



God's Transforming Love

30 day Bible Study written by Meredith Kendall -
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Introduction

Living in America you probably go to church, have gone to church or at least have visited a church. This study is actually going to be written for people who want to know this Jesus that every Christian talks about but for you may seem too perfect to love you in all your junk.

I was there for many years and by all accounts should not have accepted Jesus to be my personal Lord and Savior. I am going to take the masks off and put on the gloves. I wish someone would have done this with me many, many years ago but I also believe that God allowed everything to happen perfectly in His timing so that I could help others.

This study will have places for you to journal and if you don't know the first thing about the Bible, relax we won't be getting into the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic which were the three original languages of the Bible.

You will see quickly that I write like you and I are having a conversation.

So are you ready?

If I asked you to tell me about yourself what would you say? (I do not want your masked face to tell me, I want you to take off the mask and talk to me. You will not offend me after doing inner-city ministry for the past 10 years I have heard it all and seen it all).

My Story

Here is the corporate response to who I am:

I had the dream life, but God had other plans. God called me away from a successful career to be the Co-Founder of Against the Grain. AtG serves those who are often forgotten; those Jesus would call "the least of these".

As a nationally recognized sales leader, I learned how to build bridges and make connections with the heart of what people need. I now use this same ability to cut through the tough layer we use to protect ourselves and help people understand the root causes of their struggles and find freedom through Christ.

I did not grow up in the Church but I have learned to love as Jesus loves through a life of tough experiences. My husband of 29 years, has "always encouraged me to look at a person's potential and not write them off based on appearances". That advice has shaped the way I do ministry. I look past what we all can see and connect with the heart.

Now that I have told you the professional introduction to who I am....here is who I really am. I grew up in a dysfunctional home with a step-father who was an alcoholic and my abuser. My go to behaviors were boys and studying.

Studying because if you asked me to do something I did not want to make up something so I took very hard courses in High School, so I was always studying. And boys... because I was searching for a fathers love.

In 1985 I became a teenage mother and had moved to the Bible belt. I did not grow up in the church like my husband so you can imagine the shame and guilt that I felt knowing that people could do the math and realize we had not been married long enough to have a child.

A few years into our marriage I had an affair. I really do not remember a lot of the details except that I was lonely, my husband was working a lot of hours to keep food on the table and my go to behavior was guys. I told my husband about it and we immediately called the Pastor. The Pastors response was to talk about it that night and to never bring it up again. So that is what we did. WRONG..WRONG that was the worse advice EVER.

Forward a few years we moved even more south and got involved with a small Church. I felt like I had a lot to offer, so I jumped in with both feet. My resume included: Choir, Children's Choir, VBS volunteer, Youth Group, Bible Bowl, Soccer Coach and Fall Festival outreach coordinator. If the church doors were open we were there. The problem became that Church was a social activity not a relationship with Jesus. Even though I had this very impressive resume, I still never felt good enough to get into Heaven. I always felt there was more I needed to do so that God would forgive me for all my past.

I was a youth counselor for summer camp and I cannot tell you who was speaking or what the week was about except that the speaker said this: If you were to die tonight, do you know for sure, for sure that you will go to heaven?

Because you see in the Bible it says in Matthew 7 "And on that day many will say to me: Lord, Lord did we NOT".... and at this point all I heard was my resume.

Well before I knew it I was in the back talking with an older women who's Bible was marked up with sticky notes and she was going through these scriptures.... all I knew was I wanted to go to Heaven....so I prayed the prayer she told me to and then I was back with the youth singing songs under the pavilion. I came home to tell my husband what had happened and he did not believe that I had not already been a Christian and this is where our lives started to take a turn for the worse.

I started listening to the Pastor at the church and because I was a new Christian I started taking everything he said as truth and did not study for myself. This church talked a lot about women submitting to their husband and my best friend even gave me a book on submission. I started losing who I was and becoming a doormat.

During this time I became very unsure of myself and my relationship with my husband took a turn for the worse. He had an affair with my best friend. I thought my life was over but through prayer God redeemed our marriage and started the process of us living Against the Grain.

I thought God was done writing my testimony and in 2011, I was the victim of a gang attack. I learned from police and clients that it was a warning to stop offering freedom to those held in bondage of abuse, addiction and negative cycles.

That attack made me even more aware of the awesome calling on my life and how serious it is to be on the front lines for Jesus. After a few months of recovery I was back in the jails knowing that my attacker, who was never caught, may one day walk into class.

Today I feel that God has me on a journey to help people who may not know where to start to learn who He really is and break free from their past, the shame and guilt and start finding HOPE.

Meredith Kendall

Day 1

Not growing up in the church: It was just like God to put me with a guy whose family was very "churchy". The doors were open, they were going. I, on the other hand went a few times and here are a few memories.

- A long stick with a feather on it so if you fell asleep during the sermon they would come over and tickle you. Looking back on that as I write; I do not know what was more distracting the nodding of a dozing man or the other man with a feather attached to a long stick.
- Asking to go to a kid's summer camp and being told; "no, we did not do things like that".
- When I got older and went to church with boyfriends. I would feel something when I was there; I even remember talking with someone, crying in a small room and saying some words but then when I left the church building I went back to my boyfriend's house. Seriously I cannot remember for sure how physical that evening went but I can tell you looking back on the relationship as a whole, it ranked up there on the "Christian don't list".

Have you ever heard of the "Christian Don't List"? This is the rule book that IF you follow "these", you'll make your Father in Heaven happy?

If you are like me you heard over and over that you ARE a bad person because you:

- Swear
- Have sex before marriage
- Drink alcohol
- Steal

Does that cover the list you heard? Or are there others you heard?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

In reality here is the real "don't list". If you read the list correctly; the first scripture in 1st Corinthians is talking about believers. If you are not familiar with the Bible this is Paul talking. If you do not know the story of Paul, he was a Pharisee.

Pharisees believed that HaShem gave the Jews both a written and an oral Torah, both of which were equally binding and both of which were open to interpretation by Rabbis.

Pharisees were devoted to the study of Torah and the education of all people, regardless of status in society. The Pharisees detested hypocrisy and actively sought it out and criticized it whenever they encountered it.¹

The easy definition for what we need to know is Paul's main job was to kill Christians because of his career. And here are 2 scriptures in which Paul gives his resume:

¹ http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_a_Pharisee

You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion—how I violently persecuted God's church. I did my best to destroy it. I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors. Galatians 1:13-14 (NLT)

I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church Philippians 3:5b-6a (NLT)

Now the cool thing is that on a road in Damascus, Paul met God and it goes like this.

**Paul was actually named Saul prior to his conversion. **

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains. As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" "Who are you, lord?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do. "The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one! Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink. Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord!" he replied. The Lord said, "Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again." "But Lord," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name." But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 9:1-16 (NLT)

I know we were talking about the "don't list" but before we got there I wanted you to see who it was that God was using to talk to you about the "don't list" and who it applied to. One of the biggest issues that we, as a people group, focus on, are the "don'ts".

If you continually tell someone "don't do this or you can't have that" where will their focus be?

The focus will be on what I can't have. But in reality the "don't list" in 1st Corinthians is for a guide of who we are not to associate with.

Read this and tell me who is Paul talking about?

When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.

