



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.**

(Psalm 119:1-16 ESV)

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.

In some cases we will provide a theme for each week or maybe a single topic for each day. These themes and topics will come directly from Scripture. This devo will be ground 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 invite you to "taste and see that the Lord is good!" For this reason we will simply reference Scripture rather than typing it out for you. Our culture is lazy when it comes to picking up a book. It's fine to look on a kindle, or some smart device, but nothing beats feeling that leather on your fingers as you flip through Scripture. We must get past this laziness and convenience and we pray this devotion book helps in this regard.

The devotions in the book are coming from different angles. Some are from previous camps while some are from sermons. Some thoughts and themes will carry over for 2 weeks while some may only work through a single day or week. Some will be two pages others will be one. But through this variation we hope to cover a variety of topics and thoughts from Scripture ultimately leading you to growing & passionate walk with Christ.

The Point & Challenge

Each day the devotion will offer a point and challenge. These will help gather our hearts and minds around one solid truth from Scripture and then give us a point of action or application. We must not be hearers only but doers. So these will help us accomplish this as we look to God and His Word each day.

3 things to exercise and work out as you read through Scripture

These are things you'll hear throughout the devotions and things that appear often within our student ministry.

You'll hear them, work through them and hopefully they eventually become a regular part of how you handle Scripture.

1. **Observe** – (What does it say?) What is there? What questions come up?
How does it repeat? What stands out?
Any shifts in the story or section of verses?
2. **Interpret** – (What does it mean?) What is the Bible saying about what stood out?
3. **Apply** – (What do I do?)
What is the intended response of the folks who would have read this first? What were they called or ask to do?
What do we take away from what we read?

5 questions to ask when reading Scripture?

Rather than reading try and be a student of the Word. These questions help us with this as well as 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!

When it comes to doing a Devotion many people struggle.
Struggles can be

- time
- priority
- desire
- direction
- but also faith that the Bible is God's Word to us.

We struggle in trusting what it says so we simply don't give time to it, we don't desire it, we don't make it a priority.
So let's address the question.

Can the Bible be trusted? Is it really God's Word?

Yes and Yes.

We have some great devotions through the year that will help with this but for now we need to know some critical things that give us some confidence that the book we're reading and giving ourselves to is legit.

How did we get it?
How can we trust it?

Below are two great resources that will help with this question.
We will also look to these questions later in a devotion.

The Bible is Inerrant. We must believe this is true.

What does Inerrant and Inerrancy mean?

The doctrine of inerrancy, or the claim that the Scriptures are inerrant, means that the Bible is completely truthful in all things that the biblical authors assert—whether in geographic, chronological, or theological details. Advocates of inerrancy affirm a verbal plenary view of inspiration. That is, although the human authors of Scripture were thinking composers, God so superintended the writing process such that every word written was according to his will. The words were divinely guarded from all error. Wayne Grudem provides this helpful definition of inerrancy: "The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact." Similarly, Kenneth Kantzer writes, "Put quite simply, ...inerrancy holds that the Bible tells us truth and never says what is not so."

How Did We Get our 66 Books in the Bible?

We don't want to say that men decided what books would be included but rather that by prayer, thought, and method God used men to realize what books God had decided would belong in the Bible.

The early church insisted that recognized books of the canon be:

1. Apostolic- written by or tied closely to an apostle
(an authorized eyewitness of Jesus)
2. Catholic- widely, if not universally recognized by the churches.
3. Orthodox- not in contradiction to any recognized apostolic book or doctrine.-

based on these 3 criteria it is impossible to add to the canon today.....

THE ROCK
STUDENT MINISTRIES
P S . 6 1 : 2

*Devotions also available online at therocksm.org
open the .pdf file in ibooks or kindle and work away, work away.

Thursday – september 4

2 Timothy 2:15 Psalm 119:1-6

Why have a Quiet Time – Devotion?

All throughout Scripture we see the need for the Word of God and how it can change us. It is after all His Word to us. There is absolutely no way any person can know God and obey God without ever having His Word communicated to Him. Having an actual copy in your hands is a great privilege and honor.

Don't Waste It!

The sad thing is there are many people who don't have a copy of His Word in their language. We as a ministry are helping end this and actually if you're holding this journal you are too. How? The \$1 you spent on this book will go to help translate the Bible into the language of the YEMBA people group in Cameroon, Africa.

So as we push forward take this time seriously and thank God with every breath you have that you have a copy in your hands from which to know Him.

2 Timothy is a great place to go when understanding the need for a quiet time. It gives great credibility and offers great characteristics of The Bible.

When people say it's just an ordinary book, fiction, man-made, or not perfect, I simply take them to 2 Timothy 3:16-17. I would encourage you to read the entire book of 2 Timothy. For now, let's concentrate on these two verses

These verses tell us some incredible things about The Bible. Just in these 2 verses listen to these facts about the Word of God:

Take a minute and look at the verse and write down what you learn of the Bible:

In case you missed some basically it says The Bible is:

written by God, is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, It goes on to say The Bible's purpose is to complete a person and prepare them for every good work.

MY GOODNESS! You say you want to please God with your life, you're confused about life, not sure about things, don't have all the answers, well friend where should you go for the answer? Yes....The Bible

Hebrews 4:12 says it's sharper than any two-edged sword.
Now having a sword in our heart is not the smartest thing to do in life.

However, I think your parents would okay putting this Sword in as deep as you want. Psalms 119:11 tells us to hide it there.

This is very simple devotion but I wanted to state the obvious and ensure you that The Bible you are holding IS the most important piece of literature, history, leather, bonded leather, paper, parchment paper, papyrus, whatever model number you have it's not important, the important thing if it's the WORD, it's the most important thing for your life.

The Bible is where we see Jesus, learn to follow Jesus, learn how to follow and then continually leads us into His presence.

One last thought....John 1:1 is so awesome, it tells us that Jesus is the Word, and from the beginning the Word was there.

The Bible is the communication to His people and people searching for Him. When Jesus came to this earth He came to seek and save that which was lost, in doing so, He became the main communication of God.

God Himself visited us here on earth. In the beginning was the Word....and now you have the awesome privilege to approach this King and gain wisdom, direction and correction from Him. Adore Him, Adhere to His Word and you'll become more like Him each day.

The Point:

God's Word is amazing and the key to living a life that would please Him

The Challenge:

Consider the way you treat The Bible. The time and energy you devote to it. Do you long for it? Consider reading Psalm 119:1-16. As you read it be thinking how you regard the Word of God....is it this strong.

ask these questions each day.

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man [me]?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

The Prayer for the Week:

The Yemba People Group who have no written or audio copy of God's Word. Pray for the work that is going on and that we are supporting. Swing by the Rock and pick up a prayer card. Join the work by praying and giving!

Friday – september 5

Selected Scriptures

Trusting the Bible?

Lets ask the question, “What Does Scripture Say about itself?”

