



THE **ROCK**
STUDENT MINISTRIES
P S . 6 1 : 2

October Devotions 2018



Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the **law of the LORD!**
Blessed are those who keep **his testimonies**,
who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong,
but walk in **his ways!**
You have commanded **your precepts** to be kept diligently.
Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping **your statutes!**
Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all **your commandments.**
I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn **your righteous rules.**
I will keep **your statutes**; do not utterly forsake me!
How can a young man keep his way pure?
By guarding it according to **your word.**
With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from **your commandments!**
I have stored up **your word** in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me **your statutes!**
With my lips I declare all **the rules of your mouth.**
In the way of **your testimonies** I delight as much as in all riches.
I will meditate on **your precepts** and fix my eyes on **your ways.**
I will delight in **your statutes**; I will not forget **your word.**



BASIC

THE ROCK SM 2019

There are some **basic** things we must have in order to be called a Christian. We can't just say we are a Christian without some things being in place. We can't claim to be a chicken without producing some eggs, right? The reality of our life and walk with Christ is that this life is made up of **basic** principles. This year we'll look at some of these. We'll put them in 3 sections: Attitudes, Actions and Beliefs. These **basic** things come together in one life led by Christ to produce something extravagant.....all for God's glory.

We feel that these **basic** things be present in the life of the one that claims Christ as their savior and as one who claims to follow Christ and belong to God. We are always to be striving for and working towards these things as we seek to know Christ and make Christ known. We haven't perfected these things but are simply pursuing these things. These things aren't complex, they are **basic**.

This year we'll spend our time together focusing on these things. **Basic** things that must be present for the greater Life to be a reality. No one was ever extra without first possessing the **basics**. BELIEF influences Attitudes influences Actions. If this is true, and we feel it is, then we must ensure we are centering all our thoughts, attention, focus and priorities around what we believe to be true about God. Then and only then will our attitudes and actions proclaim Him loudly in a world that is desperate for Him.

So our heart this year is to be about the basic and allow God to bring about the extra.

Attitude Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, Actions bearing fruit in every good work and
Belief Increasing in the knowledge of God.

The Hope & Prayer

The hope of this devotion book is to provide the opportunity for students and adults to spend time with God in His Word and through prayer. There are many great devotion books available to us and we are thankful you have chosen to journey through God's Word with this particular one. We hope and pray that students and adults take this opportunity to walk with God in Word and Prayer seriously and become intentional in the time they devote to Him each day. We believe if this happens our walk with Him will strengthen.

Another great hope and prayer is that families will journey through this devotion guide together. Imagine if each family were having conversations based on what they were reading each day from God's Word? There is great possibility and great promise for the family that is centered around God and His Word.

The Plan

The plan will be to take 5 days each week to work through the devotions. These will be set up to be done Monday through Friday. Saturday will be used for reflection or catch up. We will provide a blank page for you to possibly reflect on the week in general, what stood out, what needs reminding, what steps were taken. Sunday will be a day of rest and worship. We will also give you a page for sermon notes...keep it all together right!?

In most cases our devotions will work with our sermons from The Rock. It will be another way to keep the idea fresh and hopefully help us drive the thought deeper down. This devo will be grounded in **the Word of God**. Scripture alone is our guide and help. The plan is to allow you the opportunity to open Scripture and see for yourself. We will help you each day with a simple devotion, grounded in Scripture but there is much more for you to see and read. **Throughout the year we will offer a Bible Reading Plan at the bottom of each devotion.** In some cases, our devotion will come from this passage but there will be some that are totally separate. Either way we want to give you the opportunity to trek with us as we journey through the Bible this year. We must get past the laziness of not getting in the Word of God. We hope you'll join us in this devotion book and reading plan but the end result is for you to get in the Word. Any way you do that is fine with us but how cool would it be if we were all trekking along together?

So have fun and dig in. At the least we hope you'll spend 5 minutes a day with our devotion. The end goal is to not only do the devotion but take some and read the reading plan Scripture of the day and jot down some thoughts. But again...the goal is simple.

The SET UP

Each day the devotion will provide a Scripture and then from there offer three things, an explanation, an illustration and an application. We must not be hearers only but doers. So, these 3 steps will help us make sense of God's Word and best discover the heart of God as we read His Word.

A Few Tips and Tricks to Keep in Mind While Reading...

You've often heard the words **observation, interpretation, and application** around the Rock. You'll hear them, work through them and hopefully they eventually become a regular part of how you handle Scripture. Here is one great way to think about these principles as we seek to discover the heart of what God is wanting us to see and do from His Word. This is also a great tool to use when reading Scripture with other...it's called the **One-To-One Method**.

PICK UP A JOURNAL AT THE ROCK STORE TO USE ALONGSIDE THESE TOOLS.

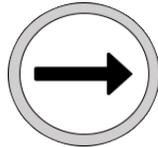
After reading the passage look for these three things:



A **light bulb**: anything that shines out in the passage and draws attention; it can be something important or something that particularly strikes the reader.



A **question mark**: anything that is hard to understand; something that the reader would like to be able to ask the author about.



An **arrow**: anything that applies personally to the readers life.

Want to go deeper than the above three things?

5 questions to ask when reading Scripture?

These questions will better help you get the point of Scripture and what God desires for us to hear and do. So again, work through the struggle and watch as God blesses this time.

1. What Does This Text Teach Me About God?
2. What Does This Text Teach Me About Man?
3. How Does This Text Point to Christ?
4. What do I need to know in light of this teaching?
5. What do I need to do in light of this teaching?

5 tips for a faithful, daily devotion

1. **Make it a priority** – stop making excuses and simply do what you know needs to be done in your walk with God. Enough is enough.
2. **Pray for guidance** – ask the Spirit to help you as you begin this time or if you've been doing this for years.
3. **Remove distractions** – you know how mad you get when someone interrupts your favorite song, show, book, game? Be that way with your time with the Lord.
4. **Plan for the Plan** - set aside a time and place but understand you don't have to be restricted with these. The important thing is doing it!
5. **Make it a Community Thing** – Get accountability! Bring your friends or family into it. If you go alone you'll not go far!

Missionary Prayer – Each week we'll provide a name of a missionary we are partnering with. We encourage you to pray for strength, wisdom, and boldness for them, their ministry and family.

Today we begin a new walk through Scripture. This month we'll read through 5 books of the Bible. Calm down! You've got this! As we read through these books we'll peak behind the curtains to one of the greatest known mysteries in the world, The Gospel.

In short the Gospel is this....**God doing for us what we couldn't do for ourselves and He did all of this through Jesus.** We heard this last month really...in Ephesians 2, that apart from Christ we are hopeless but in Christ we are full of hope and discover true purpose. The Gospel is the only hope we have in this life. The Gospel blows my mind. To think that God would choose to show love to a people who were against Him? That's crazy man. BUT, He did, through Christ, and this is good news. That's what the word "Gospel" means, good news. I kind of would have thought it would mean great news or be Greek for "Can you believe this?" but what do I know?