Paul is talking about who? _____

He is talking about the person who is a believer. If they are still acting as if they are an unbeliever then we need to walk away and actually Paul says: _____

Don't even eat with such people.

Day 2 Church Experience

What was or is your Church experience? _____

Here is part of my church experience: I went to College and met a guy. Matter of fact the very first time I met him, I told him, "good job"; he was playing the piano. His response, "no just lucky", I thought stuck up upper classman and went on my way.

Well that stuck up upperclassman was a very religious person. So much so, that he found a church that was close to the college to come every Sunday and bring a van onto campus and take college students to church. He invited me because now, we were dating.

We would go to church and as soon as we were out of the building and back in our world, nothing changed. We were already physical in our relationship; we were engaged to be married, so it made everything ok in my mind.

I remember thinking this was wrong and we should not be doing this, but every day we listened to the Christian music of Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant or Petra but that did not change our behavior. You see in our lives God only happened on Sundays from 8am-1pm.

So your church experience today, does it happen only on Sunday's or is it a lifestyle of everyday living?

On the next page you will see a diagram. This diagram changed the way I started reading and studying Gods Word. I have written down the scripture and reference for you, (Romans 12:1-2). Depending on where you are in your walk with the Lord you may not understand the first half of the scripture today but I still want you to walk yourself through this verse and what it says to you.

Here are the instructions.

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Day 3: Wedding Day

My wedding day came and extra material had been purchased for the dress and a seamstress on standby just in case I “popped” before actually walking down the aisle. Thankfully I did not. We got married in a tiny little church with hardly anyone in attendance because of our sin. My husband’s parents would not let anyone be invited except for immediate family because of our indiscretion. The wedding day had “lots of hiccups”, here are just a few.

- No hot water for the guys to use
- The Pastor was thrown out of another denomination by a committee my soon to be father-in-law was on.
- The Pastor asked if I would take my husband as my “awful wedded husband”.
- The camera broke and we were not to move until it was fixed.
- My step-father was drunk
- The wedding cake crumbled as it was being delivered
- My mom broke out in hives and she took 2 antihistamines.

Oh the memories of that day; No I was not laughing the day of, that was 1985; but, years later we laugh all the time.

Why do I bring up our Wedding day? Because it has not always been easy and we have wanted to quit but only by God’s grace and mercy did we make it this far. Think back to the last 3 days and list all the things we (my husband and I) had going against us?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Here are just a few: my past physical relationships, the dysfunction of growing up like I did, our indiscretions –premarital sex resulting in having a child 5 months after the wedding and the religiosity of his family that said; it was all my fault.

I want to look at the traditional wedding vows:

I, (name), take you (name), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part.

Now let’s break it down:

I, (name), take you (name), to be my (wife/husband), - simple enough no biggie.

to have and to hold from this day forward,- what does this mean to you? _____

for better or for worse, - and this means? _____

for richer, for poorer,- what does this say to you? _____

in sickness and in health,- says what? _____

to love and to cherish;- what does that mean? _____

from this day forward until death do us part.- do we even mean those words anymore? _____

Some of these groups of words are very simple. But what I want you to focus on for a minute is "to love and to cherish". Unfortunately when most young couples get married they are not in love; they are in lust, (*to have a yearning or desire; have a strong or excessive craving*)². Most young people have no clue who the real person is that they are about to be married to. That is why you hear a lot of time "we grew apart". Actually most women get married hoping to change the man and the man gets married hoping the woman will never change. Unfortunately the woman changes and the guy does not; so therefore they get divorced because they "fell out of love" or "grew apart". But to be in love means to have a *profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person. Be of fond attachment, or devotion to or having a profound dedication to.*³

We do not know what Love is anymore. We use it flippantly, haphazardly. What does it mean to Love God?

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself" Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)

So would you agree that Love is a commitment more than a feeling? _____

Romans 12:2 (NLT) says: *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect*

Why did I ask you to look at the traditional wedding vows? Because when you said "I do" to Christ as your Lord and Savior you made a vow, a commitment, a covenant. It will not always be easy and you may not feel like "being a Christian" but just like in a marriage; you may not always feel like you want to be married but you still are married. So we need to take our vow to the Lord very serious.

Journal your feelings or thoughts: _____

² Dictionary.com

³ Dictionary.com

Day 4: More of my church experience

I never really fit into the "church" crowd and to make matters worse we move to Tennessee, the "Bible Belt" where all the women stay home in the mid 80's and go to Bible Studies.

I was no different; my sister-in-law lived close by, drove over to get me and off we went. Into a big church we walked. The fellowship hall was filled with women and packets for this week's homework were passed out.

Me, 19, newly married, pregnant and due anytime, new to the area and un-churched; now equals going to church and Bible study.... What was I thinking?

I never fit in- trying to understand the words and meanings of "Christianese"... it might as well have been written in Greek or Hebrew.

Asking anyone for help to the real issues I was having got me the pat answer "did you read the Bible? Then you may ask me for help."

Really- now that I look back at that answer no wonder I quit studying the Bible and going to the church service.

I started being the volunteer extraordinaire. You needed a sitter for a group –I did it, just as long as I did not have to feel like I was being looked down upon because I did not know the Bible, wear the right clothes or drive the right car, now I was just looked down upon because I was just the babysitter; but the kids loved me.

I knew nothing of the God they were studying except for the few "popular stories" you heard growing up or the songs you would sing with hand motions.

How was learning the hand motions to Zacchaeus was a wee little man and a wee little man was he going to help me with my daily life?

How was the story of Jonah being eaten and thrown up on dry land by a whale going to help me?

So why am I writing about my church experience then? Because it went from bad to worse.

My self-esteem was very low. We were not making the bills and the church wrote many checks to pay for our rent or because our car broke down. We were the charity case, or at least that is how I felt. I had always worked. Since I was 12, I had always made my own money and now I am married and the church says "women stay home".

I finally talked my husband into letting me go to work. But I was lonely inside and my "go to behavior" in high school to feel love was the attention of a guy. Because I still had not changed anything in the inside, my go to behavior gets the best of me and when a guy pays attention to me at work, I fall;

An Affair.

It does not go very far or for very long and I tell my husband.

We call one of the Pastors at the church where we were attending and I confess everything.

He never meets with us.

He talks with me on the phone.

His advice: talk about it tonight and NEVER bring it up again.

He is the Pastor so he knows best, right? Wrong... Worse advice ever; but, because we are newly married we follow the advice.

But my feeling of unworthiness and that the church people were always looking at me as a sinner... whether they were or not, I felt it.

Church just became something you were supposed to do on Sunday and Wednesday; praying that you will be good enough to make it to Heaven by attending a service. I wish I had had this following scripture back then; maybe then, I would have wanted to know more about this Jesus earlier than later and what He had to offer me.

*The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. **"Go now and leave your life of sin."** John 8:3-11(NIV)*

So maybe your life of sin is not adultery but maybe it is: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, idolatry, anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips and lying, (taken from Colossians 3:5-10)

Now that I have said all this, let's finish with how God really feels about us.

Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13 (NIV)

So if God is our Father and He is also the King of kings:

For at just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords 1Timothy 6:15 (NLT)

And we are given the right to become his children that makes us... Prince and Princesses.