As we seek to become better students of God’s Word it is important to know that the greatest advocate for the Bible is the Bible.

You heard correct.....the Bible talks about itself a lot. It does us much good to see what the Bible says about itself because we can trust whatever the Bible says. Noticing what the Bible says about itself is also helpful for because these truths help us know more about the nature of the Bible and moves us to a place where our trust in the Bible is greater.

So today we want to look at what the Bible says about itself and let what we find grow our trust and reliance on God’s Word.

Numbers 23:19 - God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

-if God is completely truthful and the Bible is God’s communication to humanity, Heb. 1:1-3, then it follows that the Bible, as God’s Word, is completely truthful.

Psalms 12:6 - The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

-God’s Word is perfect.

2 Tim 3:16 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

-from God and able to do the work of God!

2 Pet. 1:21 - For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

-the words of the Bible are the exact words God wanted written.

John 10:35 - If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken—

-Jesus questioned distorted understandings of the Bible, but never the Bible.....

-You can believe the bible because Jesus did.

Heb. 1:1-2 - Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

-God spoke in the OT and it was true, fulfilled, reliable, and if that is fact, then how much more do we trust the culmination of God's revelation in Jesus Himself!

The Point and Challenge:

We can take God's Word as truth and trust that what the Bible says is what God wants to communicate to us.....so today let us treat the Bible as truth!

The Prayer for the Week:

The Yemba People Group who have no written or audio copy of God's Word. Pray for the work that is going on and that we are supporting. Don't forget to pick up a prayer card at the Rock this Sunday or next Wednesday.

Join the work by praying and giving!

saturday – september 6

Saturdays are meant to use as catch up days or extended times of reflection.

Reflection?

By reflection we mean thinking a little more on what we've seen or read throughout the week. A good way to do this is by asking some questions:

1. What sticks out from my week in the Word?
2. What are some things I need to continue to dwell on?
3. What did I learn about God this week?
4. What did I learn about myself this week?
5. What are something I need to work on in the future?
6. What would make my time in the Word better?

If you desire to read something new we'd encourage you to read through Psalm 119

Sunday is a day of rest so enjoy the day of worship

Flip

The Following devotions are from Flip Summer Camp (2010)

Below are some thoughts and excerpts from the Flip Camp notebook that will hopefully help throughout the week as we build on the idea of **FLIP**

Flip means to turn over, a move, a change, a new direction or attitude.

you see it all started in a garden. God created a perfect world and then we, mankind, decided to do the opposite of what God said. Only one tree was off limits, and I'm thinking you know the rest of the story. We not only plucked the thing off the tree, we took a big, juicy bite and then passed it all around...everything has been out of balance ever since.

But now, we're calling on you, better yet, God is calling on you, to Flip the cycle.

"We who were made for higher worlds are viewing what this world has as ultimate."

AW Tozer

God is still in control. His Word tells us over and over again to trust Him. It warns us that our desire is of the flesh, sinful, contaminated and He calls us to turn around our heart, flip the fleshly way of thinking and invites us to join the King of Kings as He flips everything right side up again. God's way of doing things won't always make sense but look at His track record, as if He needs one: *a stuttering prophet, a giant slaying student, a pregnant virgin, a donkey, and a church persecutor, a group of 12 ordinary, everyday men, a small boy*

when people give up their life things begin to flip, subside, turn, be different, change.

It's a big and LOUD idea. Stay Tuned

monday – september 8

John 8:32, Romans 11:33-36, Isaiah 55:8-9

TO FLIP, YOU MUST HAVE FAITH.
YOU MUST BELIEVE

This entire week the thought is that we must experience a change, we must change the cycle, things must be flipped. The world's way and God's way do not see eye-to-eye therefore change must happen. The only problem is this brings conflict. The things we face, the company we keep, the shows we watch, the music we listen to, the schools we attend, and the websites we view all give us conflicting ideas. This causes a crisis in our thoughts and eventually our actions. With all this in mind we must seek the truth, know the truth, and believe the truth. We must have faith & believe that:

The Truth will free you – Read John 8:32

Jesus is the Truth – Read John 14:6

CAN GOD BE TRUSTED?
DO WE HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT GOD IS TRUTH?

Read **Romans 11:33-36**. If we are to experience this Flip we must have faith that God is big enough, smart enough, and strong enough.

What is a phrase from this passage that sticks out to you regarding the greatness of God?

The Knowledge and Power of God is immeasurable (can't be contained)

Look up....way up....keep looking. You see that speck? Not that one, or that one, yea, that one. Wait, that's just a planet. Anyway, right now, above your head is a satellite going through space farther than any manmade object in history.

But even at 10.1 billion miles away, that satellite needs to travel that distance almost 7 trillion more times to reach what our best telescopes have seen (so far). WOW.

The point is that no matter how big we build something, how high we reach, how far we go, God will always be greater, infinitely greater. In fact, our little speck we like to call earth is one of millions He has created. Now think about the complexity that is in your little circle, God created that. Your body, God created that. Take in the fact that God created EVERYTHING.

If He did, and He did, shouldn't I, can't I, trust Him with my life?
Shouldn't I believe He knows best?

Read Isaiah 55:8-9: Now I know we don't like to be told we are wrong but this Scripture tells us just that. Our flesh often dances to the tune of a different drummer, something different than that which God is playing. This verse reminds us of this fact.

What are your thoughts as you read Isaiah 55:8-9? -

The Point: We must have faith that God is who He says He is and He will do what He says He'll do. He will shape us, mold us, protect us, lead us, feed us, grow us, help us, move us, stretch us and use us IF we simply believe. There is a different, I believe He knows best and I must allow Him to flip my world around.

THE CHALLENGE: Each day we'll take a look at the Sermon on the Mount. Much of what Flip is all about comes from Matthew 5-7.

Today we challenge you at some point, maybe now, to read **Matthew 5** and notice the words of Christ.

ALSO, write at least one thing on the back of this sheet, or in your journal, to share with your small group later this morning.

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

The Prayer for the Week:

Pray for your school campus or your workplace. The greatest place we could ever hope to take the Gospel, aside from our home, is the place we go each day.

Pray the Gospel goes forth, pray you'll be a vessel and then go in the name of Jesus!

tuesday – september 9

Matthew 22:37-40, John 4:7-28, Luke 6:31

TO FLIP, YOU MUST HAVE LOVE.
YOU MUST EMBRACE

When Jesus speaks people listen. When Jesus began His ministry he astounded everyone with what He said. His claims and His answers were 100% true, but for many, very hard to accept. You see He was calling for people to Flip their lives around, but most of them just ended up flipping out.

You ever tried a flip? front flip, back flip, trampoline flip, flip in a pool, flat footed, back hand stand double twist half turnpike while eating a chicken salad sandwich with too much mayonnaise flip? Well whichever type of flip you choose to attempt one thing is for certain; you better be committed to it, you better embrace it, or you'll fall hard.

