

BEYOND



DEVOTIONAL

>> DEAR PERKINSVILLE FAMILY,

Our prayer is that the Lord would move mightily in your heart over the next four weeks as He prepares you and our church for what is Beyond. We pray that this devotional is a guide for you as you seek God's direction in your role and sacrificial investment in the Beyond Campaign. This devotional can be used in a number of ways to enhance your personal devotional time during the next 4 weeks and even after the Campaign has concluded. We will begin as a church on September 10th.

Each week begins with a weekly activity for you (and your family) to apply the daily devotional in your life. Each day has a scripture reading(s). The scripture passage suggested is related to the topic of that day but is not exhaustive. It is always beneficial to study other passages that will expand your understanding of the daily subject. The scripture reading is followed by an application for you to ponder the passage you have read for that day. There are several questions for you to consider. Please use the spaces provided for you to answer these questions. If applicable, take time as a family to journey through these questions together. Each day ends with a prayer. Please feel free to write out your own prayer and make notes in the spaces provided for you.

"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

– Ephesians 3:14-21



BEYOND

WEEK 1: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

WEEKLY ACTIVITY >> Memorize Colossians
3:1-4

DAY 1 : STUDY

“God has made the written word as indispensable as the incarnate Word. For the achievement of God’s ultimate purpose, He has made Christ essential and the Bible essential....Without the written word – explaining and preserving for us who God is and what He has done – there would be no saving knowledge of God, no new birth, no faith, no seeing and savoring of God’s glory, no experience of forgiveness, no transformation, and, in the end, no completed and beautified Bride for the Son, and no worshipping family for the Father.” – John Piper

READ:

John 1:14, 2 Timothy 3:14-17

APPLICATION:

We so easily take the Bible for granted. Because the Word is so accessible, we often forget that these are God’s words designed for us. In His perfect plan, the Bible is the tool God gave us to most obviously reveal His character. This is reason enough for us to saturate our lives with Scripture. It is easy to agree with that statement, but we won’t do anything about that knowledge unless we plan ways to incorporate the study of the Word into our lives. There are several tangible ways to do this. You could:

- }} Find a reading plan online that engages you and you set aside a place and a time for it each day.
- }} Find friends or family members who agree to read with you each day and discuss.
- }} Challenge yourself to memorize a book of the Bible, and you practice on your drive to work each day.

However you choose to delve into the Bible, you can be confident in His Word, which is never wasted, in your life. As you begin, ask God to give you a genuine and lasting love for His Word. It may not happen overnight, but God loves to show you His nature and His love for you. What better way to do that than to give you a love for Scripture?

CONSIDER:

1. How does recognizing Jesus as the Word of God in flesh impact your view of Scripture?
2. Write down what your current study of Scripture looks like each day.
3. After studying this today, what is your plan for studying Scripture moving forward? When, where, and how often will this take place?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, I praise You that You use Your Word to teach, rebuke, and correct me. Thank you for the Bible, which equips me for every good work and trains me in righteousness. Help me, Father, to study Your Word faithfully and allow it to guide every aspect of my life. Teach me to walk in Your ways. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 2 : MEDITATION

“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.” — *Colossians 3:1-4*

READ:

Psalm 119:97-110, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:1-4

APPLICATION:

Even the word “meditation” sometimes causes us to feel uncomfortable. Due to the adoption of this practice by other religions, we have lost understanding of the beauty of this practice in its original intent. Meditation is about setting your mind on the fullness of Christ. It is an opportunity to choose to turn from all other voices and listen to the Spirit. David Mathis writes, “[Meditation] doesn’t entail emptying our minds, but rather filling them with biblical and theological substance — truth outside of ourselves — and then chewing on that content.” There are so many things vying for our attention and our focus. Through the Holy Spirit, we have the opportunity to let the loudest voice be the Word of God. There is nothing more powerful or effective. By choosing to listen to it over anything else, we allow Wisdom to color every perspective, thought, and interaction. Select a verse from the passages above to memorize and return to throughout the day, and allow God’s Word to be the loudest voice you hear.

CONSIDER:

1. What does it mean to “set your mind on things above” or to “mediate on God’s law”?
2. As you think about meditating on the Lord, what challenges immediately come to mind?
3. Practically, how can you build this spiritual discipline into your daily life?

PRAY:

Gracious Father, show me how to meditate on Your precepts and consider Your ways. Help me to contemplate Your wonders and promises, as David did in the Psalms. Teach me to love your law and to think about it throughout the day. Thank You that the unfolding of Your Word gives understanding. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 3 : CONFESSION

*"In confession occurs the breakthrough of the Cross."
– Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

READ:

2 Samuel 12, Psalm 51, 1 John 1:9

APPLICATION:

It is very easy for us to hide from our sin. We get caught up in our to-do lists, or we choose to distract ourselves with the entertainment that is constantly available. We become consumed with fixing other people's problems instead of identifying our own. We justify our lack of knowledge of our sin by our involvement at church, the way we help people, how busy we are with our families, etc. Our human nature's instinct has always been to cover our sin and hope it disappears, starting with Adam and Eve in the garden. In 2 Samuel 12, David ignored his sin by "making things right" in marrying Bathsheba. When Nathan brought David face to face with his sin, David confessed and was forgiven. His relationship with the Lord was made right. While the next part of his life was not easy, David remembered who God was and why he trusted Him.