I'd say earlier we'd take this month to "peak behind the curtains" of the Gospel. So what does that mean? Well, if the Gospel is what the Gospel is then it should impact or affect every part of our lives. That's a BASIC thought right? Think about it...if I get an apple watch I should wear it daily right? If I get a car I should actually drive it right? If I get something I should use that something...it should be seen in my everyday life. If something then is considered the greatest thing I've ever received shouldn't it be seen in everything I do, everywhere I go, every thought I think? You get the picture? The Gospel DOES impact every part of my life, we can't do anything about that...it does what it do.

So then, the Gospel should be seen in every part of my life. We don't control the impact but we do control how it's seen. God handles the impact....He did this....He gifted us....He sent Christ. We have the responsibility and privilege to see it overflow into every part of our lives.

Colossians 1:13-14 are two verses of a chapter that is packed with Gospel influence. HUH? That means you see the impact of the Gospel all over chapter 1 of Colossians.

VV. 13-14 happen to illustrate just what makes this good news, good. **READ IT AGAIN** HE delivered us from this dark place (ourselves, our sin, our shame, our inabilities) and transferred us to the light (Christ) to enable us to actually live (His life, in His power, with no shame, His ability.)

Guys and gals, the Gospel is good! God is good! Christ is King! And we can know Him....we can receive this good news and then we can allow it to change everything. WHY?
BECAUSE THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING.

This is a **BASIC** thought. This is a **BASIC** belief.

Failing to believe, comprehend, trust in, and walk in this belief could hinder your life.

Why walk in your strength? Why trust in your thoughts? Why lean on your own abilities?

The amazing truth of the Gospel is that God has done for us what we could never have done for ourselves? Not sure about you but I think I'd rather trust Him than me anyway.

What's keeping you from trusting and walking in the Gospel?

Has there been a time where you've decided to follow Jesus?

When is the last time you shared this amazing news with someone else?

How is the Gospel seen in your life? Does it need to be seen?

I would answer that by saying this.....HOW COULD IT NOT BE SEEN? From dark to light?

That's like saying if I go from bald to afro you wouldn't notice. You follow?

Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008): *“Faithful members of the Church should be like oak trees and should extend deep roots into the fertile soil of the fundamental principles of the gospel. We should understand and **live by the simple, basic truths** and not complicate them. Our foundations should be solid and deep-rooted so we can withstand the winds of temptation, false doctrine, adversity, and the onslaught of the adversary without being swayed or uprooted.”*

Have you ever thought of the root system of a tree? "Because it is not visible like the treetop, a tree's root system is not given the appreciation it warrants. This configuration (make-up) of underground tentacles (roots) is the source **of health or illness** for the tree, and when winds buffet the tree, it serves as an anchor. The root system of a mature oak tree can total hundreds of miles. " Well so the hidden part that most can't see it the MOST important part of the sustaining life of a big ole honkin oak tree? And it keeps it stable? Unmovable? That is pretty amazing that something you can't see, but we know is there just below the surface holding everything up and together.

In **Colossians 1:15-23** the He that **V15** begins with is Christ. YES! HE is the Gospel that enables us to live Him out. His story lived out through our lives surrendered to Him. If you look a little above in **V12** it says HE QUALIFIES us to live and share in His inheritance! He delivered us from sin, giving us the life to live out. **V15-17** says Christ is the image of the invisible God, the one who created everything. He has ALL authority. He was before all things and HE HOLDS THEM TOGETHER, just like that root system holding that tree in one stable place. If the wind hits it, those roots hold it stable.

V21 says we were once alienated from Him...separated...doing evil things. (you better check yo-self...you still doing evil? Better get rooted!) But when we surrender our lives-GET SAVED-He planted His root system in you. **You are rooted in the Word through His story...the Gospel.**

V22 says that His death (the Gospel Story) is what enables (makes it possible for) us to live out this Gospel of His. His story will present us (make us be seen like the beautiful HUGE oak tree) blameless (without fault) before Him, **v23** IF you CONTINUE in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel...wait what? IF...continue...yes it is a continual daily surrendering (*Luke 9:23*) of ourselves to live for Him.

A tree is watered and receives sun (SON-ha...get it?!). There is a continual feeding process for the Oak Tree to remain healthy on the outside. A continual process we can't see. Our Life in the Gospel has some invisible things we can't see happening on the inside (just like the tree underneath the ground with its root system). Once you receive Christ, just like the scripture says, you are His. The seed was planted, now you have a solid root system and you are growing. Your growth as a Christian (little Christ) is stopped if you aren't feeding it. JUST LIKE THAT OAK TREE! The roots hold it stable and steady, unmovable even when the BIGGEST storms of your life come! School, temptations, parents, friends, STUFF...you name it. What's your storm? Yes, stop and name it right now! You know you have one. Living the Gospel out means feeding yourself so that when you are hit with a storm or your friend or classmate or family member is hit with a storm you are rooted, steady and stable enough to withstand it. You are feeding your root systems by reading your Bible and having a prayer life with the sustainer of LIFE...YOUR LIFE. He lives it out through you when you are rooted. Root yourself, before you wreck yourself! He will enable you to live His Gospel out in you if you are rooted.

Daily. Surrender. To. Him.

Be. Rooted. To. Live. The. Gospel. Life.

Entangled? Well stickin with the plant systems...your welcome FFA!

“In Brazil there grows a common plant called the matador or “murderer.” Its slender stem creeps along the ground, but no sooner does it meet a vigorous tree, than it sends out an entangling tentacle, which cleaves and climbs up the tree, at intervals sending out arm-like tendrils that further entangle the tree. As the “murderer” ascends, the tentacles grow larger and their clasp becomes tighter. Up and up the bad vine climbs until the last loftiest spire is gained and chained. Then in triumph, the parasite shoots a huge, flowery head above the strangled summit, and there from the dead tree’s crown, scatters its seed to begin its entangling work again.”

In **2 Timothy** we are told not to even get entangled in stuff to live the Gospel life and please our Savior...the One who enlisted us. If we continually find ourselves entangled in the drama of day to day life or **STUFF that makes us look like the enemy**, it will MURDER...okay it certainly doesn't help us live out the Gospel in our lives. It will cause us to be ineffective. What in the world do I do then to help myself not get entangled in the 'affairs of this life' so I can please the One who enlisted me?

Living the Gospel out daily in my life makes me a soldier. A soldier has a leader guiding him, who he DEFINETLY wants to please! Christ doesn't leave us alone to figure it out or try to win the battles on our own. He tells us how we can overcome the entanglements that try to halt the Gospel we are working to live out. Yes, according to both of the scriptures above WE CAN LIVE IT OUT.