Before we end for the day, not sure if I have brought up a lot of "junk" so if you need to let it out, then do so here. If there are things you need to talk to God about talk to Him here. And remember that God is a big boy and He can handle it if you are upset and angry. Matter of fact He already knows it, so why not talk to Him about it so that it doesn't "eat you alive". Psalms 139:1-4 (NIV) *O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord.*

Day 5: Even more of my church experience

Here is where my church experience went from BAD to WORSE. We moved to another region of Tennessee and by this time I am totally engrossed in the "when the church doors are open you are there" way of life.

We started by going to a very large church. We became members, worked in the children's ministry and we even sang in the choir. There were a few straws that broke this camel's back:

- The pastor gave up one of his Lexus' as a sacrifice (they had multiple)
- We bought a house and were sent a welcome to the neighborhood join us on Sunday morning postcard... from the church we were members of.

My response: Sorry.....Good-bye.

So then we found a small church- so excited. The kids liked it, we liked it and excitedly we dove in with both feet. Actually the reality was by the time it was all finished: we dove in, head first, into the shallow end.

The doors were open, we were there. I was involved with:

- Children's choir
- Adult choir
- Fall festival
- Started a soccer league
- Worked at Mother's Day Out
- Worked with the youth
- Lead Bible Bowl

Wow impressive right? Works- all works, but the more I "worked" the more inadequate of God's love I felt.

The last thing I "did" was work with the youth. I was never allowed as a teenager to go to youth camps so when the opportunity to go as a counselor arose I excitedly volunteered. I remember as if it was yesterday; the speaker was giving his talk and all I remember was "if you were to die tonight do you know for sure, for sure, for sure you would be in heaven. I am agreeing all along saying "yes I do, yes I do"- then he said "but on that day many **not a few but many** will say to Him... but Lord did we not _____ and _____ and _____ and then he put it into my terms, whether or not this is what he said or not, this is what I heard: kids choir, adult choir, fall festivals, soccer leagues, Bible bowl, teaching and leading studies- your RESUME will **NOT** get me there.

The speaker then said, "So if you need to talk go out to the right."

Boohooing and sobbing uncontrollably; now the youth counselor is accepting the Lord, how funny is that?

I walked into the room and this is what happened next: a person sat down with me and opened up their Bible to all their sticky noted pages. It started like this:

Romans 3:10 (NLT) ~ As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous—not even one.

Romans 3:23 (NLT) ~ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard

Romans 6:23 (NLT) ~For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord

Romans 1:16 (NLT) ~For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (NLT) ~Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

Romans 5:8-9(NLT) ~But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation

Romans 3:22-26 NLT) ~We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT) ~God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NLT) ~ And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Now that they were done showing me all these scripture; not that I was listening... I was more worried about spending eternity in Hell. I prayed a simple prayer that was given to me to pray and it went like this: Lord forgive me of my sins, and I believe in you, be my Savior.

So your question might be: How did you get this far without being saved? Answer: I could pass the test without the experience. Along with many other things on my past resume, I also had been taught the correct answers through a class called Evangelism Explosion.

But here is my pet-peeve with rally's and conferences - THERE WAS NO DISCIPLESHIP afterwards. There was no "this is what happens next".

Day 6: How far will the right answers get you?

How far will the right answers get you in life before reality hits? It may get you a lot of material happiness, it may even buy you friends or positions, but are you truly happy with who you are? Can you be open and honest with people? Especially Christians? Or Church people? And have you ever wondered what happens to all those people that answer the “call on any given Sunday” or at a Rally- What goes on behind closed doors- you say a prayer, read a verse, get given a tract or a Bible and sent on your merry way? It is supposed to be set up that you will be contacted by a local church in your area or are given a list of churches that you can go to. The issue becomes when the excitement of going down front and the reality of what is supposed to happen next? You attempt to find a church but when you drive in you realize you don’t drive the same type of car and/or you don’t dress the same... so you either

1. Drive right back out
or

2. Go in

If you go in a couple of different scenarios can happen:

1. They realize you are new –
 - a. either based on it’s a very small church
 - b. you tell them
 - c. They realize you don’t belong in their “neighborhood”
2. They shake your hand, welcome you, and leave you stranded to figure out the “hidden rules” of this church.

Your experience is topped off by either no one saying a word to make you feel welcome or they embarrass you by making you stand up as a first time guest. So you run away never to return again.

Now let’s go back to the scriptures that most people will use when “bringing someone to Christ”.

Romans 3:10 (NLT) ~ As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous—not even one.

Romans 3:23 (NLT) ~ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard

Romans 6:23 (NLT) ~For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord

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1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (NLT) ~Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

Romans 5:8-9 (NLT) ~But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation

Romans 3:22-26 (NLT) ~ We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT) ~ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NLT) ~ And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

So now that you have read these verses, in your own words write what was being said to you.

Romans 3:10 _____

Romans 3:23~ _____

Romans 6:23~ _____

Romans 1:16 ~ _____

1 Corinthians 15:1-4~ _____

Romans 5:8-9~ _____

Romans 3:22-26~ _____

Day 7: The Next Steps

So how do we translate a decision into a daily form of living?

For the next 23 days we will be searching the scripture for what it means to live "Against the Grain". Against the Grain comes out of Romans 12:1-2 (NIV) *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

So what is it that you need to quit conforming to?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

If you are having a hard time coming up with answers; how about what the world says is normal verses what God wants for your life?

Do you have anything that God has been asking you to give Him more control of and you are still thinking you know best?

As I was writing this study I was invited to speak at a Homeless Newspaper release. When I left there I wrote this:

For the past 2 hours I have been sitting in a very beautiful historic church....It was filled with men women and babies. As I got up to speak I saw: moms, dads, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters. Now I have left after helping many fill out paperwork for a free flu shot. I smell no longer the sweetness of my perfume, but instead: smoke, alcohol and days of no running water nor a mattress to lay their tired body...but my heart is full because not one complained to me nor did they ignore me thinking they were too good to speak to me... They accepted me in as one of them with no conditions or hidden agendas, just unconditional acceptance. This makes me think of how much of my stench really does get on Jesus or do I walk far enough apart from him in my daily life that I never fully live out Matthew 11:28-30

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." Matthew 11:28-30 (the MSG)

Two of my many favorite sayings are:

- God's got this
- How's that working for ya?

So if God's got this why do we not trust Him with EVERYTHING? We trusted Him enough when we said "I do"; I trust You to save me and take me to heaven... but I do not trust You to take care of me on a daily basis. Why is that? _____

Trust⁴ is defined as a person on whom one relies.

For the rest of today's lesson we will look at a few scriptures about Trusting in the Lord. After the scripture you will find a few lines to journal. Pray before you start reading these scriptures. Ask God to guide your heart as you read and meditate on these verses. You will find journal spots under the scriptures. As you write let your mind be guided by the Spirit as to what God is asking of you; showing you; or even blatantly telling you.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight *Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)*

Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. *Isaiah 40:30-31 (NLT)*

He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, and you will bring me glory." I replied, "But my work seems so useless! I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose. Yet I leave it all in the Lord's hand; I will trust God for my reward." And now the Lord speaks—the one who formed me in my mother's womb to be his servant, who commissioned me to bring Israel back to him. The Lord has honored me, and my God has given me strength. *Isaiah 49:3-5 (NLT)*

⁴ Dictionairy.com

Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light." After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them. But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. John 12:35-37 (NLT)

And in another place Isaiah said, "The heir to David's throne will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hope on him. "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them. Romans 15:12-14 (NLT)

All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. 1 John 4:15-17 (NLT)

So how's it going? Are you hanging in there? I hope so. My prayer is that God is teaching you how to live a life daily for Him. A life of renewing your mind and not conforming to this world.