There is power in confessing our sins to the Father. It allows God's redeeming work to turn our hearts back to our Savior, and it reminds us of our desperate need for Him. God's glory is often most evident when we in our weakness confess our need for Him. That is the gospel playing itself out in our lives, over and over again, and it is the privilege of the Believer to be a part of that.

Spend some time reflecting on the ways you hide your sin. Confess your sin and your covering mechanisms to the Lord. Ask Him to tune your heart to the Spirit for conviction and discipline, because God disciplines those He loves (Proverbs 3:12). If your sin is against another person, plan a time to confess it to them and ask for their forgiveness. God is gracious, and we can honor that by examining our sin with humility.

CONSIDER:

1. If Jesus already knows my sin and his blood covers it, why do I need to confess?
2. Why is it so difficult to recognize your own sin? What “cover up” mechanisms do you use to distract you from your sin?
3. How will you build reflection and confession into your time with the Lord this week?

PRAY:

Father, You tell me in Your Word that if I confess my sins, You are faithful and just to forgive my sins and to purify me from all unrighteousness. If I draw near to the throne of grace, I will receive mercy and find grace to help me in my time of need. Father, reveal to me any sin in my life that is hindering my relationship with You so that I may confess it and repent. I praise You for Your unconditional love and for sending Jesus to be my advocate. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 4 : WORSHIP

“Worship is not an experience. Worship is an act, and this takes discipline. We are to worship ‘in spirit and in truth.’ Never mind about the feelings. We are to worship in spite of them.”

– Elisabeth Elliot

READ:

Psalm 29, Psalm 150, Deuteronomy 6:13

APPLICATION:

An area where our selfishness is most obvious is in worship. We worship God when we deem that He has worked. We make idols of our comfort and our perspective, and we forget that we worship God first because of Who He is. In the passages today, we read about who God is and why He is worthy of praise. He designed us to worship, and we are always worshipping something, be it our schedule, our family, our work, or our unmet desires. The reality is that the throne of our hearts is always a match of tug of war between our old selves and our Savior.

Luke writes, “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.” God is the only one worthy of all our affection and all of our worship. Through His redemption, we can set aside our selfishness and choose to worship God because of Who He is. Take some time to examine your heart and ask the Lord to remove any idols that may have taken His place. After you surrender, spend time worshipping Him. Sing God’s praises, revel in His word, remember His faithfulness, and delight in the truth that He redeems.

CONSIDER:

1. What is worship?
2. What does my worship show about my view of God?
3. How can I worship "in spite of my feelings", as stated in the quote above?

PRAY:

Lord, You are enthroned as King forever. You give strength to Your people and bless them with peace. I worship You in the splendor of Your holiness. I praise You for Your surpassing greatness and acts of power. Help me to reverently fear and serve You only. You are worthy of all praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 5 : FASTING

“Fasting helps express, deepens, [and] confirms the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.” - Andrew Murray

READ:

Isaiah 58, Matthew 6:16-18

APPLICATION:

As we’ve discussed this week, there are endless opportunities for us to be distracted from our purpose. The voices around us are so loud. Fasting, much like meditation, is an opportunity to replace distractions with the voice of our Father. By setting aside something that entangles us and replacing it with the Lord, we refocus on Him. Through this denial of self, the Holy Spirit makes us more sensitive to the things of God. Scripture makes it clear that God moves powerfully when His children abstain from earthly needs or pleasures, whether that is through food, drink, social media, or other aspects of your life. What do you find yourself counting on or turning to throughout the day? Pray through those, and select one to fast from this week. Make a plan to replace the time spent on that distraction with one of the other spiritual disciplines we’ve studied this week.

CONSIDER:

1. According to the Scripture you read, what is the purpose of fasting?
2. What excuses do you create to prevent you from fasting?
3. Name something that you easily turn to instead of God. Make a plan for how to eliminate that distraction and spend that time with Jesus.

PRAY:

Father, there are so many things that distract me from You. I pray that I will have the discipline of self-control to replace a distraction with time with You this week. Help me to earnestly focus on You. Cleanse my soul and give me a new desire for You. Give me sensitivity to Your voice during this time, and may You alone satisfy my hunger. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 6 : SOLITUDE & SILENCE

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.” – **Mark 1:35**

READ:

1 Kings 19, Mark 1:35-39

APPLICATION:

Have you ever felt that you are doing a million things and none of them well? Do you constantly feel overwhelmed? At these moments, the Father calls you to Himself, to be with Him, to hear from Him and to restore life to your weary heart. In our attempts to be the best father, mother, co-worker, friend, or servant, we become drained and empty. Beth Moore said, “Intimacy with Jesus must not just be the last thing to go, it must not go at all.” It seems counterintuitive at our busiest moments to prioritize solitude and silence, but it is exactly what we should do.