Read **Matthew 22:37-40**. Here we see Jesus giving us the ultimate commitment verse. If you're gonna live life, you better get this one thing straight. Love the Lord your God with all you have.

In other words, EMBRACE the Lord, revel in Him, live in Him, fully accept Him.

Check out vs. 40 – very cool here. Just to make sure you understand what's going on let me 'splain' the meaning of "on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

It means this: No matter what you've ever heard concerning God and how we are to act one thing is certain. **You Must Love Him With All You Are!**

You can see why they were flippin out. Jesus was pretty much telling them that everything they had ever heard was not completely right. They had missed the Messiah, God in the flesh. They were in need of the flip. We too respond this way too many times in life.

you can't have a flip without spinning
when change comes sometimes our heads spin, it takes a while to settle in. we've established that Jesus says that us loving God is the most important thing in life, greater than all other things. that lifts a lot of pressure off of us, we no longer have to figure it out...it's right there, in big red words.

How we respond to this however, is the spin. if you can't flip without spinning, you can't love God without showing it. the whole tell me you're a dog or just show me your tail thing.

I believe the tail a whole lot more than you simply saying it.

So how do we flip or show this flip?

Read John 4: 7-28 - Embrace Love -

How did she embrace the Love of Christ? (*write it below*) (hint, v. 28)

Read Luke 6:31 - Show Love - this is not so much about being nice so others will be nice back rather than choosing to do what's right even when people do the wrong things to us. we flip it

HOW WILL YOU CHANGE THE WAY YOU EMBRACE LOVE?

The Point: Flip is an action word, would that be a verb? When we have faith, and then embrace His love, it causes us to act like Him. We show love. We love other others because He loves us. you can't flip without love, without embracing all He is and committing to Him.

THE CHALLENGE: Read **Matthew 6 (or Luke 6)**
and notice the words of Christ.

How will you show the love of Christ today?

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?
What is the next step I should take after reading this?

wednesday – september 10

Psalm 63, Matthew 5:6

TO FLIP, YOU MUST HAVE IT/PASSION.
YOU MUST PURSUE

Suppose you had a dream like, I want to pursue football, dance, Broadway, tennis or professional duck hunting in Africa - suppose you had that dream and your parents told you they believed in you but never really spoke of it again, reacted to it, responded to it, helped you with it, supported you with lessons or the stuff needed to accomplish the dream/task,
Would you doubt they ever really supported or believed in you?

Some of you have experienced that and you know what that feels like. Usually that experience helps in how we respond to others....but how often do we do this with God? We make all these promises, we tell Him we are all about who He is, what's He's about, or we're all into telling of His fame.

We may believe, embrace, but we never pursue Him, we never follow through with that. There is no spark or action to our life, that means something's wrong.

If you were on the side of the road and needed a special wrench to fix your flat tire and I walked up and told you I had that wrench and then I walked off, would you follow/pursue me?

typical responses: uh yeah! or
depends on if I could get that wrench anywhere else.
you know the wrench (pursuit) we're talking about and there's only one place to get it

Read **Psalm 63** – Write down some ways this chapter speaks of Pursuing God.

When you think of the words "It" and "Passion" what comes to mind? -

2 good words to compare to **It & Passion** are **Hunger & Thirst**

Monday we read **Matthew 5**, look back at Matthew 5:6
what happens if we hunger and thirst for righteousness?

righteousness = God, holiness, right living

Who is one person you know that has a great Passion for God? _____

why do you think they are so passionate about God?

what do they have that you don't have?

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR PASSION FOR GOD?

The Point: If we are going to commit to something we should be willing to pursue that. If we believe & embrace all that God is it will be seen in our Passion for & Pursuit of Him. Our wants and desires will change.

THE CHALLENGE: Read **Matthew 7** and notice the words of Christ.

What are we challenged to do based on this chapter?

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

thursday – september 11

Isaiah 55:8-11, Luke 9:23

to change

When I think of FLIP my mind goes crazy. I go back to trampolines, burgers, repentance, fish on the ground, diving boards, eggs and much more.

This week there is no doubt that when I hear the word FLIP burgers, fish and eggs will not be on my thoughts. I'll think of you, of worship, of sermons, of devos, of games, of Andrew's flip turning into a belly buster, but more than anything, I'll think about CHANGE.

Get this:

At the beginning of this week you were asked to focus this week on one thing: To flip your way of thinking. All week we've concentrated on key thought: that God's desire for our lives and the world's desire for our lives do not match up.

Our flesh, our minds, our thoughts are in a battle each day. You always thought you had voices in your head right? Well there are conflicting opinions going on and only one opinion is full of truth. Yep, that would be God's thoughts and desire for your life.

Something must change in our lives if we are to accomplish our purpose; giving God ultimate glory. It's a struggle to live a Godly life at home, why? Because of who I choose to hang with? Because of who I choose to date? Because of my family life? Regardless of the excuse or reason it's still possible. We have the very spirit of God living within us for this very reason, He knew it would be tough. Take advantage of this Spirit and His power. We must flip daily!

Read Isaiah 55:8-11

We pray that as we leave camp week our thoughts would remain on this verse. That as each day flips by, we too would flip our thoughts as needed.

Luke 9:23 speaks of taking up our cross – that my friend is FLIP

And if we are to Flip then we must be faithful to the big 3:

Faith – **Love** – **It/Passion**
believe embrace Pursue

one of the hardest things for us to grasp is to BELIEVE
read **Isaiah 55:9** again. Did you notice something BIG there.

God is Big God is God

Do you honestly, 100% believe that God is God and that He is All we need?

THROUGH CHRIST WE CAN FLIP!

MORE ON THIS TOMORROW

The Point

The heart behind that year of camp and this week was to help you get to a place where you realized the war that is raging and the need **to renew our minds daily**, to be discipled, to put hands and feet behind our claims. We feel as though God has enabled you now to see that, experience that, and now to live it. to flip it

The question comes back to you:
will you?

Man, how many times have you been asked that question – will you?

Well – Will You?
We pray you will.

One last thing we must do to FLIP: See Proverbs 5:6-8

The Challenge

What is major flip or change that needs to take place in your life?

What did the Word teach me this week about God, Jesus, Man (me)?
What is the next step I should take after reading this?

friday – september 12

Colossians 1:13-14, 21-23

The Gospel is the Great Flip

There are many great references and pictures of the Gospel in Scripture. These give us the knowledge and wisdom, confidence and assurance as we walk through life with God.

These give us power to share with boldness and hope to walk through the darkest of times.

To Flip is to change and we know that Gospel is all about change. But how confident are we in this change...in knowing, trusting, and being ready to share it. Do we really know and understand what has happened?

Read Colossians 1:13-14

I hope you saw this amazing description of the Gospel here as Paul encourages the church at Colosse.