Day 8

In 2011 my husband and I were part of a church planting assessment. I was asked “how I would lead someone to Christ”. We have looked in previous days at when they call the Roman Road, the scripted way to lead someone to Christ and saying the sinner’s prayer. For today’s lesson I will be using all of Scripture: Old and New Testaments.

Genesis 1:1(NLT) *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*

I really believe that you have to start here because you first have to believe that the Father, God, created the heavens and the earth... He created everything.

Then in Genesis 1:26 (NIV) Jesus was already with God... *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...”*

If you don’t believe me that Jesus was there in the beginning look at John 1:1-2(NIV) *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*

So Adam and Eve have been created and placed in the Garden with only one stipulation... Genesis 2:16-17 (NLT) *But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”*

And Eve knows the rules too in Genesis 3:1b-7 the Serpent comes and says *“Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?” “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’” “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.” The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.*

So Adam and Eve go from having a perfect relationship walking with God to feeling shame for their nakedness.

Genesis 2:22-23(NIV)*And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.*

Due to their disobedience; SIN has now entered the world and our perfect relationship with God has been severed.

Romans 5:12-21(NLT) *When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. But there is a great difference between Adam’s sin and God’s gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God’s wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God’s gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man’s*

sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous. God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The world continues to become more and more sinful, but to understand the awesome power of God; you then have to believe that God flooded the whole earth and only saved one man named Noah and his family.

Genesis 6:6-8(NIV) *The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.*

So how did we ask for forgiveness back then? _____

Sacrifices/offerings... depending on the sin you would bring different offerings, they can be found in Leviticus.

Now we can fast forward again to God allowing his Son to come to this earth as a baby, born of the Virgin Mary. Why is this important that they make mention that Jesus was to be born of the Virgin Mary?

Because it was told it would happen many, many years prior in Isaiah 7:14(NIV) *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.* – Which means God with us.

I like how Luke in chapters 1 and 2 tells the story of the Angels visits with Elizabeth and Mary and the birth of Jesus. But you have to remember that the whole reason that Jesus was born was so that He could die for our sins. 1 Peter 2:24 (NLT) *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right.* And in the midst of John 3 the verse everyone memorizes growing up John 3:16.

John 3:3-18(NIV) *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who*

believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

So what does that say to you?

Again all the Gospels have the story but Matthew 27-28 is where you can find the death, burial and resurrection. Why is the resurrection (to be raised from the dead on the 3rd day) so important?

So that we have hope and He proved back then that He is who He said He is... but still people did not believe and they saw...

But look what Isaiah had to say about the reason for Jesus it can be found in chapter 53(HCSB)

Who has believed what we have heard? And who has the arm of the Lord been revealed to? He grew up before Him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He didn't have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at Him, no appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; He was despised, and we didn't value Him. Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished Him for the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, He did not open His mouth. He was taken away because of oppression and judgment; and who considered His fate? For He was cut off from the land of the living; He was struck because of my people's rebellion. They made His grave with the wicked and with a rich man at His death, although He had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully. Yet the Lord was pleased to crush Him severely. When You make Him a restitution offering, He will see His seed, He will prolong His days, and by His hand, the Lord's pleasure will be accomplished. He will see it out of His anguish, and He will be satisfied with His knowledge. My righteous Servant will justify many, and He will carry their iniquities. Therefore I will give Him the many as a portion, and He will receive the mighty as spoil, because He submitted Himself to death, and was counted among the rebels; yet He bore the sin of many and interceded for the rebels.

For me, it makes more sense when its put this way; show me the whole Bible and how it is intertwined with Jesus from the very beginning knowing He was coming so that we could once again have a perfect relationship with God the Father through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. So that on the day of our physical death we will enter Glory with them but until that time we are left here on this earth to do something:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do Ephesians 2:10(NIV)

Day 9: Lineage- Where'd He come from?

Have you ever thought seriously about the human lineage God use to bring Jesus into the world? Today we are going to look at the lineage.

Who did Jesus come from? Do you know? _____

Well the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, Joseph was his earthly father and Mary is his mother, the one who gave physical birth. Mary was a Virgin so that there was no way this child could be the product of a boyfriend/girlfriend or a husband/wife. Here is the story of when the Angel came.

Luke 1:26-38 (NIV) *In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.*

Matthew 1:1-16 (NIV) *A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, **whose mother was Tamar**, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, **whose mother was Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, whose **mother was Ruth**, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, **whose mother had been Uriah's wife**, Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon. After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, **the husband of Mary**, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

Let's break down Jesus's lineage.

"Whose mother was Tamar"? Why does it take time to mention the mother in this instance? Who is Tamar? Hint: Tamar's story starts in Genesis 38

Day 10: 12 Disciples

Yesterday we looked at the lineage of Jesus. Today we are going to look at the 12 Disciples. Hint they are written in Mark 3:16-19

Can you name the 12 Disciples?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Here are the names of the 12 Disciples: Simon (whom he named Peter), James and John (the sons of Zebedee, but Jesus nicknamed them "Sons of Thunder"), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon (the zealot) Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

Why do this exercise? For no other reason except that I wanted you to see that the people Jesus chose to become his "inner circle", for lack of a better word, were fishermen, tax collectors, common people, educated and uneducated.

For the longest time, I thought that there was no way I could ever do anything for Jesus. I did not grow up in the church; Because of my past, my self-esteem was in the pits. Why would God use me to talk to people about Him? The answer is very simple... because I love Him with all my heart and I want to live every day in a way that is pleasing to Him. In the early 2000's, He showed me that the way I was living Sunday Afternoon through Saturday Night was not bad according to the world's standards, but no one would know that I was a Christ Follower if they came over and spent a day with me. My life was still about how I could serve myself; to do the most for myself; and if you happened to get blessed it was purely to make myself feel good.

I have written about my past; but today, I want to go back to my past, to tell you about who I was. I grew up in a perfect family as though I thought. Until my life was shattered at age 10, my mom told me we were moving back to Grandma's and my dad was not coming. Now part of me was excited because you see my Grandma was my rescuer and my best friend. We did everything together when I was younger. We baked, we gardened, and we even hung the clothes out to dry together. She would sneak me out of my bedroom window when I was little on Saturday mornings. Things were perfect when I was little. Things were still ok, and my mom got remarried to a guy she hardly knew but he treated her well and bought us kids lots of gum, candy, pop and ice cream, so to 3 little kids we were in Heaven. We moved to his house and moved schools once again. Things went bad very quickly. We were never a "family" we were 2 families living under the same roof, and we were reminded often that this was HIS house not ours. The abuse started shortly after we moved in and I was constantly called names such as "whore and bitch". I was also told constantly that "you will never amount to anything" and "you'll end up just like your mother.

Question? What were things that were spoken over you as a child, teen or even as late as yesterday?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Now I want you to put all the words that have been or are being spoken over you and if they do not line up with what God says about you, your new statement is this: Jesus did not speak this about me so therefore it is not true. And here are a few scriptures to memorize.