Ephesians 6 tells us to suit up in our spiritual armor. There are a WHOLE lot of actions in these verses, so get ready and get to work. We are told this is not a flesh and blood battle...it is spiritual, so we need to be equipped properly to fight. Spiritual battle=spiritual armor. In order to stand in this battle you are commanded to put on the WHOLE armor not just pieces. You can't put on that helmet and protect your mind and leave your belt of truth off or shoes of peace at home. How many days do you do a great job in one area of your Christian walk and totally fail in another? I know, me too! I think this is where our battalion comes in. We know there isn't just 1 soldier fighting for the US in distant places. There are thousands upon thousands. They do it together. You can't win a battle alone. There is no way 1 person could pull back and kill all those matador vines from a tree. It would take an army to save that one tree from the death grip that vine has. You MUST surround yourself with like-minded soldiers, fighting the same way at the to battle for you. Willing to STAND and live out all the little parts of the Gospel to conquer one small battle at time to ultimately WIN the big battle of portraying and living out the Gospel to a lost and dying world and ultimately please the One who has enlisted you.

John Piper says when a Christian soldier's “evenings and days off begin to be filled up with harmless, enjoyable diversions...the whole feel changes. The radical urgency fades. The wartime mentality shifts to a peacetime mentality. The lifestyle starts to get cushy. The all-consuming singleness of vision evaporates.”

Spurgeon adds that “Many of God's children are in this condition — entangled, surrounded, captive, held fast!” Are there any “matador vines” in your life that need to be eradicated?”

Live out the Gospel in your day to day life.

Root up the vines that are entangling you and choking the Gospel in your Life.

So, what needs pullin'?

How does the Gospel help me become involved in the Church?

The Church is a community of people trying to live out the Gospel Life TOGETHER. It is not the building friend. It's my battalion that is fighting with me!

We left yesterday considering the Gospel in our day to day living as a full on battle. We realized by the end of it that we CAN NOT do it alone. We need our fellow soldiers to help encourage, build-up one another to win the battles and ultimately live out the Gospel for Christ. Where do we find a collective body of fellow believers that will strengthen and help me?

Yes, church.

Church is the group of believers that have attached themselves to one another coming together to corporately worship the Savior and thank Him for the gift of the Gospel, while seeking to learn and deepen their relationship with Him! Choosing (it is a weekly choice we make) to attend church regular can be the tie that binds your spiritual armor on daily. It will make you successful in living out the Gospel.

Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

Many choose to make church optional or are okay with a casual attendance.

If you casually attend Math class, what happens? You fail the class.

There's no growth in the subject. You struggle to maintain a passing grade. And because you never show up, there's no relationship with fellow students to even consider asking for help or to share notes. You just feel alone and negative about the class...you CHOSE to skip repeatedly by the way. You feel like you don't match anyone, because they have been attending and you have been skipping class. If you show up every now and then with your 'I hate math' attitude, can you really focus and learn anything?

BUT WAIT!, what if you attend it daily, you hear the teacher's instructions, you are laughing with your classmates at free moments (you're together all the time...there has to be some connection), and what is a hard class and difficult at times becomes doable and well you can pass it with a decent grade. Math may be hard, but now it is more doable with the support of a teacher and classmates working through the same stuff.

Yep, apply it spiritually guys. If you never attend church you feel lost when everyone else is together. You feel alone and unsupported in a walk the Word tells you is possible. We can't stir up and encourage one another' if we are not TOGETHER...because the day is approaching. Things are getting tougher. We need each other more in a day where Christians...real Gospel living life Christians are hard to find.

Don't just show up to meet your quota for the week or to please a parent. Show up with expectations. Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." Guess who promises to join us when we are gathered together to worship Him with more believers. YESSSS!!! Christ. Show up expecting to grow and gain the encouragement needed to fuel you in your pursuit of living out the Gospel Life. Try it. Faithfulness breeds fruit...good works v24 above.

We often hear the phrase, "I'm going to Church on Sunday", or something along those lines. A lot of times we refer to the actual building as the Church but in reality the body of believers that meets is the Church. The Church is made up of all of the saved individuals around the world, yet we meet in a local church setting.

As the Church of Christ, we have first been called to Unity. As like minded, fellow believers we have been commissioned to live out the command of God given in **Matthew 28:19-20**. Often referred to as the great commission, we are called to GO and make disciples. We are to be unified in doing so though. In verse 13 of the reading it says, "For we were all baptized by one spirit into the body." This verse speaks of the one alike thing that keeps us unified as a Church. So many times in the Church we let minor differences and opinions get in the way of the mission that God has commanded us to live out. This is a tactic of the Devil to stop the work of the Lord from going forward. Are you involved in drama in the Church that is affecting the Unity God has called us to have? If so, this needs to be made right. Go to that person and say something like, "I know we don't agree on this, but we are unified in the simple fact that we have been saved by Christ and need to put this behind us to not hinder the spreading of God's word." This may be hard to do, but it's what God has called us to do as his people.

Next in the reading, we see that although we are unified as a Church, that we all have separate roles. These roles are all equally important and should be viewed as so. The pastor is an important role in the church, but so is the greeter that hands you a bulletin and shakes your hand when you walk in the door. You have a job within the church and you should treat it as honorable and do everything to live out this job. You shouldn't complain about your role or boast about it either. God has divinely placed you there for a certain purpose. So yes we all have separate roles, yet it all works together in a unified body to live out the commission given to us by God.

What can you do to be more unified with the body of Christ?

Are you fulfilling your role in the church and treating it as honorable?

Is there any fellow believers that you need to make things right with to encourage unity and the furtherance of the gospel?

saturday -

October 6

CATCH UP DAY

CATCH UP DAY

Speaker: _____

Text: _____

So many of us, myself included, catch ourselves pursuing our goal of making the “big bucks”. Stuff like driving a new Tesla, buying the newest iPhone, living in the most elaborate mansion, or wearing the latest pieces from the New York Fashion Week. None of these things are bad or sinful, they are all good and can be used to glorify God in a variety of ways, that is until money (and it’s benefactors) become our deepest desire. I struggle with this all of the time, wanting to work longer hours to make more money, all so that I can ultimately spend it on things that I plan to bring me joy. It’s a common theme in our lives, and as we grow older, the desire will grow.

There are a couple of things that can help us to confront our sinful lust of money that we’ll discuss. They’re discussions that I’ve had with older mentors and adults that explain their financial situation, that tell me in a variety of ways what they would have done differently.

Money Can’t Buy Happiness

Laugh at me, I know, it’s cliché. You could say that it’s the most overused saying in the English language, but nonetheless it’s still so incredibly true. To a lot of people, money can be idolized to become a hopeful escape to any problem that we may face. That’s one of the biggest misconceptions about it, that money will solve each and every issue in your life, when in reality it can cause many more. Instead of money being a source of joy, it becomes the “cruel master” that is talked about in **Matthew 6:24**. In fact, many times we end up doing what the author of Matthew tells us, we start to hate God because we don’t feel that we have enough money. So... what now? I think the ultimate response is the exact opposite of the cliché; don’t try to buy happiness with money. Why not? Because you’re ultimately going to come up short. Our joy, as sons and daughters of Christ, is found in him and the grace that we have been given daily. Money is dangerous, but the right use of it is crucial.