What is the big change you see in verse 13 that has occurred in the lives of those that are in Christ Jesus?

they have moved from _____ to _____

Have you ever searched for something in a room that was dark? It's pretty tough and thankfully we have a switch we can FLIP on right?

Point being: We know the difference between darkness and light. It's huge! That's the Gospel, that's the most amazing flip ever!

But there's more here....Read Colossians 1:21-23

Feel better about yourselves?

Me either....but get this – we are not the hero's of the story are we?

The beauty here is not me...that I made it....or succeeded.

The beauty here is Christ and the hope of the Gospel.

Christ has reconciled (brought us back) by His death!

What is the Gospel? It's a flip, a change and all honor and credit goes to the Father who initiated this great work!

But yes....there's more.....Read Ephesians 2:1-10

2 words I'm hoping stood out: "BUT GOD"

vv. 1-3 describe us before the Gospel invaded our lives.

v. 4 is the most amazing thing ever. (think amazing grace)

vv.5-10 is our new life in Christ and all it brings.

Do you see the difference?

From enemy to friend

From darkness to light

From rebellion to unity

From war to peace

From judgment to mercy

From following self to following Christ

The Point

So what's the point of this – The Gospel is the great Flip.

And this is a gift from God. Let that sink in.

Through Christ we can move from darkness to light.

The Challenge

The challenge is to daily preach the Gospel to yourself. As you do you become more and more confident in Christ and more able to share this great news! Never lose sight of the cross....it's why we have it plastered everywhere. But may we never lose sight of the great hope it brings.

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

saturday – september 13

Saturdays are meant to use as catch up days or extended times of reflection.

Reflection?

By reflection we mean thinking a little more on what we've seen or read throughout the week. A good way to do this is by asking some questions:

1. What sticks out from my week in the Word?
2. What are some things I need to continue to dwell on?
3. What did I learn about God this week?
4. What did I learn about myself this week?
5. What are something I need to work on in the future?
6. What would make my time in the Word better?

If you desire to read something new we'd encourage you to read through Psalm 119

Sunday is a day of rest so enjoy the day of worship

Feedback:

We need to hear from you!

Are the devotions helpful?

Any changes you would like to see made?

As we decide if we are going to continue this in January it is very helpful to hear from you.

When you get a chance send a message to me and let me know how things are going with you and your time in the Word.

We'll ask periodically throughout this book.

How do contact?

email – chris@roopvilleroad.org

facebook – [facebook.com/therocksm](https://www.facebook.com/therocksm) (send a message)

phone – text me at 770.328.4192

monday – september 15

Selected Scriptures

How to Exercise Your Faith

Bro. Stephen Peeples

Hundreds of thousands of books have been written about diet and exercise. Doctors tell us to stay in shape and we will live longer. The truth is staying in shape takes hard work. Not everyone is willing to pay the price. But for those who have the discipline, the rewards of physical fitness outweigh the demands!

The Bible tells us physical exercise is profitable but temporary because our bodies eventually wear out (1 Timothy 4:1-8). “But godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (8b). Our physical bodies won’t last, but our souls will spend eternity either in heaven or hell. The Apostle Paul points out to Timothy that it makes sense to spend more time being spiritually fit because that affects us in this life and the life to come. So....let’s workout spiritually:

1. Warm Up - (Romans 12:1-2)

Warm-up your faith by giving yourself totally to God. That’s what faith is – placing your total trust in Him. God will bring about a transformation of your thoughts and heart. God wants to be your Personal Trainer. Warm-up with Him each day.

2. Stretch - (Luke 17:5-6)

Just as it’s a good idea to stretch physically so you don’t pull a muscle, it’s also a good idea to stretch spiritually so you don’t come up limping or hurting. Ask God to increase your faith. The way you live is a reflection on how big you believe God is. Stretch = Simply Trust Realizing Everything Takes Christ’s Help.

3. Cardio - (Proverbs 4:23; Luke 6:45)

If you want to know what’s in your heart, listen to what you say. Another way to put it is, “What’s down in the well comes up in the bucket.” Solomon encourages us in Proverbs to guard our hearts. You can get to the top without integrity. You can probably get to the top quicker without integrity. But, without integrity, you can’t stay at the top! Be a positive reflection of Jesus Christ by having a heart for God and modeling a life of integrity.

4. Endurance Training - (James 1:2-4)

Everyone goes through tough times. Being a Christian doesn't vaccinate you from hardships. However, as Christians, we have an Advocate in Jesus Christ who has been tempted in all ways and has endured more hardships than we ever will. He understands what we are going through. When things get rough, Jesus will be there. Trials cause your faith muscles to flex and build your faith stamina. For those who endure, a crown of life awaits you! (James 1:12)

5. Spiritual Fitness - (Ephesians 4:14-16)

As a result of exercising your faith, you will be stronger, more mature, and not easily picked on by the bullies of doubt and fear. You will notice a difference in your love for others. Exercising your faith ultimately brings growth and unity to the body of Christ – a fulfillment of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20.

The Point

This walk with God takes work....get to it:

Warm-up, S-T-R-E-T-C-H, Cardio, Endurance Training, Spiritual Fitness

The Challenge

Simple, Get to work

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

The Prayer for the Week:

Pray for your school campus or your workplace. The greatest place we could ever hope to take the Gospel, aside from our home, is the place we go each day.

Pray the Gospel goes forth, pray you'll be a vessel and then go in the name of Jesus

tuesday – september 16

Proverbs 1:7

Knowledge

Bro. Stephen

Read Proverbs 1:7

There is nothing more important in all of life than to know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom [He has] sent” (John 17:3).

We learn two lessons from this verse:

The Beginning of Knowledge

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (1:7). The word “beginning” is a Hebrew noun which denotes the first place in time, order, or rank. It stresses the importance of giving God first place in our lives. To know Him, we must fear Him. “The fear of the Lord” is a common expression in the Psalms and elsewhere and occurs fourteen times in this book of Proverbs. In this context, it means expressing regret and turning from sin. “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (8:13). The Bible calls this repentance. We can never experience tight fellowship with the Lord and hang on to our sins at the same time. Yet, to know God deeply, we must trust Him. This calls for reverential trusting in God. “In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence” or faith (14:26). So the knowledge of God begins with “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Let us begin experiencing God today-by turning from our sins and trusting in our Lord & Savior. The complete fulfillment of our existence is knowing Christ more and more as we daily walk with Him.

The Barrier to Knowledge

“Fools despise wisdom and instruction” (1:7). The second part of our text reveals the barrier to the knowledge of God. The word “fools” describes the unrepentant mind set that despises divine wisdom and instruction. You will recall that David tells us in two of his psalms that “the fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (14:1; 53:1). The “fool” here is synonymous with a wicked person. He or she aggressively flouts personal independence from God and His commandments. Such an individual is the opposite of a wise man or woman. The attitude of a fool is illustrated in Genesis 25:34 where Esau despised his birthright and sold it for “one morsel of food.” Even though afterwards he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for “he found no place for repentance” (Heb. 12:16-17). The barrier to the knowledge of God is the unrepentant mind and the unbelieving heart.