Ephesians 2:10(NLT) states

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NLT) states

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for Me wholeheartedly, you will find Me.

Proverbs 23:9 (NIV) states

Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.

Now re-read them and place your name in the blank... and claim the verse as yours.

Ephesians 2:10(NLT) states

For you _____ are God's masterpiece. He has created you _____ anew in Christ Jesus, so that you _____ can do the good things He planned for you _____ to do long ago.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NLT) states

For I know the plans I have for you _____," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you _____ a future and a hope. In those days when you _____ pray, I will listen. If you _____ look for Me wholeheartedly, you _____ will find Me.

Proverbs 23:9 (NIV) states

Do not speak to a fool, _____, for he will scorn the wisdom of your _____ words.

For the past 2 days we looked at Jesus's lineage and His inner circle. Is God asking something more of you and HOW are you going to go about accomplishing it?

Day 11: God Who?

Who is God? _____

He is the Creator....

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you? Deuteronomy 32:6b (NIV)

He is your Daddy....

to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. Galatians 4:5-7 (NIV)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.

Romans 8:14-16 (NLT)

He is the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end...

Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him— even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen! "I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One." Revelation 1:7-8 (NLT)

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life." Revelation 21:6 (NIV)

"Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." Revelation 22:12-13 (NLT)

I think a lot of our issues today are that we do not see God as the Supreme Ruler that He is; we only want to remember that verse that says "you have a friend in God". They use the following partial verse as their foundation for we have a friend in God.

I have called you friends (partial verse used frequently from John 15)

Now let's look at the whole context of the scripture. Jesus was talking to His disciples. They were called friends because *"You are My friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn't know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain,*

John 15:14-16a (HCSB)

God has rules we need to follow and do what He has asked; it was not just a “hey let’s go get coffee or a coke and hang” kind of friendship.

Now it’s time for honesty: Friends for the most part; let us stay where we are especially in our negative, self-defeating cycles. Why? Because they don’t know how to change themselves. Instead of being vulnerable to one another we build our lives around lies of who we portray to be; then we live a life in fear of being found out to who we truly are.

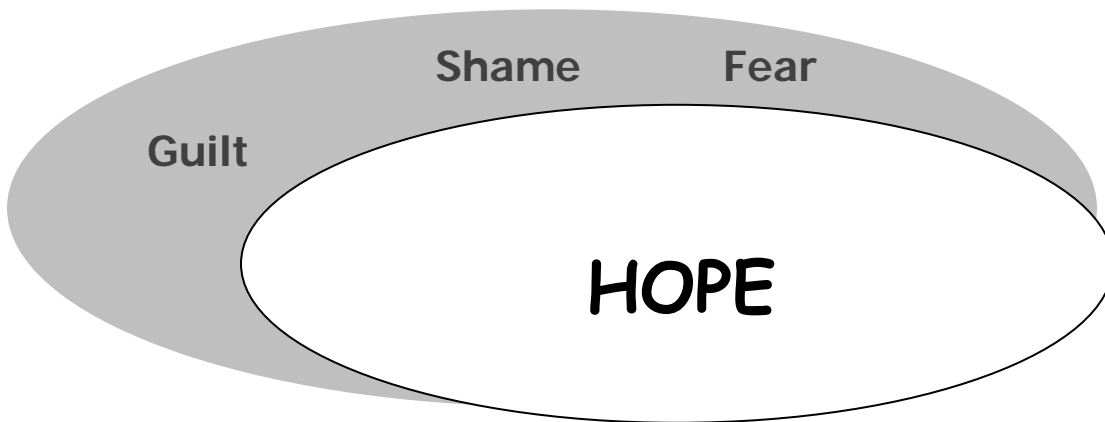
So let’s go back to the day you said the “prayer” or went through the Roman Road.

What was the very first thing they talked about: _____

Hopefully, Forgiveness of sins.

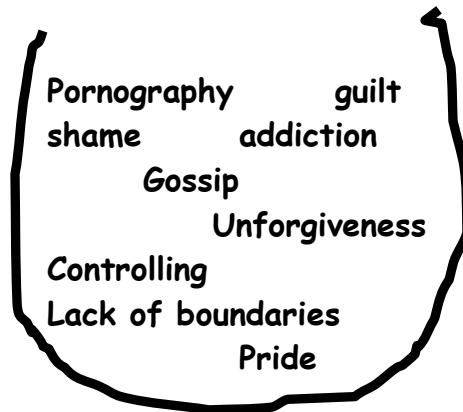
Let’s look at Forgiveness. Jesus has forgiven you...but have you forgiven you? Or given yourself permission to forgive yourself?

Unforgiveness creates a shadow around the HOPE that Jesus really wants you to have.



Forgiving ourselves is actually a very big part of feeling hope. When you do not forgive ourselves we create, without even knowing it a thing called “Self Sabotage”. Self- Sabotage is deliberately destructing oneself. Let me give you an analogy:

You are taking out the trash: Big black garbage bag full of stinky party trash. Or maybe it looks like this:



Then along comes Jesus and He asks where have you been? Didn't you say a prayer a year ago? Where have you been?

Well Jesus I need to get my life together first. I need to take out the trash. Then I will be ready.

Jesus then says to let Him take out the trash for you. You hand him the bag with all the junk in it but before He walks away you grab it out of His hands to take back just one thing.... And usually it's that unforgiveness for ourselves by our self. We feel our past is too "dirty" that we can't get too close to Jesus who is "perfect".

Those are the lies of Satan himself unfortunately they may even come in the form of Church people who say comments like "what are you doing leading a Bible Study"?

Again remind yourself that Jesus uses all people including those with a past to do the work here in the world. If you don't think so look at this passage:

*They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed by the legion, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. The eyewitnesses described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs. Then they began to beg Him to leave their region. As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed **kept begging Him to be with Him. But He would not let him; instead, He told him, "Go back home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you."** So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.*
Mark 5:15-20 (HCSB)

Do you feel you are not good enough for something good to happen to you? If things start to go good you do something to make it fail? That way you can say "it wasn't ever going to work anyway", that is a form of self-sabotage. Self-sabotage is when you think something bad is going to happen, so you make the bad happen, so you can control the outcome. The problem comes when the "bad" was never going to happen you just did not see yourself worthy of having the better outcome, so you "sabotaged" it.

Your job is to start seeing yourself as Jesus does and for that we are going to end this day with a Prayer of Forgiveness.

Write down the names of people that you need to forgive including yourself and the offense or offenses that need to be forgiven

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

This prayer is re-written from Ephesians 4:31-32 take the name of each person one by one and pray this prayer.

Lord please help me as I pray to forgive _____ for these offenses:

help me to get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior, including but not limited to revenge and sabotaging my own success. Instead, Lord help me to be kind to _____, to be tenderhearted, and Lord may I forgive others and myself, just as you Lord through Christ have forgiven me.

Day 12: Who's DNA do you have?

DNA—deoxyribonucleic acid—is a sequence of nucleotides which determines individual hereditary characteristics⁵. In real terms... the thing that makes you who you are is called DNA. You get half from your mother and half from your dad.

