get connected?

What are you doing to ensure that you are growing as a disciple for others to follow?

Prayer

Lord, I know my shortcomings, I know what needs to happen to change the shortcomings. Help me to make the decisions to be a part of the things I need to grow in You. Help me to lead others to do the same. Help me to be that example. More so help me to be that person who takes another by the hand and leads them into growth.



ENCOUNTERJESUS



KNOWCHRIST



REFLECTHIM

Sterling

CHRISTIAN CHURCH



LOVE**GOD**



LOVE**PEOPLE**



MAKE**DISCIPLES**



ENCOUNTER**JESUS**



KNOW**CHRIST**



REFLECT**HIM**

Worship Services:

9:00am Traditional

10:30am Contemporary

6:00pm Contemporary

Office & Youth Center:
109 North Eagle Street
Veedersburg, IN 47987

Worship Center:
701 South Sterling Avenue
Veedersburg, IN 47987

(765) 294-2405

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