What a warning about barriers in our lives! Let us see to it that no sin-barrier ever robs us of knowing God through His dear Son Who died for us to break down all barriers, and rose again for us to bring us blessing.

The Point:

Fear [respect] the Lord with all you've got and seek His wisdom today and everyday!

The Challenge:

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?
What is the next step I should take after reading this?

Missions Emphasis:

Pray today for Mike Flannery who serves as the Director of Missions for the Frontier Baptist Association in Buffalo, N.Y. Mike serves the Lord tirelessly, overseeing numerous churches in his association. Pray for him to have strength and discernment as he serves the Lord and His churches.

wednesday – september 17

Holiness

Bro. Stephen

**“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:
and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” Proverbs 9:10**

This is a powerful chapter in parabolic form that contrasts wisdom and folly (i.e., verses 1-12 and 13-18). At the center of these two sections is our devotional verse for the today. The subject is holiness (v. 10). And for those of us who know our Bibles, we hear God saying, “It is written, be holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44; I Pet. 1:16). What does this mean for you and me?

We must Sense the Holy One

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the “Holy One” (v. 10). As we approach this subject of holiness, we must come with a sense of reverence for “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of saints, and to be held in reverence by all those who are around Him” (Ps. 89:7). Reverence means “holy respect.” The same idea is conveyed in the New Testament where we are exhorted to “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28). Our God is a holy God, and we should have a strong moral dislike to any dishonorable act (Prov. 8:13). With this sense of reverence, we must also approach the standard of holiness with a sense of confidence – “In the fear of the Lord, there is a strong confidence” (Prov. 14:26). If we are walking under an unclouded heaven, with the unquenched Holy Spirit filling our lives, we can “come boldly to the throne of grace [to] obtain mercy and find grace in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

We Must Seek the Holy One

“The knowledge of the Holy One” (v. 10). To know holiness, we must seek the Holy One. So often we think of holiness as a quality or an attribute; but holiness is more than that. Holiness is a person - “The Holy One.” God, in Christ Jesus, has become our “sanctification” [holiness] (I Cor. 1:30). As He, and He alone, lives in us by the Holy Spirit, we manifest in our behavior patterns the characteristics of holiness. So there must be “the knowledge of the Holy One” (v. 10). This calls for the Christian to be seeking a deep and forever growing knowledge of the Lord Jesus. As we seek holiness, our knowledge of the Lord we serve will indeed increase.

We Must Serve the Holy One

“The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (v. 10). Understanding means “to separate mentally or to distinguish.” When we really know the Holy One, we choose Whom we will serve! And we do so with holiness of life in **our walk**, “Be holy in all your conduct” (I Peter 1:15); **our worship** - “Pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands” (I Tim. 2:8); **our work** - “We commend ourselves as ministers of God...by purity” (II Cor. 6:4, 6); **our witness** - “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses” (Acts 1:8). What a call to holiness!

The Point & Challenge

Be holy in your walk, worship, work and witness!

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

Missions Emphasis:

Pray today for Home Missionaries who serve all over North America and Canada. Our country is a mission field with many diverse ethnic groups with multitudes that need Christ as Savior.

thursday – september 18

Wisdom

Bro. Stephen

“The Lord gives wisdom” Proverbs 2:6

Life is quite meaningless without Divine wisdom. We need this wisdom to interpret life, death, and eternity. Worldly wisdom is “earthly, sensual, [and] demonic,” whereas heavenly wisdom “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:15, 17).

God’s Wisdom Is a Gift to Be Possessed

“The Lord gives wisdom” (v. 6). To possess this wisdom we must fulfill certain conditions. Look at verses 1-4. We must receive God’s wisdom (v. 1). This is where we fail so often. We “do not have because we do not ask” (James 4:2). We must request God’s wisdom. We must “cry out” for discernment and “lift up [our] voice for understanding” (v.3). God says, “You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13). More than this, we must research God’s wisdom. Like an eager miner, we must dig for “hidden treasures” in God’s holy Word (v.4). Each of these conditions is preceded with the participle “if!” Remember that God’s spiritual blessings are always conditional.

God’s Wisdom is a Goal to be Pursued

“The Lord gives wisdom” (v. 6) in order to reveal Himself to us. The conditions we have looked at are followed by the important word “then” (v. 5, 9). The first teaches us that wisdom reveals the awesomeness of our God....only with Divine wisdom do we understand “the fear of the Lord” (v.5). In a day of irreverence and spiritual insensitivity, we need to contemplate the awesomeness of the God with Whom we serve! Divine wisdom also reveals the attributes of our God.

These are summed up in one statement: “the knowledge of God” (v. 5). Think right now of His nature and names; reflect upon His perfections & excellencies; worship Him in “the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2). Divine wisdom likewise reveals the activities of our God. Among the many that could be enumerated in Scripture we are given several right here. God speaks wisdom to us - “from His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (v.6). “He stores up sound wisdom” in us (v. 7).

Recall the times when you lack wisdom (James 1:5). He sends wisdom to us in times of danger and peril “to preserve the way of His saints” (v.8). This brings us to our second “then” (v.9).

When we fulfill the conditions (mentioned above), God reproduces Himself in us with the sublime qualities of His “divine nature” (II Peter 1:4). Our text (v.9) mentions three: “righteousness,” “justice,” and “equity.” These three occur in the same order Proverbs 1:3 and suggest a course of action or way of life. The term “path” (v. 9) means “the way in which a chariot rolls.” What a beautiful metaphor! Like a chariot rolling down the highway, we should display the characteristics of our God for all to see. In New Testament language, it is the outliving of the indwelling Christ. All this is possible because “in [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge....and [we] are complete in Him” (Col. 2:3,9). There is no demand made upon our lives for which He is not adequate to meet. Thanks be to God!

The Point & Challenge

Pray for the wisdom we’ve studied today!

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

Missions Emphasis:

Today, pray for those living in your neighborhood that are unchurched and lost. Ask the Lord to make you a lighthouse in your neighborhood by sharing the Gospel!

friday – september 19

Trust

Bro. Stephen

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean no on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” Proverbs 3:5-6

No verses are better known and loved in the book of Proverbs than the two that invite our attention today. And there is substantial reason for this. The subject is TRUST; and therefore, “the fundamental principle of all religion.” The New Testament reminds us that “without faith [trust] it is impossible to please [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). With that in mind, the importance of our text presents a threefold challenge:

The Decision of Trust Must Be Foremost in Our Lives

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding” (3:5). This is where you and I must begin. Trust must be total “trust in the Lord with all your heart.” The verb literally means “to cling to”; yes, with both arms! Along the Christian pathway, Jesus must have all of us. A handshake is not enough. But more than this, trust must be focal, “lean not on your own understanding” (v.5). This is subtle, but immensely significant. The verb “lean” is used for a person who rests upon his spear for support and safety (II Kings 7:2). As long as we can trust our spears or an officer who holds our spears, we are NOT trusting the Lord! No, trust must be total and focal on Christ and Christ alone.