Save, Give, and Spend Money Proactively

I know what you’re thinking. Why is saving money such a big deal to me? I’m only in middle school or high school, but that’s not entirely the point. No matter whether you have a consistent flow of an income, we can all do well to manage our money better. **Proverbs 13:16** says, “Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly.” This is a clear statement that setting a clear plan with our money, i.e. preparing to tithe, to pay bills, for daily expenses, etc. is helpful, and could ultimately help us have dominion over our money rather than our money having it over us. The biggest advice in this area that I’ve gotten over the course of my life is that if you don’t have a plan with your money you aren’t free, you’re a slave.

What?

What kind of friends do you have? Do you have the kind of friends that will always be there for you or the kind that will desert you at the first sign of trouble? Today, let's look at two people and see their friendship. David & Jonathan had a friendship unlike many. It literally says that Jonathan "loved him as his own soul." I know, that sounds like a weird choice of words, but it's not! Jonathan was saying that this friendship was like a brotherhood. Jonathan would go to lengths unheard of for David because he loved him. That's a true friend, a friend that loves you "as his own soul."

→ **How does it look to love a friend as you "love [your] own soul"?**

If you keep reading in the story, you see that Jonathan really meant what he said. He did love David like this... Jonathan's dad tried to kill David multiple times, yet every time, Jonathan would warn David. Saul is trying to kill David because David is Israel's next king, and Saul wants the kingship to stay in the family line... But Jonathan doesn't care. Jonathan will go to whatever lengths to protect this God-fearing and God-loving friend of his because he loves him. If you look back to 18:3, it says that Jonathan made a covenant with David. That's intense.. their friendship wasn't half-hearted nor was it only for their benefit... their friendship was centered around and grounded in love. The only love they knew which was covenantal love.

→ **What does it look like to have covenantal friendships?**

Why?

→ Jonathan & David's friendship gives us a beautiful picture of covenantal friendship. Let's define covenant to understand this better. A covenant is an oath-bound promise to serve someone else. So a covenantal friendship is a commitment that strives to love and serve someone as if that person is you.. I would even go as far to say it's a lifelong commitment to a friendship. This isn't weird. We need this. We only need friends of the same gender like this. This relationship is here to show you that you need people to do life with for all of life. People that will sharpen, protect, and love you. Ultimately though, Christ is this friend to us. He protects us, sharpens us, and loves us when we trust in Him. He's the friend that suffered things worse than we could, was hated for more than we are, and died a death crueler than we will... All for us.

What Now?

- **Have a best-friend:** If you're a guy, seek out a guy... if you're a girl, seek out a girl. Seek a deep, God-honoring friendship that encourages, loves, and serves
- **Be that friend:** Be this kind of friend. Don't put half effort into friendships. Love people genuinely.
-

Know Christ as that Friend: Jesus is the ultimate friend. The friend that will love at all times. Trust in him. Know him. Come to him with everything in life.

What?

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.” Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7. Just for a minute, think back to that Isaiah passage... R.C. Sproul paints a picture of a messenger sprinting to a town that has anxiously awaited to hear a report... he's coming with news of a victory, and you can tell it... the joy on his face is glowing, he's sprinting full speed, and dust is being kicked up... how beautiful the feet of the messenger... Now think back to this Roman's passage a couple verses earlier, Paul says that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved... anyone can have victory! But Paul doesn't end there... he poses a couple of questions... “How will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in whom they've never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”

→ **What does Paul mean when he asks these questions?**

In verse 13, Paul says that anyone who calls on the name of the Jesus will be saved... but Paul wants you to see that there still is work to be done. People can't call on someone they've never believed in, and they surely can't believe in something they've never heard of! How can we help people hear this message? We preach... don't get scared of that word... preaching the Gospel can be behind a pulpit on Sunday morning or it can be done around the lunch table. When Paul says to preach, he means we have to proclaim, announce, let it be our message!

Why?

Why does Paul even mention this? **Because this is life or death stuff** ... people are dying every minute and going to Hell ... People who die without Jesus are spending eternity as enemies of God because they haven't heard the Gospel ... Paul wants you to ask yourself the question... “Am I okay with that? Do I care that people are spending an eternity being punished for their sins instead of the joy of being with God?” We must have an urgency to preach the Gospel.

What Now?

- **You can get the Word of God to your classmates...** God has placed you in your school to reach and influence your peers... *“how are they to believe in who they haven't heard?”* Be the feet of the Gospel to your teammates, students, and friends. Your classmates need someone to put their hope and joy in rather than in this temptations and things of this world.
- **You can get the Word of God to the World...** We as a church partner with the Seed Company to translate the Bible for people across the world that don't have the Bible in their language... **These people do not have a Bible...** That means they don't have the Gospel. Help them get it... Talk to a leader at the Rock to see how you can donate or get involved and make an impact across the world.

Dating and love can be a super tricky and a difficult thing to get involved with but it can also be a beautiful and glorious thing. In this devotion I am not going to give you a five-step plan to perfect dating, unfortunately that does not exist, but we will dig into the Scripture together and tackle three “love” questions... Sound like a plan? Let's jump into question 1.

WHAT IS LOVE?

→ Our culture defines love as a deep passion or feeling. This definition is all related to selfish gain but God defines love as something completely different. 1 Corinthians 13 gives a beautiful and perfect definition of what love is. We see that this type of love is (1) patient, (2) humble, (3) kind & true.

HOW TO LOVE?

→ Love is PATIENT. When I was in school I was not patient; I wanted to be in a relationship now! But the kind of love that 1 Corinthians describes is patient. Instead of jumping in and out of relationships what if we were patient? What if when we found the “one” we didn't have to tell them about all of our past relationships? Guys I know that patience is hard, I never said this was going to be easy, but it is worth it. When my fiancé and I told each other of our past relationships it was hard, how I wish that I would of waited for him. I promise you, patience will save you from a lot of heartache.

→ Love is HUMBLE. In middle and high school I dated completely for my own gain. I wanted to be popular and I felt like dating was a requirement for popularity. I also desired to have the world's definition of love. This 1 Corinthians love is so different; it is not about your own good but the good of others. What if we put our future spouse's good above our own good? What if one day you were able to be completely and fully his or hers? Guys seek the joy of your future spouse. Put him or her above your current desires.

→ Love is KIND & TRUE. Guys the truth is that dating involves a relationship between two sinners. When you begin to understand how sinful you are and how merciful God is to bestow His love on you I promise you, you will show kindness and love to your significant other better.

WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO LOVE?

→ There is no perfect age to begin dating however I do believe that there is a right time to begin in the adventures of dating.

- (1) I believe you are ready to date when you have a clear picture in your mind of the kind of person you want to date and when you will not settle for less. Is this person patient? humble? kind & true?
- (2) When you begin in this dating world you **must** build boundaries, which you will not compromise on. This is so important guys. Don't allow the world's definition of love define your relationship.
- (3) You are ready to date when you are more interested in becoming the right person then you are finding the right person. Guys focus on your relationship with Christ. Focus more on strengthening your love for him then you are in strengthening your love for a boy or girl. When I found my future spouse I was not looking. I was focused on growing my relationship with the Lord and out of nowhere I got a text from a random boy, who now is going to be my husband.
- (4) I cannot go by without saying this; you are ready to date when you are ready to find a mate.