In the midst of His ministry Jesus withdrew to a place of solitude, to pray and to seek his Father. The work of God alone did not sustain the Man of God. Only time with His Father restored Jesus. Likewise, only time alone with the Father will restore you and prepare you for the kingdom work He has called you. When you take time out of your busyness to spend with the Lord, you will see the impact of that overflow into your household, marriage, office, and every day interactions. Pour your weary selves into His Word and find your rest in Him. Take a few moments now to silence your phone, remove distractions, and sit in solitude before the Lord.

CONSIDER:

1. What does it mean to be in solitude?
2. Why is it so hard to spend time specifically listening to the Lord? What does it show about our beliefs that we spend so little time practicing this?
3. As you think about practicing silence before the Lord, how will you do it? How will you catch your thoughts from distracting you?

PRAY:

Father, very early in the morning, Jesus got up and went to a solitary place to pray. Help me to follow His example so that I may be strengthened and renewed. This noisy life often distracts me and deafens Your voice. May I be still before You and allow Your Spirit to speak. Help me to make space in my soul and space in my life for You to do a deep work in me and through me. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 7 : SIMPLICITY

“To receive what we have as a gift from God is the first inner attitude of simplicity. To know that it is God’s business, and not ours, to care for what we have is the second inner attitude of simplicity. To have our goods available to others marks the third inner attitude of simplicity.”

– Richard Foster

READ:

Matthew 6:25-34, Acts 2:42-47

APPLICATION:

No matter what we have, we want more. Something always convinces us that we need more – more stuff, more money, more clothing, more respect, more activities, more, more, more. We develop into bottomless pits of hunger for the world and all it has to offer. We stuff ourselves at the table of the world yet remain consistently hungry for more. The empty promises of more will never satisfy us. Helen Roseveare, a missionary in Africa, once said about herself, “You no longer want Jesus only, but Jesus plus...plus respect, popularity, public opinion, success, and pride. All this and more, Jesus plus...No, you can’t have it. Either it must be ‘Jesus only’ or you’ll find you have no Jesus.” Jesus plus anything equals nothing; it must be Jesus only. Jesus is the way to eternal life. He is life and peace. He alone can satisfy. As Jesus says in John 4, “whoever drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty again. Indeed, the water I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Jesus promises something more than a momentary satisfaction, instead offering something eternal.

Where do you see excess in your life? On what are you holding too tightly? Take some time to prayerfully examine this. Simplify your schedule and cut out the unnecessary. By doing so, you may become more available for the work God has for you. Simplify your possessions and give away or sell things that are no longer of use to you. If you choose to sell some items, sacrificially invest in the Beyond Campaign and watch the Lord redeem your excess for His glory. Most of all, remember that Christ alone is your hope, and rejoice in the simplicity of that truth.

CONSIDER:

1. What do you need to be a Believer?
2. Why do we succumb to the lie that we need Jesus plus something? What does that show about what you truly believe?
3. Does your home or calendar feel crowded? What can be cut away starting today?

PRAY:

Father, Your Word tells me not to worry about tomorrow. All that I have is from You and belongs to You. Help me to follow the example of the converts in Acts and to freely share what I have with those in need. Lead me to experience the freedom that comes from giving to others with a generous heart. Show me the many things that I can live without that would bless others. Amen.

NOTES:

BEYOND

WEEK 2: PRAY BEYOND OUR GEOGRAPHY

WEEKLY ACTIVITY >>

Place a map in your home where you (and your family) may see it daily and place a pin in the following locations:

**BOONE ♦ BOSTON ♦ BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY IN
SHERBROOKE, QUEBEC ♦ BANGALORE**

Pray for each of these areas asking God to shine His light brightly in these cities. Ask God to raise up people to proclaim the gospel in each of these areas. Also pray for God to lead you in the ways that you personally can shine His light in Boone and Beyond.

DAY 1 : PRAYING BEYOND OUR GEOGRAPHY

"I believe that in each generation God has called enough men and women to evangelize all the yet unreached tribes of the earth. It is not God who does not call. It is man who will not respond!" – **Isobel Kuhn**

READ:

Matthew 28:16-20

APPLICATION:

Our worlds easily become very small and narrow. We go from our homes to work or school to our weekly activities to church and back home again. We become wrapped up in our lives and the lives of our family and friends. Occasionally, we may see a story that reminds us to pray for someone beyond our circle, but typically we stay content in our own realm of life. Yet Jesus has called us to something totally different.