The Devotion of Trust Must Be Fostered in Our Lives

“In all your ways acknowledge Him” (3:6). By all the means of grace FAITH-TRUST must be fostered. We must live in the Scriptures (Rom. 10:17), we must look to the Savior (Heb. 12:2), and we must lean on the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The proof that trust is growing is that we acknowledge the presence and pleasure of Christ in all our dealings and undertakings. The verb “acknowledge” literally means “to consciously know or recognize.” This is no mere theoretical exercise. It is rather the total involvement of mind, heart, and will in holy synergism with the Savior. There must be no area in our lives where He cannot be welcomed and enjoyed. Paul sums it up perfectly when he exhorts, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31).

The Direction of Trust Must Be Followed in Our Lives

“He shall direct your paths” (3:6). If our first two considerations are fleshed out in our lives, we can trust God to guide us in all our ways. The idea behind the word “direct” is that of making a way plain. In the Old Testament, it is used of God’s power to remove obstructions (Isa. 49:11). The word is also employed to spell out the decree of a king. God not only removes obstructions, He also reveals instructions (Isa. 30:21; John 8:12). Needless to say, immediate obedience to all His instructions and commands demonstrates total and focal TRUST. You and I can know God-directed guidance every day of our lives! He created us “in Christ Jesus for good works...prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

The Point & Challenge

Make Proverbs 3:5-6 your daily prayer and perhaps your life verse as it is mine!
What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?
What is the next step I should take after reading this?

Missions Emphasis:

Today pray for those who are in your family that are without Christ. Ask the Lord to give you boldness to be a witness before them.

saturday – september 20

Saturdays are meant to use as catch up days or extended times of reflection.

Reflection?

By reflection we mean thinking a little more on what we've seen or read throughout the week. A good way to do this is by asking some questions:

1. What sticks out from my week in the Word?
2. What are some things I need to continue to dwell on?
3. What did I learn about God this week?
4. What did I learn about myself this week?
5. What are something I need to work on in the future?
6. What would make my time in the Word better?

If you desire to read something new we'd encourage you to read through Psalm 119

Sunday is a day of rest so enjoy the day of worship

Write it out:

Take some time today (Saturday or Sunday) and write out the benefits of you staying in the Word.

Answer these questions honestly as we walk through life seeking to better follow and trust Christ.

1. Have I been faithful to being in the Word daily?
2. What are some things to keep making it tough?
3. What are some differences that are evident as I set aside time to meet with God through His Word?
4. What is a good goal for me personally for the amount of days and time I spend in the Word daily?

monday - september 22

Micah 4:5, John 14:6, Luke 9:23

Following Christ

For the next 2 weeks we'll revisit a series we did this past year based on a book entitled Not A Fan by Kyle Idleman. Within these 2 weeks prepare to come face to face with the reality that following Christ demands your life.

Read Luke 9:23

This is a very popular verse. We all know it. The moment we started to read it we could finish the verse from memory. The problem is we too often fail to realize the implications or fail to see exactly what we are being called to do.

If Micah 4:5 is true (read it)

Then John 14:6 is crucial (read it)

and this makes Luke 9:23 important as well. (you've read it)

If pleasing God, walking with God is ultimate for us then following Christ is the way this happens and I must be devoted to not only understanding it but actually doing it too. That was the hope of the series, to help us gain a greater understanding of what it actually means to follow Christ, to follow Jesus.

There are 3 crucial words to the thought of following Jesus.

Whatever - Whenever - Wherever

We hear that and immediately think we pack everything up and move to Peru and begin working in the middle of nowhere...or is it just me?

Maybe you think it means to become Amish and begin making furniture with no electricity, running water and....get ready.....no TV.

But listen...the call to sacrifice is a call to deny you, self, each day.

It means you acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord each moment of each day.

To the point you're willing to do

Whatever - Whenever - Wherever

For Him and His glory.

Tough Question:

what kind of relationship do you have with Jesus?

Do you love Him with your life or do you simply like the forgiveness He provides?

**See the struggle is many honor Him as Savior
but do not bow to Him as Lord. Both are needed!**

Here's another scary thought:

Most people like Jesus enough to be at church but do not love Him enough to give Him their life.

Are these people truly following Christ?

When I am a fan – I pick and choose

When I am a follower – I give all.

The Point

There is a difference between liking Jesus and loving Jesus and it's seen in how we follow Him.

The Challenge

Let's get real this week and come face to face with our walk with God, with how we follow Christ. We are not perfect and we are not all expected to move to some third world country....but are we willing?

Read Mark **8:31-38** as we prepare to dive in

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

The Prayer for the Week:

Pray for truth this week. In our lives, in the lives of all our students and parents who are going through these devotions. There is a need to wake up and be confronted with what it truly means to follow Christ.

Step out of your comfort zone and come face to face with a God who demands all. Consider what we are being asked to do. We are being asked to deny self and follow the Son. He's asking for our life! But again, consider who it is that is asking.

tuesday – september 23

Luke 9:51-62

Wherever rather than “Not There!”

Yesterday we began this thought and faced the sad reality that most people are merely fans of Jesus. They still live within their own means (strength/wisdom.)

These people come to church but the week/life is theirs to live the way they want.

A big question for us to consider is this:

How do I follow Christ in a place where most folks are not following Him?

The answer?

I simply stay faithful to Christ and follow Him wherever He leads.

But what does this mean? (If you didn't read Mark 8:31-38 yesterday go read it now)
In Mark 8:31-38 we saw a brief description of what it looks like to follow Him. Simply put it means we lose our life. We give up the rights. His desires become our desires. We seek only to please Him

Today we begin looking at 3 guys with 3 responses to following Christ. Truthfully....they look and sound like we do sometimes.

“Not there” “Not that” “Not Now”

So let's learn from them and Christ's call and example.

The choice is there: Save your life or Lose your life in Christ.

Jesus has previously said where He was heading...to the cross.

This wasn't comfort....following Christ would bring sacrifice.

{sidenote} why would we ever think following Christ here would bring comfort and smooth sailing here? We live for the assured hope of being with Him!

Jesus would soon put skin on what “wherever” really meant. buckle up!

Read Luke 9:51-62

You've been here:

“I'll follow Jesus anywhere!”

We've all been this bold and certain at some point....and then it happens.

Jesus confronts us.....“how about there?”

our response.....“there?” Jesus responds....“yep.”

So now what?

This guy in verse 57 gets destroyed by us doesn't he?