Are you ready for a mate?

Response:

- Pray for your future husband or wife.
- Keep your future spouse in mind in the decisions you make daily.
- Focus on becoming a person of patience, humility, kindness and truth. Be the person you're looking for.

There are only a slim few people that enjoy going to school, the studying, the classes, and all that comes with it. While I credit those people and think they're awesome, they're still a small percentage compared to the rest of us in middle school, high school, college, etc. But, what if I told you that you can find joy and peace while going to school, rather than dreading it every day that your alarm goes off or your mom comes in and wakes you up? You'd think I was crazy right? Well, allow me to blow your mind!

Some people, even me sometimes, freak out when they run into big words like the word "sovereignty". Basically, what sovereignty means is believing that God decides ultimately whether you live, and whether you do this or that, and - in our lives - is as practical as your plans for tomorrow, this weekend, this school year, and all of your life. Two things God's sovereignty leads us to reflect on this year. To help us guide our choices, our joy, and our mentality.

Gospel-Centered Joy

As we've started our school year, I think it's more obvious than ever that we needed, currently need, and will continue to need the gospel daily. We always need a reminder that our sins are forgiven through the blood of Christ, and that God is for us and not against us because Jesus has pleaded our case. You will need a persistent confidence that Jesus being crucified wasn't just random, that it was a sovereign plan to save our souls, and we can see this in Acts 4:27-28 (read it, I promise it won't hurt). Basically, this is saying that God had already planned out what Pilate and Herod and the Jews and all other parties did for the death of Jesus. Because of this, we are able to say "This happened because the Lord willed, they lived and did this or that." You're going to need that this year, the fact that God is for us, that Christ died intentionally for us, and therefore everything happens according to his sovereign plan.

Witnessing Fearlessly

There are going to be things throughout the year that will make all of us terrified of what the future brings. It can be as simple as thinking you made a fool of yourself in class, or extremes like a city bombing, a terrorist kidnapping, or a malignant tumor. In all of these scenarios, and all others, we have a tendency to want to shrink back in the shadows in fear, but Christ calls us to do the exact opposite. On the contrary God calls us to step out during these scary times and be a fearless witness for Him. We can see this in Matthew 10:28-29,31, so go look at it! The 100%, no doubt, fact of God's sovereignty is the foundation of fearlessness this year and all years that are to come. We are able to find joy, find peace, and ultimately courage in this because God has willed everything to happen that has happened and will happen. Although we might not understand what his plan is, or what the next step is, God has his hand in every situation that takes place, no matter how fearful it makes us. Whatever happens in this world, whatever happens in your school, whatever happens in your family, fear not.

saturday -

October 13

CATCH UP DAY

CATCH UP DAY

sunday – sermon notes

October 14

Speaker: _____

Text: _____

Desires are something we all are filled with. As humans we desire many things; some good but a lot of our desires in our flesh are full of sin and ungodly ambition. Without constantly seeking the Lord we can fall into the sin of ungodly desires quite easily. We naturally, in our flesh desire sinful, worldly things.

Read 1 John 2:17. This verse tells us that we may get these things we desire but that they are temporary and aren't eternal. It doesn't end there though. It says that if we live in the will of God and desire the things that he desires for us, then that is something we can hold onto eternally. Now I don't know about you, but I would much rather have something that will fill me with joy eternally, then temporary happiness that will leave me and will let me down sooner or later.

So now you may be saying, "I want to desire God, but how can I do that and not fall into the temptation of desiring sinful things?" It starts with having a personal relationship with him. I want you to think of your best friend right now. Ok... Got them in mind? Now I want you to think about the timeline of your friendship. Were you best friends from the very moment you met? Probably not! It took time to get to know one another and to learn what the other enjoyed and loved, and eventually you not only desired to be around them, you desired to do what they wanted because you didn't care what you were doing together as long as it was together.

This is the same way with God. If you don't spend time with him and learn more about him then you'll never know his desires for you, and most importantly you won't desire Godly things. You have to form a personal relationship with our Father and the closer you become to him the more you will desire him. The more you desire Godly things, the less you will desire the worldly things.

Read Galatians 5:16.

QUESTIONS:

Are my desires Godly desires or do I strive to fulfill my fleshly desires?

What am I doing to grow closer to Christ and learn more about him and want he desires for me?

What can I, in my personal walk with Christ, do to desire more Godly things? Are my eyes fixed upon him?

We have all been blessed with certain talents. Some have been blessed with talents athletically, some academically, some intellectually and some musically. There are so many talents that the Lord has gifted his people, and it is up to us whether or not we use those talents for the purpose we were gifted them for. The reading today was short but is a verse that I try to live my life by daily and as child of Christ, we all should strive to live by daily. **1 Corinthians 10:31** says, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God."

Our God not only created us for his Glory, he also gave us certain talents to use to glorify him as well. We live in an age where professional and college athletes especially are put on a high pedestal for what THEY can do. These athletes are usually full of pride and extremely boastful about what they can do, right? Well God has called us to be humble with our talents and to recognize that it is all due to him that we can do what we are able to do.

In **Philippians 2:3** we are commanded to be humble and to consider others. If we are boastful in our talents then all that is doing is putting other people down. We should strive to make sure we encourage and lift up other people in all we do, even when we are more successful than someone else in the moment.

We can put this to action in our life every single day. Our talents are used daily, no matter how big or small that specific talent may seem to you. We need to stop daily and examine our lives to see if we are making sure we show Christ and bring glory to his name through our talents. It's easy to be prideful and boastful when we succeed in things, especially when other people are praising you for it. In these opportunities, it is a perfect chance to let these people know that it has nothing to do with you, and everything to do with a magnificent God that you serve and live for.

QUESTIONS:

Are you glorifying God through your talents, or boasting in yourself?

Are you considering the lifting up of others, even amidst success?

Living for the Your Dreams vs. Living for the Kingdom

We all have hopes and dreams. Some of us may be hoping to graduate high school with a 4.0 while others may be hoping to simply graduate high school. Some might have their dreams set in sports, family, school, or work. None of these things are sinful however they can easily conform into sinful pursuits. When our hopes and dreams start to become the thing we are living for that is when we must reevaluate our dreams.

When I was in high school my dream was to receive a basketball scholarship. Quickly, this dream began to control my life. I spent countless hours in the gym, pouring my entire life into **my** dream. Each morning when I woke up I had a mindset to live in such a way that would allow me to obtain **my** dream. **My** dream quickly morphed into sinful pursuits. I was living for **my own personal happiness**.