Proclaiming the Gospel is not optional. We read in the Great Commission that Jesus says, "Go". This could look several different ways. Maybe the Lord is calling you to totally leave behind your life to make disciples in another nation, either for a few days or for a few years. He could be calling you to move to a new neighborhood, away from close friends and family, so that you can minister to another part of Boone. Perhaps the Lord wants you be bold and speak His truth in love to your friend or coworker. We have so many opportunities to go, but we are quickly satisfied by what's convenient. Jesus never promised the going would be easy, but He did promise to be with us every step of the way.

Take some time to ask the Lord what is hindering you from proclaiming the Gospel. Pray that He would give you a glimpse of the urgency of the gospel. Pray that God would give you a desire to be a part of the advance of His kingdom. Then, when the opportunity arises, go.

CONSIDER:

1. What does it mean to fulfil the Great Commission in your life?
2. How can you find ways to “go” every day?
3. How can you incorporate daily reminders to pray beyond your realm?

PRAY:

Lord, thank You for your work around the world. Give me a desire to see Your church grow. Teach me how to live the Great Commission in my daily life. Please give me opportunities to leave my comfort zone to proclaim the Gospel. Please teach me how to pray beyond my geography and give me a hunger for Your Word. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 2 : CHURCHES REVITALIZED

"God does nothing except in response to prayer."

– John Wesley

READ:

Revelation 2:1-7

APPLICATION:

This is a particularly convicting passage for seasoned Believers. Verses 4-5 says, "But this I have against you, that you have abandoned the love you had first. Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first." Yesterday you prayed specifically the lost in our community of Watauga County. In order to reach our community, not only do new churches need to be created, but the current churches need to be revitalized. The definition of "revitalization" is to give new life or vigor to something. That idea is exactly what this passage in Revelation is talking about. Do you remember what it was like as a new Believer, the passionate love you had for God? Most likely, you were eager to proclaim the Gospel, you wanted to obey Him not because that is what should be done but because He redeemed you! As churches, this love for God needs to be our motivator, the thing that drives and renews us. We cannot abandon the love we had at first, because that leads to such empty faith.

We as a church need to encourage – which, by definition, means to put courage into – local churches in our community, to remind them of their first love, and to reinvigorate their ministry to the people in their area. What if we as a church train pastors, teachers, and disciple-makers in order to give new life to churches? It would be beautiful to see the generations of Believers in our county be renewed in their passion for the Lord. This renewed passion would revitalize their church and in turn revitalize their community for the gospel. Take time to pray today for our local churches, that they would remember their first love and not grow weary of doing good. Pray that God gives you ways to encourage Believers at churches across our county. Pray that we would be united for the sake of the Gospel to advance His kingdom and reveal His glory in our county.



CONSIDER:

1. Have you forgotten your first love for the Lord? Take some time to pray that your first love would be renewed.
2. What friends do you have at other churches in our county? What can you do today to encourage them?
3. What would keep you from answering God’s call to serve in another location/church to help revitalize an area and further God’s kingdom?

PRAY:

Father, don’t let me forget my first love. Teach me how to do good works out of great love for you. Help me to be Your hands and feet, Father. Fill me with a willingness to be Your servant, to show Your truth to those who do not know You. Fill my heart with Your praises so that I cannot help but speak them of You. Create in me a desire to help others and to partner with other churches and Christians to share Your love. Open doors so that hearts and souls will be stirred to know You more. Show me how I can help equip and encourage others as they train to share Your Gospel. Use me, Lord, and make me Your vessel. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 3 : BOONE COMMUNITIES TRANSFORMED

"He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light."

- John 1:8

READ:

Acts 17:16-34, John 1:6-9

APPLICATION:

God longs to redeem our community. He wants our neighbors to understand the gospel and love Him wholeheartedly. He wants to take every circumstance in this county – both good and bad – and use them for His glory. We see in the passages today that God uses His people to transform communities. He invites us to be part of His process to advance His kingdom. Currently, to reach our county, ninety-one new churches need to be created. That is overwhelming to consider, but the first and most important thing you can do to further His kingdom in our county is to pray. Pray for unbelievers in your community, that their hearts would be softened to the truth. Pray for Believers, that they would answer God's call to proclaim the gospel and plant new churches. Pray that you would reflect God's glory to those around you and that you would have opportunities to tell of His gospel. As you go about your day, pray for those you see as you drive, work, and run errands.

CONSIDER:

1. Just like the men of Athens, people in our community see themselves as religious. How would you explain the difference between being religious and being a Christian to one of these people?
2. Do you long for your neighbors to a part of God’s kingdom?
3. How will you intentionally begin praying for your neighbors and your community?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, help me to see others as You do. In Acts, You tell us that You have fixed a day on which You will judge the world in righteousness by Your Son, Jesus. Open my eyes to see those who I interact with daily as needing You and Your gospel. Touch the hearts of our community, Father, and open their eyes to see You. Open my mouth to proclaim Your love, and open their ears to hear You calling them to repentance. Embolden me with Your Holy Spirit in such a way that I cannot stop from sharing of Your great love with those around me. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 4 : BOSTON