When you accept the Lord as your personal Lord and Savior you now have the DNA of the Lord. 1 John 2:6 (NLT) *Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did*

So what are the “hereditary characteristics” of God or otherwise known as the Fruits of the Spirits?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control Galatians 5:22-23a (NIV)

Thought question: As your days go by are you taking on more earthly DNA or heavenly DNA?

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. Galatians 5:16-18 (NIV)

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21(NIV)

So why did I tell you my story of where I came from? I wanted you to see that most people who grew up in the church were taught a traditional “Sunday only” Christianity. You were put to shame if you were late to church. You had to sit a certain way, you had to talk a certain way and if anyone walked in the church that did not fit that mold, they were immediately looked down upon and given the “we don’t act like that” list.

Jesus is all about relationships. He is less about everything being tucked neatly between the hours of 8 and noon. He is less worried about making sure that you get 20 minutes of singing and only 5 minutes of announcements and 45 minutes of preaching. He is more worried that you are actually in relationship with Him and that you actually know what He stands for and wants from your life; your everyday life, not just your Sunday morning, act as if nothing is wrong life.

While writing this I was told multiple times by leaders in local churches that they wish they had not grown up in the traditional church. They say they would not have to undo most of their thinking of who God is. What do I mean? I mean that God is a relational God and He wants His followers to have authentic real relationships and unfortunately real life problems are usually not talked about in churches unless it’s to gossip, of course in the form of a prayer request, about someone else’s family.

⁵ thefreedictionary.com

I said it in Day 11 and it needs to be repeated: the way I see things especially if you are trying the church thing: Instead of being vulnerable we build our lives around the lies; then we live in fear of being found out.

The church was and still is filled with people who are very "Religious and prideful". So what do we do about it? Leave the church never to return... I used to think so...but God convicted me of that and said "NO...stay and change the direction from within".

So my prayer, is that this Bible Study will prepare you for what God has in-store for your life: a true authentic relationship with Jesus that will breed enthusiasm for who God really is.

So what does it mean to live out your faith? What does it mean to become more like Jesus while living in the world? The rest of the 30 days will be dedicated to helping you learn quiet time techniques that will bring the scriptures to life so that your day will be filled with Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The following page is an exercise we did in Day 2 you will finish the rest of the study using this new tool to study Scripture. I hope it will bring to life the Scriptures for you as it has for me.

Date:

I have written down the scripture and reference for you. In the left box I want you to:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Colossians 3:1-10 (NIV)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 13

When I started the journey living "Against the Grain" in 2002; I did not realize that it was going to be a foreign concept and that people would look at me as something special. I realized that many people who have grown up in a traditional church setting have been told that unless you go to Seminary, you are not eligible to speak of the things of God or to study His word. We can go to Bible studies that are selected from the church and we are encouraged to read the Bible through in a year... but what about actually living out what you read or hear. Where is the application of what God says to do?

Journal your thoughts: _____

This study I pray will jump start your excitement to see what God has planned for you next if you will just: listen for God, and apply what He told you to do through scripture.

So yesterday you were in Colossians now go back 2 books to Ephesians and look what it says here:

Date:

I have written down the scripture and reference for you. In the left box I want you to:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-32 (NIV)

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 14

So back to back days with Paul writing:

Ephesians 4:22-24(NIV)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Are there things in your life that you need to re-evaluate? My husband wrote a blog called "**Satan's New Scheme**" Posted on October 30, 2012: and I think it is very relevant to this study.

"Satan was dissatisfied with using the same old ploys to deceive people. His methods were working in several areas, but the numbers were struggling in the most powerful country in the world. So one hot morning, he called together all of his demons for a brainstorming session. He told them of his dissatisfaction. "We can do worse...we need a new approach".

All the demons sat looking at each other wondering what was going on with the boss. They had been causing destruction and breaking up families. They had introduced abuse, addictions and division to millions, what more could he want?

"We have done a good job with hurting people, but I feel like more damage must be done".

One demon said "why don't we start a rumor that Jesus never existed? That will get His followers to walk away."

Several demons got excited with a new turn for an old lie, but they soon realized there was too much evidence and it wouldn't work.

Another demon jumped up.

"I'VE GOT IT! Let's tell them that if they follow Jesus they will surely be persecuted and die? They'll be scared and surely turn away."

A few of the demons liked the idea, but Satan reminded them that every time Christians have faced persecution the church has grown, but with that comment, Satan got a sly grin on his face.

"That gives me an idea...I think I have the answer. Punishing those who follow Christ has always backfired...so let's pull back on all the tormenting and no longer cause them pain. Let's tell them that following Jesus is easy. Let's distract them from the truth. Let's get them to believe that if they go to church, sing some songs and attend a life group, their lives will be better. Let's give them exactly what they want...A god that gives them everything they want."

The demons looked confused. One of them said "But unholy lord, won't everyone want to follow that Jesus...won't we lose a bunch of our followers?"

Satan stood from his fiery throne and said "YES...yes we will. They will all want to follow a god whose main concern is their comfort and security. They will all serve a god who will make them all happy. This lie will have the following results."

"First, they will no longer use their money to cloth the naked and feed the hungry. They will spend their money on air conditioning, sound systems and coffee. They will develop elaborate youth programs that teach their kids that the best part of being a "Christian" is the fun you can have".

"Second, they will no longer visit the sick or those in prison. Instead, we will tell them that Bible studies, special events and life-groups are where they need to focus their time. We will get them so distracted with learning about Jesus...they will have no time to go out and BE Jesus".

"Lastly, a god who wants them happy will cause division. They will divide over anything that makes them unhappy. We'll get them to reduce God to what they can fit into their tiny little brains and get them to believe they have perfect understanding and are always right. They will fight over their understanding of God, the way that they worship and who they follow. This will REALLY come in handy every few years when they fight over their leaders. One group will talk about serving the poor as they retreat to their comfortable homes in their luxury cars. The other half will fight for morality while they sit in front of their TV's and take in every sin that we turn into entertainment."

"NOW GO!!!"

With those instructions, Satan's team screamed in delight as they rushed out of hell and ascended to the earth...and the victory was won."

So back to what God says:

Date:

I have written down the scripture and reference for you. In the left box I want you to:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-16 (NIV)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Date: _____

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- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 15

Yesterday during the scripture time did you see the part about: *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Ephesians 4:14 (NIV)*

We are no longer infants, tossed back and forth by the waves. The waves of what? All kinds of teaching. There are challenges with a few leaders out there that have fallen away from teaching the truth. Preachers and Leaders now decide what and how to preach and lead based on the latest trends.

In the Bible Study I co-authored called New Beginnings: Week 8 is titled "Who are you listening to and do you even care?" The reason for asking that is because when a preacher starts preaching the truth it is not fun to hear especially if you are still living a "double life". You know that life; the one that is only Christian on certain days or certain times or in front of certain people.

One of the questions that week 8 asks is "do you run fast towards the latest fad (clothing, music, car, phone etc.)?"

Well the same goes for following "Preachers and Leaders" instead of Christ. Churches will change a program in a heartbeat if they think that more people will start attending on Sunday Morning or the youth group will have a higher attendance on a Wednesday night.

My question is: Does it really matter in the grand scheme of God's calling on our lives to live differently; if the air conditioning is working or if they have the latest and greatest gaming system in the youth room? No! It doesn't. Also to make things worse is when the preaching and leaders change also when there is a newest fad. Today's scripture will show you that even in the times of Paul this was an issue.