We make fun of him and question his salvation or devotion to Christ.

Did you see how Jesus responded and set up the scene?

Read verse 58 – sound cozy and comforting?

But don't we do the same thing?

Do you see what Christ is demanding or asking for here?

He's asking for you to be willing to go wherever.

Don't think too big here. Don't be in Africa when you're in Carrollton.

Answer this: Where are you today?

Now answer this: Are you following Him there?

Are you pursuing Christ with the willingness to make His Name famous in the very place you now are? Is their faithfulness?

We won't list all the places, you know them. Are you following Him there?

Take a look at **Colossians 3:23** and sum up below what it is saying.

The Point

The concern in Luke 9 is not that you pack up and move away from everything you know. The concern is your willingness to follow Christ wherever. Are you willing? Is He worth more to you than anything...even your very life.

The Challenge

The challenge is the devo itself. This is hard stuff. I thought life would be easier with Christ. It is easier, if by easier you mean the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer is the One you are following.

The challenge is you dealing with this reality and seeking to please Him

So: Are you following Him where you are?

Are you willing to drop all and follow Him wherever?

(Home, School, Neighborhood, Locker Room, Work Place)

Are you willing to follow Christ in the ordinary and to the extreme?

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

wednesday – september 24

Luke 9:51-62

Whenever rather than “Not Now!”

In Luke 9 we see Jesus offer the invitation to follow Him to 3 people. As they process how following Jesus will impact their lives and situations they make excuses.

You ever made excuses?

Me too, and I've come up with some pretty lame ones too....horrible ones!

We've done this with Christ too.

Our heart may be His but we struggle with the truth of actually following Him. So what do we do? we make excuses.

Understand this:

The task of following Christ is crucial, costly and above all; so why wait? Stop with the excuses and surrender all

The “whenever” guy in verse 59 has an understanding of who it is that he is talking to....look at how he references Jesus.....”LORD.”

And even better, he has a valid excuse....if it's true....but look at his excuse or reason for being on the fence of following.

Did you see it? “I need to go bury my dad.” WOW
The WOW moment comes up next really.

What did Jesus say to him? Let the dead bury the dead.
And then it gets even more crazy. What did Jesus tell the guy to do?

What is Jesus really saying?

the call to follow Him is now more important than anything else?

We could sugarcoat what Jesus is saying or we could face reality.
The #1 thing in this life and in this world and in all creation is....

The Glory of God.

More important than anything you could come up with.
Remember though: the task of following is crucial, costly and above all.

I know what you're thinking....this is tough Chris. I know, I struggle too. But look at **Matthew 4:18-20** real quick.

Zero in on verse 21-22.

Now settle in on verse 22.....who did they leave behind?

Their Father.

The difference between the fan and the follower is that the follower says **WHEREVER – WHENEVER – WHATEVER.**

In **John 6** Jesus is saying some pretty radical things and many of the people left. (v. 66) and Jesus then turned to the Twelve and said "Do you want to go away as well? (v.67) and their response is so huge and beautiful.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. (v. 68)

What a response and what a challenge to us.

The Point

Are we ready right now to follow Christ? If He truly is our only hope why are choosing to make excuses or wait on some special event to take place or life achievement or certain age? Why not go now, follow Him now?

The reality is the time for us to go and proclaim the kingdom of God is now so why put it off any longer?

The Challenge

Seek to live a life that is ever ready to go and proclaim His kingdom. No more excuses, no more delays, go now!

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?
What is the next step I should take after reading this?

thursday – september 25

Luke 9:51-62

Whatever rather than “Not That!”

In Luke 9 we see Jesus offer the invitation to follow Him to 3 people. As they process how following Jesus will impact their lives and situations they make excuses.

today the guy just wants to say goodbye to his family.
Just want to grill out have a little going away party and then I'll meet up with you.

Well, that's what it would look like now.
Go back and read **Luke 9:61**.

Now at this point if I'm around I'd probably hit this dude.
Because if the second guy's excuse was to bury his dad and that didn't fly I'd be like “man really, you just want to have a cookout?”

But still, he ask the question and from it we learn something huge.

This guy wanted to follow Jesus, that's not the issue.
The issue is that he didn't want to follow Jesus right then. with everything.

There was something he couldn't let go of at that moment.
Remember **Matthew 4** yesterday, the fisherman that just dropped everything.

That's the goal.
This guy in v. 61he held onto his nets.....he was staring at them.
Just one more cast.....please?

Get this picture.
Many believers say this: I will follow you Lord with everything!

Then Jesus points to the thing you're holding onto behind your back.
“What about that?” “This?” we reply

How did Jesus reply to this guy? How does He reply to us?
read v. 62.

Right now you're thinking you don't plow or plow that way.
You see in those days you used cattle to plow and you guided them.
If you looked back you'd mess everything up.

Jesus is saying if you're going to follow you must keep your eye focuses on Him. Everything must be let go and offered up.

Remember. Following Christ is costly, crucial and above all!

Another way to say it is this – It's not that Jesus is the top priority. It's that Jesus is the only priority

He desperately wants you – He doesn't want to share you
He will settle for nothing less than your undivided attention and complete commitment
He wants you to invest in him more than your car or clothes or hobbies or cellphone
He wants you to surrender to him more of your time than your friends get from you.
He wants you to give more joy/energy in worshipping him than the game or other things
He wants to be Lord of your life – not just a side thing.

I Kings 19

Elijah was a prophet in the OT - He was told to select Elisha as his successor
When Elijah finds him....Elisha is plowing a field with 12 oxens (shows wealth)
If Elisha accepts he would have to leave friends, family, wealth, everything

When Elisha heard....he didn't offer any excuses but guess what he did?

He burned the plow and killed the oxen.....why?

He burned **his plow** to give his full attention to **the plow God had given.....**

He wasn't giving himself the chance to return to the old one.

The Point

Jesus is our highest treasure, our guide, our motivation, our strength, our life.
Following Him is costly, crucial and above all.
Whatever it is....we must be 100% in and committed.

Being confident in this (he who began the work in us...is faithful to complete it)
If you are following Him....trusting in Him....walking with Him –
He is strong enough to keep you!

The Challenge

Survey your life....what is it that you are still holding onto?

What is holding you back from letting go? (no frozen singing allowed!)

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?

friday – september 26

Luke 9:51-62

Wherever-Whenever-Whatever

This week has been challenging. We've been confronted with some hard truths and seen examples of those who have chosen to follow Christ above all.

Go back and read **Luke 9:57-62**

Put yourself in their shoes....after hearing how Jesus has just responded what would be your answer, excuse to His request to FOLLOW?

Jesus is asking for a lot – He is asking for our lives, all of it.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.
Jim Elliot

Trading everything we have for all that God offers is the best deal we could ever make.....ever.

Read Psalm 106:19-20

The context is this: Moses is on the mountain...the children of Israel are waiting. IN the meantime what you just read takes place.