“Harvard University was founded in 1636 with the intention of establishing a school to train Christian ministers. In accordance with that vision, Harvard’s “Rules and Precepts,” adopted in 1646, stated: Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only gives wisdom, let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of him”

– Original Harvard Mission Statement

READ:

Luke 10:1-9

APPLICATION:

Boston was once a hub of Christianity in America. The foundation of this city was built upon the love of the Lord, His Scriptures, and the mission to know God and honor Him as Lord. In the 17th century, the greatest minds were trained and sent out as missionaries in their specific fields. Today, some of the world’s brightest minds still make their home in Boston. However, in the centuries since the city’s founding, it has turned away from the Lord in the pursuit of human knowledge and earthly pleasures. Each day people from all over the world arrive in Boston to study, work and pursue their passions. The North American Mission Board says, “[Boston] has become a crucial stopping point for young professionals as they move on to positions of influence and innovation all over the world. But the majority of these future leaders will leave the city without ever being touched by the influence of Christ. This is because the city of Boston is making history—but without the help of the church.”

The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Over 98% of Boston’s population is unchurched according to the North American Mission Board. The need is unbelievably great. The church must rise up and rebuild the city of Boston with the foundation from which it was once built. Establishing Christ as the Cornerstone and training its people to build God’s kingdom and not their own. Please pray for the church planters serving in Boston. Pray for our partners, Jonathan and Suresh. Pray for the Lord to rise up laborers for His kingdom there in Massachusetts. Pray that the wisdom of the world would be made foolish and the people of Boston would pursue Christ and His wisdom.

Below are some specific prayer requests from our Boston partners. Please take time this morning to lift these requests to the Lord.



BOSTON:

- >> There are 85,000 South Asian Indians in Boston who, prior to Suresh moving to Boston, had no church and no gospel in their language. One church and one church planter isn't enough. Pray for Suresh to train and multiply seed sowers, disciple makers, church planters, and leaders from the harvest of S. Asians in Boston.
- >> Suresh is also regularly connected with about 18-20 different ethnicities in his work - pray that God would bring many of them to Christ and use them to reach their own peoples.
- >> Suresh has been threatened by some radical Hindus and radical Muslims in Boston, as it is a hub in the US for them. Pray for protection and continued boldness on his part.
- >> Pray for the Jonathan and his family as they plant a church in Boston.
- >> Pray for them as they share the gospel with their neighbors by holding soccer clinics and Bible studies in their home.
- >> Pray for open ears and hearts as they share the gospel with international students at Bunker Hill community college.

CONSIDER:

1. Why is it important for you as a Believer to understand what is happening in the city of Boston?
2. Visit <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston> and skim the information. After learning more about Boston, how does it affect the way you pray for Jonathan and Suresh?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your laborers in Boston. Sustain them as they proclaim Your truth to those around them. Please bring people alongside them to advance Your kingdom. Draw the people of Boston to You. Father, may the nations hear the gospel in Boston. Tear down the prideful altars built in Boston and rebuild the city with Christ as King. Teach me to pray for these church planters, churches, and the people of Boston. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 5 : BISHOPS'S UNIVERSITY IN QUEBEC, CANADA

"And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy." **– Colossians 1:9-11**

READ:

Colossians 1

APPLICATION:

Paul is a great example of someone who prayed for Christians he had never met and churches he had never visited. Colossians 1 implies that Paul had never visited the church in Colossae, but he heard of their faith and wrote to encourage them. In verses 10-14, Paul prays that the church would grow in the knowledge of God's will and live lives pleasing to the Lord. When the church received this letter, they must have been humbled and renewed at the Lord's word through Paul.

As a church, we have heard about our partners at Bishop's University in Quebec, Canada. While most of us have not visited, we have an opportunity, like Paul, to cover them in prayer. We can pray that God would sustain and encourage our partners, giving them opportunities to boldly proclaim the Gospel. Pray that the Lord would build His church on this campus and in this city. Below are some specific prayer requests from our partners. Please take time this morning to lift these requests to the Lord.

BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY IN QUEBEC:

}} Pray for God to open up houses of peace in our partner Lucas Aube's neighborhood segment that is filled with college students.

}} Pray that God would stir the hearts of the Quebecois to seek more in life and be open to the gospel of Jesus.

}} Pray for barriers to be removed for him to function as a church that starts churches on campus and in the community.



CONSIDER:

1. How can I tangibly encourage and support my fellow Believers around the world, even those I've never met?
2. Visit [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop%27s University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop%27s_University) and skim the information.
After learning more about this university, how does it affect the way you pray?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, I thank you for Lucas Aube, Quebecois Christians, and the students serving you at Bishop's University. Father, I pray as they connect with the students there you would give them boldness to share the hope of the gospel. Soften the hardest heart and open their ears to hear Your truth and turn in repentance. Many have never heard the gospel and have no knowledge of the scriptures. Father, reveal Yourself in a mighty way. Remove all the distractions and all the noise that works to get their attention so that they may they hear Your voice and turn to You. It is only through Your power at work that Bishop's University will be transformed. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 6 : BANGALORE

"May God deliver us from the easygoing, smooth, comfortable Christianity that never lets the truth get hold of us." – **A. W. Tozer**

READ:

Matthew 25:34-40, 2 Samuel 9

APPLICATION:

Not only was Mephibosheth a descendent of the dethroned king, but he was also disabled in a time when people with disabilities were considered "lesser" people. We see in this story a demonstration of the Gospel, as God's grace and love is extended through David and he brings Mephibosheth into his household to eat at his table. Brokenness is a trait that God values, and He uses it in mighty ways. It isn't surprising that He would use Mephibosheth to foreshadow the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross.