But remember that: *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8 (HCSB)*

Date:

I have written down the scripture and reference for you. In the left box I want you to:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (HCSB)

I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of His appearing and His kingdom: Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths. But as for you, be serious about everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Date: _____

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- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 16

So based on yesterday, what did God speak to you about? _____

Are there still things you need to watch or change in your own life? _____

For the next few days we are going to take a chapter in a book and go through it verse by verse. What I want you to see is that Old and New Testament have daily living charges that affect your life if you are willing to stop, listen, and apply. I do not like using the word obey because I think "apply" has a bigger implication in our daily living for Christ, especially in a country where we have everything we need.

We will start with James 1

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: James 1:2-8 (NLT)

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 17

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: James 1:9-11 (NLT)

Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements.

Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 18

Date:

I have written down the scripture and reference for you. In the left box I want you to:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: James 1:12-18 (NLT)

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 19

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: James 1:19-27 (NLT)

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 20

Now that you have done all of James 1. What thoughts do you have on living differently? What did God talk to you about personally? And as you did the blank sheets did you find yourself finishing out a chapter or just lone verses?

Hebrews 4:12(NLT) says: For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires

This is from my journal after reading James 1:

Today my study in God's Word was from James 1: Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Every time I read these verses I start thinking of the Christian who has finally gotten off the fence: You see Satan owns the fence. So as we start living a life that has the prayer attached: God give me your heart. You had better be prepared to live out the beginning of James 1

As I was reading in James 1 again: "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking." The part that hit me was "But when you ask him...be SURE your FAITH is in God alone". How much of our faith is in things, people or even drugs? We medicate ourselves daily so we do not have to face the world. This medication can be legal such as food, video games or shopping just to name a few. But when we ask God for wisdom on how to handle life we may not like the answer. He may ask you to give up a comfort, He may even ask you to give up a friend. And again these can be all "legal" things by the world's standards. But then it goes on to say "for a person with divided loyalty is an unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."

Have you ever wondered why you think your prayers are not being answered? I am the worlds best at saying "Lord thank you and could you handle this or that...."... then I get up off my knees and pick it back up and say "oh I'll help you handle that".

Am I talking to anyone else? Then the last part says "Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do."

Where is your loyalty on Sunday afternoon after church until Midweek service if you go... then until Sunday Morning when you walk back into the church building? Would anyone know that you loved God with all your heart mind and soul even if you NEVER EVER spoke a word? Or do you have to make it a point to say... "yeah I went to church on Sunday and"

Why is it that when we read James 1 starting in verse 12 we only read "God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation", and for whatever reason we think that God is going to give us material blessings of some sort....

But we need to read on and finish the rest of the verse "Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." You see we may never see a blessing this side of heaven for enduring testing and temptation...but we are promised the blessing of life eternal.

These verses talk a lot about temptation. When we hear the word temptation we may think of doing something wrong in the sense of breaking a diet or stealing something.

But what about thinking of it like this...

Last night we went to the ER to visit a young man whom we have known for many years. He made a touchdown and the other team was told by their coach to take him out... take him out they did. He now is out for the season with a fractured shoulder.

There are many temptations that can come out of this; Temptation of revenge, Temptation of trying to play before being completely healed and the temptation of becoming so angry that you quit doing what you love just because you have to take a break from playing the game.

We have to remember that Satan had to first ask God to touch this young man via this other player. So what should the response be: let's first look at the rest of the passage: "And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death."

So when the temptation is to get even or play before being completely healed or walking away from the sport out of self-pity. We need to remember that Satan will then win. Because all these examples will have lasting effects:

- 1) Getting even, what does that really accomplish you might feel good for a moment but in the end who really gets hurt. You do... because who gets caught getting "even". You do... then the consequences could be what? No longer being allowed to play organized sports or even a no tolerance consequence and ALC for the rest of the year.
- 2) Temptation to play before being completely healed: The consequence could be long lasting as to never having a High School career, College career or even NFL career in football because the bone never was allowed to properly heal so therefore became weaker.
- 3) The temptation of becoming so angry you quit doing what you love just because you have to take a break: This can cause long term effects of an

attitude of indifference. And mad at the world which in turn takes you to the "why me God, why did this happen to me"? And instead of looking for the answer from God you get spiteful and angry against the world and God and never see the true reason of the "having to take a break from playing on the field".

His coach came in and said something profound: "he has so much heart". So what if by allowing this injury to occur, God is going to use it to further something greater in this young man than playing on the field during the game.

What if God is now asking this young man to step up and take this time to hone in on his real leadership abilities? Those God given talents to be a motivator for others who may never have a football career but because this young man took the time to notice him and speak words of encouragement over him, he became the next Bill Gates or Donald Trump.

Or what about the kid on the team that no one ever wanted to be with or talk to... this young man took the time to show him a play or two to hone in on his given talent and he goes on to become the next John Elway or Joe Namath.

What are you going to do with the "temptation in your life today"? Are you going to let the temptation and action on such temptation become the death of you? Or are you going to say "NO to the temptation of reaction and say ok God what would you like me to do? The choice is ultimately yours. Make a wise one.

So that is just part of what I got out of James 1. I would never have gotten it though if I did not first start my time with the Lord asking: "Lord, give me your heart". And this tool of breaking down the scripture and re-writing in my own words make me take a deeper look at the words that are written not just read.

For the next 2 days we are going to be in the Old Testament; Deuteronomy 8. Again let God talk to you.

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:1-10 (NLT)

“Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors. Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. For all these forty years your clothes didn’t wear out, and your feet didn’t blister or swell. Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the LORD your God disciplines you for your own good. “So obey the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with fountains and springs that gush out in the valleys and hills. It is a land of wheat and barley; of grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates; of olive oil and honey. It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. When you have eaten your fill, be sure to praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
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- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 21

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:11-20 (NLT)

"But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the LORD your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be careful! Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' Remember the LORD your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath. "But I assure you of this: If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you will certainly be destroyed. Just as the LORD has destroyed other nations in your path, you also will be destroyed if you refuse to obey the LORD your God.

Date: _____

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- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 22

What did God say to you over the past 2 day's: _____

When I read through Deuteronomy 8 just in the first 2 verses I got this:

**“Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands.
Deuteronomy 8:1-2**

During yesterday’s sermon we were taken to Deuteronomy 8 as he was talking about Gratitude. As I was reading this and circling wildly key words I thought I would spend a few days in this chapter. Just in the first 2 verses this is what God taught me.

Be careful to obey all.... I cannot pick and choose what I obey as a Christian. I cannot choose to give this person grace and not this person because this affected me personally and the other situation did not. God gives us all grace and mercy and tells us to forgive just as He has forgiven us.

Here is the other cool part God showed me this morning: then you will live and multiply and you will ENTER and OCCUPY.

How many times do we ask God to give us a “glimpse” of His heart?
What Heaven will look like?

How many times have I heard Pastors say after a great Sunday worship: “you were just given a glimpse of what Heaven will be like.”

I think we need to change our prayer instead of “Lord enter me into.....” it needs to be Lord may I occupy⁶ (to stay... to put down root.... to become a resident of...)