In order to abandon living a self-centered, self-glorifying lifestyle, each morning we have to ask this question to ourselves, **"Today, what am I going to make much of? Am I going to make much of Christ, or am I going to make much of self?"**

When I was living for **my** dreams I wasn't looking to make much of Christ. I was looking to make much of myself. John Piper says, *"The difference between kingdom living and earthly living is the King."* Christ, the King of Kings, must come before our worldly pursuits. You should strive to be a great student, if you are an athlete you should strive to be the best on the court or field but don't live for your student or athletic status. Live for Christ in the classroom, on the court, and on the field. Live as though Christ is your King.

But what if God asked you to surrender your hopes and your dreams to Him? What if you don't graduate with a 4.0 because you sacrificed some study time to host a bible study? What if you don't get a scholarship to play sports in college because you were known more for your faith than your talent?

If Christ is King of your life you should be willing to respond as Jesus responded to His Father. Right before Jesus headed to Calvary He pleaded with His Father. In **Luke 22:42** Jesus prayed saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." Jesus left his throne in heaven in order to come to earth and fulfill the Father's will. Jesus' response to God's plan for His life was, "Father, not my will but yours."

How will you respond?

Will you respond by saying Father, not **my** hopes and dreams but **yours**?

I am ready to go out with no question to your asking? God my answer is "yes."

I am willing to give up my hopes and dreams for you Lord? "Not my will but yours."

What?

Have you ever sat down to think about what your normal day looks like? It probably consists of a good amount of sleep, a lot of school or work, and then a little bit of time for fun things like video games, hanging with friends, watching TV, playing sports. We're really busy people, so how we spend our times is a BIG deal. In Ephesians 5:15-17, Paul says to "look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise." Paul too saw that time was important... Paul taught that how we use our time is evidence of who we are in Christ... Specifically here, Paul is calling us to use our time wisely.

→ **What does it mean to use your time wisely?**

Paul explains the thought behind this more in 16b. He says "because the days are evil." Paul is saying to come ready to fight the battle for your day. We have to choose to not give in to temptations of laziness by scrolling Instagram/Snapchat for hours, frustration to our siblings, jealousy over a friend's stuff, lust towards a guy or girl, stress because of homework... the list goes on. Every single day, we're faced with evil... we have to live wisely. Think about this... We all like to eat... but if we're trying to eat healthier we're not going to just eat M&M's, Snickers, cake, & ice cream. We're gonna eat fruit, vegetables, things filled with protein. Just as we change our food, we have to change how we spend our time. The KJV says we have to **redeem the time**. Life is short, the days are evil; make the most of your time instead of wasting it.

→ **What are some habits you can cut to use your time wisely?**

Why?

Paul's entire purpose for telling us to spend our time wisely and make the most of our time is to point us back to God. The best way you can spend your time is devoting your entire life to the Lord. James 4:14 says that your life is "a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes." We are busy people with busy schedules, but our time is important to us and to God. How you spend your time matters. Look to Christ. Serve Others. Honor God in everything you do. C.T. Studd once said "**Only one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.**"

What Now?

- **Stop Wasting Your Time:** John Piper has a popular book called "Don't Waste Your Life." That's exactly what we're saying here. Stop wasting your life... stop spending so much time on your phones and consoles... even more so don't spend your time engrossed in sin... Stop wasting your time sinning and....

Redeem Your Time: Paul says to live wisely "making the best use of [your] time." Start your mornings in the Word, go to school ready to talk about your relationship with Christ, listen to songs that cause you to praise God! Let God infiltrate every area of your life so you can make the most of your time!

I realize we've already read this passage but it's worth seeing again!

What?

Have you ever seen Transformers? When I was a kid, I used to watch the tv show (Yeah, there was a tv show before the movies!) every Saturday morning. It was so cool to see how an old, ordinary car transformed into an insanely cool and powerful robot. The series is so cool because of how something old and ordinary transforms into something radically new and different.

That's what Paul is talking about in **Colossians 3:1-17**. Paul talks about this intense transformation from old to new... He says that if you've been raised with Christ, if you've put your faith in Jesus dying on the cross and raising from the dead to restore us to God, then first you have to **"put to death what is earthly in you."** Paul literally says to kill your earthly desires. You can't leave any trace of it. You've got to kill any part of you old life lingering around or it will pull you back into that lifestyle.

→ **How can you put your old life to death?**

When I truly became a Christian, I remember having to do this... The friends I had hung out with, I had to drop so I could flee my past sins. I spent my weekends at home instead of out late with friends to resist temptations. My WHOLE worldview was transformed. I "put to death" my old life, and Christ transformed my heart to something radically different. That's the other side of the coin. Paul says you have to "put to death" your old life, but then you have to put on Christ! Christ has given you a new heart! One full of love and thankfulness, now you have to live it out that new heart! Read over the qualities in verses 12-17.

→ **How can you put on your new self?**

Why?

When I think about my old life, I remember trying to run to everything else to fill a void in my life... friends, games, relationships, etc... One day, I remember the question pressed on my heart "What are you chasing? What is all this going to get you?" That question radically changed me. Paul is saying here that if we choose to live in old life, then it will lead to death & an eternity separate from God... **BUT** if you trust in Christ, you've been gloriously raised from the dead! You been given a new life! Live it!

What Now?

- **Kill Sin:** Kill your old life. John Bunyan once said, "Be killing sin or sin will be killing you." Kill your sin. Read over vs. 5-11 and pray about the sin in your life.
- **Put on Christ:** Trust in Christ. Let His new heart for you be lived out in your classrooms, with your friends, on your teams. Compassionately love people.
- **Thank God:** Matt Chandler said, "become experts in how good God has been to you." Think about how God is changing you to become more like Christ everyday

saturday -

October 20

CATCH UP DAY

CATCH UP DAY

Speaker: _____

Text: _____

Happy Monday!

The next two days we will spend it in Philippians 4, I know we just finished that chapter and book last week but who's counting right? Plus this chapters helps us in such a huge way as we think about the mind....what we're looking at all week. I know...your mind is a crazy topic! Kidding.

I know what you're thinking and the answer is No... we're not learning some weird mind control stuff. But on a serious note, if we are honest, our mind is something all of us struggle with controlling. From impure thoughts to worries to anxieties sometimes it seems as if our mind has a mind of its own!

I know the apostle Paul understood the struggle we have, because he too had it. When we have something on our mind and it grows and grows and grows until it seems as if we have been overcome by that thought. Paul gives us great hope when it comes to our minds. Paul lays it out plainly to us: We ought to rejoice in all things at all times because God is in control, he is at hand and this means whatever we are going through struggling through he can work it for good! (Rom. 8:28)

Paul continues his thought by challenging us to not be anxious... he's saying do not be worried, do not fret, do not over think. While this isn't easy he gives us some guidance in what to do! He says instead of worrying and being anxious, get those thoughts out of your mind by lifting them up to God by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving.

Then one of the most comforting verses in all of the Bible speaks loud and clear: Paul says, "and the peace of God, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. - God himself will guard our minds and our hearts in and through the one who has died for our eternal peace, Jesus.