In India, although discrimination based on caste is illegal, people are still judged based on their social standing, which is passed down through your family name. Our partners Suresh and Latha have a powerful ministry that flies directly in the face of this perspective. They look beyond family name and instead love people because that's what Jesus does. This couple serves the people in their area of India to further God's kingdom. They live out Matthew 25:34-40.

In our society, we don't have a codified system that establishes our social value, but we are often quick to judge others. Every day through our words and actions we let others know if we find them worthy of our time, attention, money and love. As Suresh and Latha demonstrate, Jesus shows us that because of His love and sacrifice all are worthy to receive time, love, attention, and care. How can you extend that love to people around you today? Take time to laugh with and encourage the cashier at the grocery store, welcome the new person in your neighborhood, share an encouraging word and a gift card with the homeless on the side of the road, or take a meal to a family going through a challenging time. Finally, pray for Suresh and Latha as they minister to the people of Bangalore, India. Ask for God to sustain and encourage them. Pray that the people of Bangalore would have hearts open to the Gospel.

CONSIDER:

1. In what ways do you find yourself judging people based on their value to you?
2. What does that show about how you view people? How does that view fit within the Gospel?
3. Why is it easy to ignore or “second-guess” the prompting of the Holy Spirit? How can you build saying “yes” to the Spirit into your routine?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, forgive me for the times I don't listen to Your voice asking me to help someone. Help me to see others as You do – people who need Your Gospel. Remove all fear from me, Lord. Make me bold. Show me how I can be a reflection to those in need both here and in Bangalore. Please bless those who are already answering Your call. Encourage them as they serve and teach me to do so as well. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 7 : PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

“Faith never knows where it’s being lead, but it loves and knows the One who is leading.”
– Oswald Chambers

READ:

Revelation 7:9-17

APPLICATION:

These verses in Revelation paint a beautiful picture of people from every tribe and nation praising God. For Believers, this will be a truly glorious day when we praise our God together as one. As we rejoice in the hope of this future, this picture also gives us an overwhelming desire to reflect Jesus to those we meet. Knowing what lies ahead, we are incentivized to proclaim the Gospel with our words, with our actions, and with our attitudes. As we’ve learned this week, prayer is the basis for advancing the kingdom. Pray that God gives you a hunger to share the Truth, urge to pray for Believers and non-believers, boldness to speak the words He gives you, and a desire to serve and encourage people in His name. Spend some time praying boldly for our county and for our Beyond (Boone, Boston, Bishop’s University, and Bangalore).

CONSIDER:

1. Praying is an active form of worship. What are some experiences you've had this week during your prayer time?
2. After spending time praying for Boone and Beyond this week, where is God leading you to go from here?
3. What ways will you tangibly remember to pray for your community, Boston, Bishop's University, and Bangalore?

PRAY:

Father, thank You for Your Word and for leading me this week. Thank You for the picture in Revelation of praising You with other Believers from around the world. Please continue to show me how I can serve Your kingdom and live for Your purposes. Give me boldness to speak of Your love and Your Gospel. Thank You for the work You are doing in Boston, at Bishop's University, and in Bangalore. Build Your church in those areas, and teach me to continue to pray for them. Amen

NOTES:

BEYOND

WEEK 3: DISCOVER BEYOND OUR GENERATION

WEEKLY ACTIVITY >> Seek out someone of a different generation, whether that is your child, a friend at work, or someone whom you worship alongside every Sunday. Invite them over for dinner or take them for coffee. Begin to pursue a discipleship relationship with them this week.

DAY 1 : REMEMBER WHY YOU BELIEVED

“Should we not press it home upon our consciences that the sole object of our conversion was not the salvation of our own souls, but that we might become co-workers with our Lord and Master in the conversion of the world?” – **Lottie Moon**

READ:

Ephesians 2

APPLICATION:

Twelve men responded with reckless abandon to the call of Jesus, and the world has never been the same. They had no credentials, but they were men transformed by a miraculous Savior. These twelve encountered the Messiah, and the urgency of the Good News took over their lives. It wasn't even an option for them to keep the Gospel to themselves or count on someone else to do it; rather, they ran forward to proclaim God's redemption to the world despite persecution, immense suffering, and certain death. Don't be tempted to think these guys were perfect – you know the stories of their doubt, their disobedience, and their denial of Jesus. Yet God redeemed even their worst moments for His glory, and He used these men to start His church across the globe.