What did they do? What did they exchange for “things?”

Before we bash....how often do we do this?

What are some things that would be considered “metal images” in your life?

What is holding you back from following Christ now?

What is keeping you from following Christ with all you have?

What are your thoughts when you hear the cost of following Christ?

Find Hope in **Romans 8** – that God has provided for you time and time again.

Find hope in the fact that nothing will ever separate you from His love.

The Point? In Christ we have all we could ever hope, want or dream.

The Challenge? Diving into that with all we've got, that which He has given.

saturday - september 27

Reflection

Think a little more on what we've seen or read throughout the week. A good way to do this is by asking some questions:

1. What sticks out from my week in the Word?
2. What are some things I need to continue to dwell on?
3. What did I learn about God this week?
4. What did I learn about myself this week?
5. What is something I need to work on in the future?
6. What would make my time in the Word better?
7. How consistent was I in my prayer life?
8. How did staying in God's Word affect my week?
9. How did NOT staying in God's Word affect my week?

If you desire to read something new we'd encourage you to read through Psalm 119

Sunday is a day of rest so enjoy the day of worship

sunday – september 28

Ever considered how busy we make our schedule to be on a Sunday?
Take a look at your last few Sundays....how busy have you been?

It's almost like we come back from vacation and we need another vacation to rest up.

Why do we do this?
What do you think?

How can I truly take a day of rest?

What can I do, or not do, today that would help me truly rest?

monday – september 29

2 Timothy 2:22

Fleeing Immorality and Pursuing Holiness

The Word of God calls us to flee sexual immorality and to pursue holiness. This may sound like a drag or maybe sound like something that is unattainable considering your desires or past. The good news is that Jesus has made a way for us to be forgiven and has made a way for us to experience victory over sin through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read 2 Tim. 2:22 and write down the key words that communicate what God is asking us to do.

There is a call here to “**flee**”.....this may sound like something you do and less of something that the Holy Spirit does. You would be partly correct. The Bible describes our pursuit of holiness as a battle or a journey that we go on and we take part in, but not one we take part in alone. We struggle alongside the Holy Spirit.....relying on the Spirit, working for the fruit that the Spirit produces in our lives. As we do this, by God’s grace we will see victory over sin and those youthful passions.

So no matter what “youthful passion” you are struggling with in this season of life.....know that there is victory and holiness can be attained by God’s grace. Yes, even victory over lust, addiction to pornography, and all else that seeks to destroy us.

A few years ago John Piper released a guide in the form of an acronym to help flee sin.....this will be very helpful in future days.

F.L.E.E.—A Strategy for Pursuing Sexual Purity

Here's a strategy: F.L.E.E.

It's biblical, it's hard to forget, and it fits on a napkin.

First, *fill yourself with Christ.*

- Fill your life with his people: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another" (Colossians 3:16).

Second, *lock out the lies.*

." . . . With much seductive speech she persuades him. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter. (Proverbs 7:13-23)

Third, *exchange* lies for truth.

- God is not stingy, but good (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).
- Sinful pleasures are not filling, but fleeting (Hebrews 11:24-26).
- This is not inevitable, since God provides a way of escape (1 Cor.10:13).

Finally, *expose* yourself to the light.

Turn and read (1 Jn 1:5-7)

So, are you hiding? Confess your sins to God. He forgives! But don't stop there. "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another" (James 5:16). That's what Christian friends are for.

It is good news that we are not condemned in Christ, and it is good news that we are no longer slaves to sin. My friends, flee from sexual immorality.

The Point and Challenge:

God desires holiness for His followers and by the power of the Holy Spirit we can have victory over sin in our lives.....so today rely on God and work hard to FLEE sin!

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?
What is the next step I should take after reading this?

The Prayer for the Week:

This week we challenge you to pray for boldness to fight sin. Make it a prayer but follow it with action. Invite others to pray for and with you this week. Bringing others into the fight brings accountability and support.

tuesday – september 30

Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health....

Do You Thirst for God? This may be a question you have never thought about. This question says a lot about your spiritual health. What we desire and long for says much about what we worship and who we are.

Notice what one pastor said many years ago,

“holy desire, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in Scripture as an important part of true religion.” J. Edwards

Do you long and hunger for God like you do a meal?

Notice what Paul and the Psalmist say,

Phil. 3:10

“that I may know Him”.....the more we know Him, do we want more?

Ps. 42:1-2

“as the deer pants for the water, so my soul pants for you”.....is this you?

Thirsting for God should be a daily characteristic of our walk with Jesus. Sometimes we may not thirst like we should but we must be pressing on daily to know God more!

As a follower of Jesus sometimes our soul seems dry.....

Thirst of the Dry Soul

when in Christ, thirst is not gone forever
if so then we would be self-sufficient.

a spring satisfies not by taking away the need for water,
but by giving water.

The soul becomes dry by:

- drinking the fountains of the world more than “the river of God”. Ps.65:9
we feel not as close to His presence....be sensitive and seek hard.
- prolonged mental and physical fatigue...cure is obvious.....keep seeking.

As a follower of Jesus when we seem dry and know we need to pursue Jesus, it is a blessing.

* **Spiritual Thirst is a Blessing.....**

Turn and Read Isaiah 30:18

God Initiates Spiritual Thirst,
and He does so in order that He would satisfy it.

“When a man pants after God, it is a secret life within which makes him do it: he would not long after God by nature. No man thirsts for God while he is left in his carnal [i.e., unconverted] state. The unrenewed man pants after anything sooner than God: . . . It proves a renewed nature when you long after God; it is a work of grace in your soul, and you may be thankful for it.”

-Spurgeon

As a follower of Jesus sometimes we don't thirst after God.....

* **What if I don't thirst after God?**

-there has to be examination done on the soul to find out what kind of thirst you have.

-Meditate on Scripture.

meditate, not just read-you cant have quenching without absorption-read-write-think

"the simple reading of the Word of God" can become information that "only passes through our minds, just as water passes through a pipe." -

George Muller

-Pray through Scripture.

-let the Word of God be the wings of your words to Him-

- They called on God to know him better.....Col. 1:10

-Read thirst-making writers.

- After the God-breathed words of the Bible, read the time-tested works of those Christian writers with a thirst-making pen.

Are You Sensitive to God's Presence?

The **Point** and **Challenge**:

everyday we thirst for something.....is that something God? Today see you need for God and let your thirsting for Him lead you to seeking Him like never before!

What did the Word teach me about God, Jesus, Man (me)?

What is the next step I should take after reading this?



What's Next?

Make sure you pick up another devotion book at The Rock. This devotion will begin on Wednesday October 1st and be ready for pick-up on Wednesday September 24th

Keep in mind: All devotions are available on our website, therocksm.me or therocksm.org. Just look for the “daily devotion” tab on the top of the page.