But with that prayer; we also have to remember that God will want to make sure we are for real... so remember if your prayer is to OCCUPY instead of just entering... during times of trials and tribulation.... You have to remember that God wants to see you are for real for Him...

So where do we go from here: We are going to go to Philipians.

⁶ Dictionary.com

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Philippians 1:9-11 (NLT)

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Date: _____

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Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 23

In my study of those verses this is what I received:

Philippians 1 states that I pray your love will overflow more and more... that you will keep on growing (just because you said "I do" to Jesus yesterday or forever ago... you still need to keep on growing in knowledge and understanding of Gods word).

Now look at the end: For this will bring much glory and praise to God... What will bring much glory and praise? The righteous character produced in your life by what? By Jesus Christ....

Now lets bring this down to reality.... When your child goes out to play a sport or off to college... what do we as parents say..."make me proud". Or when a child/teen is going out in public what do we say "don't you embarrass me"...

Guess what? God is saying the same thing right here... "for this will bring much glory and praise to God". God is saying "make me proud and don't embarrass me".... Does your everyday life make God proud or are you embarrassing Him?

I hope that this study is making you realize that just because you said "I believe and forgive me for my sins" that it does not end there... actually that is just the beginning. My prayer is that you are finding yourself hungry more for what God says about life and things and not what a Pastor or Leader has to say. Again the Word has not changed and will not change, so if you want the truth about a matter go to the Truth. For a few days we are going to look at a scripture(s) as it pertains to certain actions/attitudes/or emotions.

The first one is Anger. Why do I start here? Because we all deal with it and there is nothing wrong with righteous anger... what is wrong with anger is when you allow it to control you instead of you controlling it.

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: On Anger

Don't let your spirit rush to be angry, for anger abides in the heart of fools. Ecclesiastes 7:9 (HCSB)

Patience is better than power, and controlling one's temper, than capturing a city Proverbs 16:32 (HCSB)

A hot-tempered man stirs up conflict, but a man slow to anger calms strife Proverbs 15:18 (HCSB)

Be angry and do not sin; on your bed, reflect in your heart and be still Psalms 4:4 (HCSB)

But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Fool!' will be subject to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, 'You moron!' will be subject to hellfire. So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you're on the way with him, or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I assure you: You will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny! Matthew 5:22-26 (HCSB)

Date: _____

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Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 24

So did you find any other scriptures on Anger? Or did God convict you to change something about your life? Or any other journaling comments you want to talk about:

For the next 2 days we are going to look at scripture on Perseverance⁷- steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.

As you start walking a daily walk you will have to remember this:

"Go to church once a week and nobody pays attention. Worship God seven days a week and you become strange!" AW Tozer⁸

⁷ Dictionary.com

⁸ <http://www.quoteschristian.com/church2.html>

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: on Perseverance

Galatians 6:6-10 (HCSB)

The one who is taught the message must share all his good things with the teacher. Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap, because the one who sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So we must not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, we must work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.

Matthew 10:16-22(HCSB) "Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as serpents and as harmless as doves. Because people will hand you over to sanhedrins and flog you in their synagogues, beware of them. You will even be brought before governors and kings because of Me, to bear witness to them and to the nations. But when they hand you over, don't worry about how or what you should speak. For you will be given what to say at that hour, because you are not speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is speaking through you. "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will even rise up against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered

Date: _____

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Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 25

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 1 (HCSB)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy: To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We must always thank God for you, brothers, which is fitting, since your faith is flourishing, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast about you among God's churches--about your endurance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you endure. It is a clear evidence of God's righteous judgment that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering, since it is righteous for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and *to reward* with rest you who are afflicted, along with us. *This will take place* at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His powerful angels, taking vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of everlasting destruction, away from the Lord's presence and from His glorious strength, in that day when He comes to be glorified by His saints and to be admired by all those who have believed, because our testimony among you was believed. And in view of this, we always pray for you that our God will consider you worthy of His calling, and will, by His power, fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Date: _____

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Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 26

Thoughts so far on what God has to say about Perseverance/ Endurance? Are there things that you need to push through on? Have you quit just before it was to be finished because you were afraid of the outcome? _____

*Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne.
Hebrews 12: 1-2 (HCSB)*

So back to a question that has been asked before in this study; what is it that God is asking of you to do that you have been putting off? _____

Are we embarrassed to be known as a "true follower of Christ"?

*"Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven.
Matthew 10:32-33 (HCSB)*

God has a job for you, are you ready?

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts1:8 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

Being a witness for Christ what does that mean? _____

There is a hodgepodge of scriptures for today. Ask God before you start reading: "Give me Your heart God".

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: _____

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. John 12:24-26 (ESV)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10:27 (ESV)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalms 23 (ESV)

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." James 2:14-20 (NLT)

Date: _____

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- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 27

So we looked at scripture yesterday that talked about Sheep and shepherds and then faith without works. Seems we were all over the board but not really. There is another scripture that says:

Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you'll recognize them by their fruit. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!'"
Matthew 7:15-22 (HCSB)

Remember at the beginning of this study, this was the scripture that the speaker was quoting when he mentioned my resume for Christ. So as you look at your life are you truly sold out to Christ?

As we start to wind down this study our scriptures will talk about what it means to be sold out to your faith, walking as Jesus would have you walk and what you can expect.

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: Matthew 5:11-16 (HCSB)

"You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men."You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lampstand puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Date: _____

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Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 28

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: John 15:1-19 (NLT)

"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other. "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.

Date: _____

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Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 29

Date:

In the left box I want you:

- Re-write the scripture in your own words.

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to you?
- How can you apply it to your life?

Scripture: 1 John 2:1-17 (NLT)

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world. And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining. If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is still living in darkness. Anyone who loves another brother or sister is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. But anyone who hates another brother or sister is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness. I am writing to you who are God’s children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus. I am writing to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I am writing to you who are young in the faith because you have won your battle with the evil one. I have written to you who are God’s children because you know the Father. I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God’s word lives in your hearts, and you have won your battle with the evil one. Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Date: _____

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Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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Day 30

You have done it... I hope that it has taken you 45 or less days to accomplish this. I know that the last 2 days have been filled with lots of scriptures. What I would recommend is that you get a notebook and use the template that you have been using to keep your time going with the Lord.

I pray also during your last 30 days that you have realized that the Bible is living and breathing. I always love it when I read a scripture that I knew was there for years and now it means something completely different for me.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
Hebrews 4:12-13 (NIV)

Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.
2 Thessalonians 3:1-15 (NIV)

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"
Esther 4:14 (NIV)

I hope you have enjoyed this as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

I would love to hear from you to see how God has rocked your world and what He has you doing for Him here on this earth.

Meredith
meredith@atghope.org

Scriptures used in this study came from the following translations:

New Living Translation (NLT)
New International Version (NIV)
The Living Bible (TLB)
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)
New American Standard Bible (NASB)
The Message
New King James Version (NKJV)
English Standard Version (ESV)
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Holy Bible: Easy-to-Read Version™

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Date: _____

This page is blank for you to start journaling on Scriptures that God has put in your heart at this time:

- Write the scripture reference
- Write out the scripture on the right side
- Re-write the scripture in your own words on the left side

Then answer these questions:

- What does this scripture say to me?
- How can I apply it to my life?

Scripture: _____

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