What motivated these people to leave their families and livelihoods behind? They understood the glory of how Jesus was and what He did. As it lays out in Ephesians 2, Jesus Christ left His rightful throne, lived a sinless life, bore the punishment of man on the cross, and three days later He defeated death and rose again. Through His resurrection the veil was torn, the grave was robbed, death lost its sting, and the debt of all mankind was paid. The twelve disciples surrendered their blood-bought lives to the One that ransomed them. How can you respond with any less devotion and commitment? You were once dead in your sin but Jesus has made you alive! Devotion and commitment weaken when the power of the resurrection diminishes in the Believer's life.

Meditate on Ephesians 2 today. Ask the Lord to return to you the joy of your salvation. It is impossible to discover beyond our generation when we have forgotten what Jesus has done in our own lives. Take some time to dwell on the cross and how you have seen God redeem your life.



CONSIDER:

1. What did your life look like when you were dead in your transgressions?
2. How did you hear the Gospel and what were the events that led you to surrender your life to Jesus?
3. What does it mean that Jesus is our peace? How does that knowledge impact the way you live and interact with others?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, I was dead in my transgressions and sins. I lived in the ways of the world, gratifying the cravings of my flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, I was by nature deserving of wrath. I was separate from You and Your son, excluded from citizenship in Israel and a foreigner to the covenants of the promise. I was without hope and without God in the world. Yet, in Christ Jesus although I was once far away I have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Thank you that by your grace alone I am saved. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 2 : FAITHLESS FORGETTERS

"We must not hide them from their children, but must tell a future generation the praises of the Lord. His might, and the wonderful works He has performed, so that a future generation—children not yet born—might know. They were to rise and tell their children so that they may put their confidence in God and not forget God's works, but keep His commands."

– Psalm 78:4, 6-7

READ:

Psalm 78

APPLICATION:

In Psalm 78, the Psalmist pens an incredible journey of the history of Israel, their disobedience and forgetfulness, and the continued consistent faithfulness of God. The Father has done mighty works that testify to His character and the way He always keeps His promises. God parted the seas, provided a compass in the form of a cloud and a fiery light, gave the Israelites food and water in the desert, and protected them against their enemies. Despite these unforgettable acts, the people of God turned away from His covenant, disobeyed His law, and forgot His faithfulness. Even in this betrayal, the Lord remained faithful to His covenant with Abraham.

This is an amazing reminder to the people of God in the 21st century, as we are also often faithless forgetters. Today, dwell on the words of Psalm 78 and remind your forgetful heart of what God did for His promised people. Take time today to dwell on what Christ has done for you. Who can you share that with today or this week? Revelation 12:11 says, "They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." What Jesus has done throughout history and in your own life must be proclaimed to the next generation! Share it with your children, family, friends, someone who sits next to you in the pew, a neighbor, or a colleague. Through your stories, God can raise up a new generation of Believers and further His kingdom. Don't overlook that or take it lightly. You are invited to participate in His mission for the world.

CONSIDER:

1. If you have children, in what ways are you sharing the things of God with them? How are you discipling them? If you do not have children, are you discipling anyone younger than you? If not, how will you begin doing so?
2. Name something God has done in your life lately. Who can you share that with today?
3. Why is it so easy to forget what God has done in our lives? Why is so difficult for us to share those examples with others, both Believers and non-believers?

PRAY:

Jesus, often I can be a faithless forgetter. I forget what You have done, the wonderful works that You have shown me. Forgive me, Father. May I hear your instruction, listen to what You say, declare Your wise sayings, speak mysteries from the past, things I have heard and known that have been passed down to me by faithful disciples. May I not hide them from my children but tell the future generation the praises of you, my Lord. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 3 : FULFILL THE COMMISSION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

"To know the Word of God, to live the Word of God, to preach the Word, to teach the Word, is the sum of all wisdom, the heart of all Christian service." – **Charles E. Fuller**

READ:

Luke 9:57-62, Luke 14:25-35

APPLICATION:

There is a song we sing on Sunday mornings that says, "The only thing I want in life is to be known for loving Christ, to build His church, to love His bride, and make His name known far and wide...It is not fame that I desire nor stature in my brother's eye. I pray it's said about my life that I lived more to build Your name than mine." These words are powerful reminders of our call as Believers. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, Luke says. Too many times we are distracted from our purpose. That purpose could not be more clearly laid out in scripture: "Go and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded." As we read last week, we must go. Jesus is calling us to follow Him and keep our focus diligently on the task. We cannot keep letting ourselves be distracted by our desires for acceptance, for love, for understanding – all of these desires are met in Jesus, and out of that knowledge we go. What is keeping you from fulfilling your purpose? Set that aside, and be bold out of the confidence you have in Christ Jesus. He has called you to be His disciple, so commit to that and don't look back.