God has not just made a way for daily peace for us through Christ but he has also made away for us to find eternal peace in Christ. We can have peace if we put our trust in Christ; our worries, our doubts, our struggles, our failure. He will give us peace and he will guard us.

So what do we do?

We rejoice always... in anything and everything we rejoice because God is in control!

We give our worries, doubts, and anxieties over to the one who can work all things for his glory and our good!

We trust God to follow through with his Word to give us peace and to guard our hearts and minds.

Filling my Mind

Read: Philippians 4:4-9

Today we look again at Philippians 4. But focusing on verse 8! If you didn't get a chance to read yesterday's devotion, read it this morning and this one a little later!

In this section Paul gives us even further direction on how to fight against bad thoughts, anxiety, worry, fear, fretting... all of it! In the paragraph above he told us to get the bad thought out of our mind and give them to Christ. Now he tells us what to *put in* our minds! He literally lists them out! Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellence, anything worthy of praise! Everything Paul is listing things that are good! Paul is encouraging us to think on the things that are real and true.

Paul is saying instead of thinking on bad things, think on good things —> true things!
True things such as who Christ is and what Christ has done, that God works all things for good for those who love him, that God has blessed us with so many people in our lives.
Our minds have a habit one over-thinking, making a big deal about little things... but Paul encourages us and says - Stop... breath... think about good things.

So start your day off with thinking about good things: things that true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellence, anything worthy of praise!

Think about what Christ has done for you!
Think about your right standing with God!
Think about the peace that he brings you today!

Glad your back!! Today we focus on training the mind!

We know that as athletes or as musicians we must train! It takes hours and hours and hours to become good at whatever your hobby is... even longer to become great! The question is how do we do this spiritually - how do we spiritually train our minds? Paul gives us the answer in Colossians 3:2. Paul says, "Set your mind on the things that are above, not that are on earth." *I know, this is not the first time we've heard this passage this month. But this verse is packed with things we can learn and apply.*

Training our mind takes a daily commitment to take action.

So often our minds wander don't they... wander from the great truths we learned early this week (see Monday/Phil. 4:7) Again Paul, challenges us to focus our mind. Not to focus on the things we can see with our eyes, but rather he says focus on something else. "Focus your mind on the things that are above, not that are on earth." How do we do this? FAITH.

Here's the deal though, this doesn't come easy... its actually really difficult. It takes us making a conscience effort.. like every day.. to focus our minds on the things above! What are the things that are above? - God's goodness, his faithfulness, his guidance, his love, his grace, his wisdom, his strength. All that God is we focus on, we fix our heart on! Daily we have to focus our hearts! The question is today will you focus on him... or something else?

Application → Fix your eyes on the things of God, and when bad things come to mind, fight them. **Fight them by focusing on the things above.**

Gather your thoughts, own your thoughts, control your thoughts, surrender them.

Read: Romans 12:1-2

Been a quick week! Glad you have been trekking all week long.... Right?

Anyways... We all get to a point when we just need to pour all the junk out; and what better day to do it! When we eat a lot of junk food like sweets, hot takis and Mountain Dew, it kinda makes you feel like you need to cleanse your body of all that nasty stuff.

Bare with me.. If you're like me you probably spent all week long making mistakes and tripping over your own feet... some of us literally... don't laugh. But sometimes we just need a cleanse or detox; we need to get all the junk out of our head - today we lean on Paul again and let him teach us how to do that!

Verse 1 begins with a call to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable... he goes on to say this is how we spiritually worship God! Paul continues with a call to mold to look like the world but to rather be molded and transformed by the "renewal of your mind" all so that we can choose between right and wrong, good and bad.

There is something really important here - the phrase "renewal of your mind." The word renewal means, a reconfiguring a starting over, a reset! Our mind can get to a point where it needs to be reset. It gets dirty... filled with junk and we need to just wash it! But how in the world do we wash our minds???

Two ways!

1. **We read God's Word.** We continually feed ourselves, submerge ourselves with the good, healthy for our bodies nourishment —> Scriptures... This flushes the junk out of our minds and replaces it with God's truth. The Word is the water we need to flush our minds. But it doesn't stop there.
2. **We pray!** We have to pray fervently - this means a lot! We have to pray that the Lord would clean our hearts. Remember the Psalmists words in Psalm 51:10 when he said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." This was a prayer for the Lord to do a work of cleaning... our prayer ought to be the same way!

What should we do??

READ THE WORD -Continually be in the Word! Daily... maybe even more often! Seriously though, spend time in the Word, saturate yourself in it!

PRAY- Pray for the Lord to clean your mind. Ask him to infiltrate your heart and mind with his Word cleansing you.

READING PLAN: **Philippians 2:11-15**

Missionary Partner Prayer – Mike Outten, Buffalo

friday

October 26

The Gospel & My Mind (Resetting it)

Lamentations 3:22-23

It's Friidddaaaayyyy!!

Today we look at such a great promise from the Lord...

We all get to the point in our day, month, life when we need a restart, a reset, a start over. God has promised us just that. We know that, as Christians, our ultimate start over is found in Christ. Christ redeems us. He give something dead life. The Bible refers to this as being born again... having a new life. (1 Peter 1:3, 2 Cor. 5:17).

If you are in Christ, saved, redeemed than you have been given the greatest start over anyone could ask for! But there is also another promise the Lord has given us! Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us that daily the mercy of the Lord is renewed. This is so helpful and encouraging! If you are like me, I daily fail... I daily, I mean several times a day fail the Lord. I miss the mark... I mess things up. But the encouraging thing is that God's grace and mercy is new DAILY. Actually, secondly, millisecondly (is that a word?).. thats pretty often guys. Now this isn't a free card to sin and do bad things. However, this is a promise we can hold on to as we start the day; knowing that whatever happened yesterday is in the past and today the Lord's grace and mercy is fresh. The Lord is forgiving, all we must do is ask for forgiveness and it will be given... even daily.

So start today by asking for forgiveness, repenting of the things you failed at yesterday and begin your Friday fresh and focused —> #FreshFocusedFriday! Also thank him for his grace that provides new mercies. Through this brings Christ.

READING PLAN: Titus 3:1-15

Missionary Partner Prayer – Mike Outten, Buffalo

saturday –

October 27

CATCH UP DAY and also watch College Football Day

CATCH UP DAY

READING PLAN: Catch-Up

Missionary Partner Prayer – Mike Outten, Buffalo

sunday – sermon notes

October 28

Speaker: _____

Text: _____

monday

October 29

The Gospel & Me (Our Testimony)

Titus 3:3-9

Dramatic or mundane our testimony is one of the greatest tools of our faith that Christ uses through us to draw others to Him. What makes every testimony so powerful is that it's not about you. It's about the gracious, loving, powerful God who chose to lift you out of the pit of sin. Whether that sin was "big" or "little" in our eyes it is still a glorious reconciliation between a holy God and sinful man. How powerful and encouraging!

Look at Titus chapter 3.

Verse 3 describes us as *foolish, disobedient, envious, and hateful*, but that one verb makes all the difference. It says we **were once** _____. Past tense. Read on to **verse 4** and we see the word "but". This signals a change, and that change is God. He saved us, and there was nothing we could have done to grant His grace. It's all through His mercy. This points again to the beautiful character and love of God. I don't know about you, but when I think about how unrighteous I am in comparison to the righteousness of Christ I can't help but be amazed that He chose to love and forgive a wretched sinner like me.

Our testimony is not about us.

When we tell others about how God has worked and changed our lives we should never glorify ourselves in the process. We should not focus on how "good" we are now. Instead our testimony should further glorify and exalt Christ in comparison to our sinful nature. Nothing we have ever done or will ever do will be enough to earn Christ's forgiveness. He gives it to us freely regardless of who we are or what we have done, and because of that any and every testimony is a beautiful picture of the redemption found only in Christ. So boldly share how Christ has called you to Him and how He is continually working in your life, all with the end goal of proclaiming His goodness and mercy.

READING PLAN: III JOHN (all of it!) ha

Missionary Partner Prayer – FCA

tuesday

October 30

The Gospel & Me (Claudia)

A Testimony of Grace

At a young age I repeated the "prayer" and believed that I was saved. But on my first youth retreat during the summer of 2009 the Holy Spirit started to heavily move in me. I was not expecting for God to

do anything during this week however he did. During worship, I was brought to tears because for the first time I realized that the Jesus, who I had heard about all my life, really died on the cross for me! The head knowledge I had finally turned into heart knowledge.

After worship that evening I went to my small group and my leader directly asked me in front of multiple girls if I was saved. She thought the answer was yes because I was the girl that was at church every single Sunday but I quickly answer no. I knew in my heart that the prayer that I repeated was not true salvation. After small group that night I repented of my sins and gave my life to Christ. I knew that my identity was in Christ; I was a Child of God.

After gaining this new identity I desired to combine my love for sports and my love for Christ. I wanted to start a bible study with my basketball team but I never gained the courage to do it. Finally in 11th grade my fears subsided and I began a Bible study with my team. This was such an encouraging time; it was amazing to see what the Lord was doing through and to my team.

In 12th grade FCA began and unfortunately I did not continue with the Bible study, I just encouraged my team to go to FCA. This was a fatal mistake for both my team and myself. Not only did I neglect the Bible study but I also began to give my entire life to basketball. I was a senior looking for a scholarship, so every free moment of my life was spent in the gym. #Ballwaslife. Quickly and without me realizing it, basketball was stealing my identity.

I ended up getting a scholarship but before moving to college I went to an apologetics camp called Impact 360. Again, the Holy Spirit was at work in my life. During the first week of camp a speaker delivered a message that heavily impacted my life. During the message he asked three questions: (1) How do people know you? (2) Are you willing to give up everything for Christ?, (3) Who are you without that thing that is holding you back? To the first question my answer was, "They know me as #12 the point guard at Alexander High School. To the second, "Yes, God I'll give you everything but basketball. And to the third, "If I were to have basketball taken out of my life, I have no idea who I am.

Guys the answers to those questions completely rocked my world. Late the night I walked outside and opened up the Word to 1 Corinthians 10:31, which at the time was my life verse. As I read I quickly realized I was misusing this verse. Instead of playing the game for God's glory I was playing it for my own glory. I began to cry out to the Lord. I said, "Lord I am sorry for using the gift that you have given me for my glory. God take basketball away! I no longer want my identity to be in basketball, God it is in you! God take it away. But if you desire for me to continue to play God use it complete for your glory and not my own. God I'm all in! I give you everything."

Now I am a senior in college. The Lord allowed me to play basketball during my freshman, sophomore, and majority of my junior year. Did I play much during those years, no, my main job was to warm the bench. HA! But I was content with that because I knew that the Lord had me on that team for something so much bigger than basketball. **Galatians 2:20** says, " I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live in the Son of God who loved me an gave himself for me." I know that my identity rest in Jesus Christ, it does not lay in the amount of minutes I played it lies in Him. I do not play basketball anymore; God has closed that door in order to open others. But I know wherever I am, whatever I am doing; my identity is in Him. I am going to be all in for Him wherever I go because He went all out for me!

READING PLAN: II JOHN (all of it!) ha

Missionary Partner Prayer - FCA

wednesday

October 31

What's your story?

Joshua 22:15

Well, that was a lot of talk about the Gospel wasn't it? But we finish where we started by saying this....Can we really talk too much about the Gospel? I'd say no.

The truth is the Gospel impacts every....single....part, drip, ounce, area of our lives. If we don't see that we really need to put on some better glasses. Maybe take a look at our heart, devotion, fellowship.

Do you know Jesus Christ in a personal way?

Have you surrendered all you are to Him? To follow Him? To deny yourself?

Listen...Linda Listen! Jesus is not wanting to wreck your life in a bad way....but He is desiring to wreck your life for the sake of the kingdom, the glory of God. Remember....that's the main reason you're here!

SO...stop playing poor pitiful you and start taking advantage of "Christ in you."

Stop pursuing dead end stories and begin to pursue the trail that will always lead to your good.

The Gospel is not a Sunday thing, an FCA thing, a j93 thing. The Gospel is life man.

It brings life and it shows us how to live life.

Today is Halloween. You'll have some opportunities to do some things you shouldn't probably.

I'm like "Dude that's everyday of my stinking life." And it is. But Halloween brings this weird, dark element to life. It's cool to play dress up but dadgum, cover up! Anyway....Joshua said this in Joshua 22:15

"Choose this day who you will serve" and I would add then spend your life doing all you can to serve.

Solomon said that...plain English here but Solomon said whatever you gonna follow, follow it with all you got. At the end of the day why have regrets that you left something out there?

For me...I want to follow the Lord...In Joshua's day it was like "You can follow God or you can follow the world (Amorites). It's the exact same for us. So, who you gonna follow?

Lot's of questions today right? But I so want all of you to be confronted with the Gospel, the truth of it, the impact of it, the daily need for it and then simply choose...make yourself known. What you got?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THE GOSPEL?

There is no choice but to accept it and live it **or** to reject it and go your own way.

There is no in between.

I pray, we pray that you say as Joshua said...I'm SERVING THE LORD!

But get this sad reality...many of those who stood with him on that day by the next page of Scripture were back to doing their own thing. The Gospel was a joke to them....their Gospel was the faithfulness of God....they had signs pointing to a Messiah but Jesus was just that...a sign.

BUT US...we have the full revelation of God, the Bible, Jesus, the Holy Spirit. We see the whole truth.

You gonna walk away or trust God?

By the way, the book after Joshua is Judges....Judges don't play, they judge.

So as we wrap up our look at the Gospel I challenge you consider your response to the Gospel and then look around for the fruit of that choice. Don't play games, don't give the answer everyone wants to hear but consider the true answer of your heart and your life. Don't play.

READING PLAN: Psalm 119:1-16

Missionary Partner Prayer - FCA



our desire is to help students and leaders know Christ and make Christ known
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