CONSIDER:

1. What is keeping you from “going,” however that looks in your life?
2. What does it look like to be known for loving Jesus and following Him?
3. Is God specifically calling you to do something right now? What will it take for you to say yes to Him?

PRAY:

Jesus, my heart’s cry is to follow you wherever you lead. I know my flesh will make excuses to turn back and delay my obedience. I know that in the delay I am in sin. Forgive me. You ask for immediate obedience. Father, Your Word says, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” God, may I not look back but instead look forward to the next generation. May I plow where you lead and trust you with the harvest. Send me out, Lord, I will follow. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 4 : DISCIPLE IN LOVE

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." **- John 13:34-35**

READ:

1 Corinthians 13, Philippians 3:8-14

APPLICATION:

Paul had it all together. He was born in the right family, he had the right job, and he did the right thing and followed God's law to the letter. Paul had every reason to put confidence in himself. But when he encountered Jesus, Paul realized that everything he was relying on was nothing compared to the Gospel. All of his values suddenly changed, and his life turned upside down.

How many times do we look at the people around us, particularly those younger than us, and think that they are ok? Why is it so easy to think that because these people are at church then they know the truth and are living for Jesus? This is a lie that Satan loves to perpetuate. How many times have you been desperate for someone to know you, to support you in your life, and to encourage you as you follow Jesus? If you have thought that, then you know someone else has too! How many times do we think, "I'm not the right person for that," or, "There will be plenty of volunteers that who are more gifted for it"? Don't you think that puts a limit on how we allow God to use us? In 1 Corinthians 13, we get a beautiful picture of how we are supposed to love each other as the church. Live this out, say yes to opportunities, and in doing so, you'll fulfill the purpose Jesus set before you. Find an opportunity to invest in the future generations of God's church. Contact Carrie for opportunities with the children's ministry. Ask Seth, Luke, or Betsy for suggestions on how to get started mentoring someone younger than you. Do you see a gap somewhere on Sundays or Wednesdays? Offer to fill it! This is what it means to be the Body of Christ, defined by love.

CONSIDER:

1. Do you think 1 Corinthians 13 defines our church? If not, what are you going to do to change that?
2. What excuses do you give to keep from serving (read: loving) the next generations? What are those excuses rooted in, and what does Scripture say about that?
3. Who in our church comes to mind when you think of mentoring? Make a plan to ask them if they would be interested in meeting with you to discuss it.

PRAY:

Father, I can speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but if I do not have love then I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. Even if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Father, give me a supernatural love, Your love for those that bear Your image. Help me to be patient, kind, content, humble, servant-hearted, and forgiving. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 5 : ANGUISHED FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

"If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for." – **Charles Spurgeon**

READ:

Romans 9:1-3

APPLICATION:

Reading this passage, we can practically feel Paul's anguish. Paul longs for his fellow man to be restored to God. So much so that he would willingly surrender his salvation for that of his brothers. He understood the eternal separation and punishment that awaited his kinsmen and the generations after him. That same reality is true today. Judgment is coming against those of this generation and the next that have set their hearts away from God. This should burden and anguish His children. Just a few miles down the road from Perkinsville there are 19,000 people who represent the next generation and only 1% of them are following Jesus. These massive statistics of lostness are more than just numbers, they represent souls. Those you encounter everyday are living lives in opposition to God. May this reality cause a deep anguish in your heart.

When you read Romans 9:1-3, was there someone who came to mind for whom you feel Paul's anguish? Write the name of that person or any lost family members or friends on paper. Place that paper somewhere you will see every day, like your house, your car, or your office. Set a time daily that you will pray for them, and create a reminder on your phone or calendar for this every day. As you pray, ask God to give you His love for these people. Ask Him to give you a boldness to speak His redemption into their lives. As the Spirit leads you, schedule a time to meet with them to share the hope of the gospel. Ask for prayer from your church and other Believers as you begin this process.

CONSIDER:

1. Paul had a deep love for His fellow man to the point that He wished he could take their lostness upon himself. Do you relate to this? Why or why not?
2. How does loving the lost show love for the next generation?

PRAY:

Father, fill my heart with your supernatural love. May my words be as Paul's when he says "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Give me an unceasing love so deep for the lost, that my heart is sorrowful and anguished. Father, I pray for Paul's desire for his fellow man. I know that I cannot love apart from you. I ask that you would remind me of their destination, eternal separation from You. Oh God, forgive me for not reaching out those that are near to me and far from you. Teach me how to love the lost and be bold in sharing the truth with them.

NOTES:

DAY 6 : NEVER TOO OLD OR TOO YOUNG

“Desire that your life count for something great! Long for your life to have eternal significance. Want this! Don’t coast through life without a passion.” – John Piper

READ:

Luke 2:22-38, 1 Timothy 4:6-16

APPLICATION:

Here we have examples of people who loved God and sought to serve and trust Him faithfully. Simeon and Anna were both advanced in years, at ages where in today’s society we would expect them to be retired and enjoying a slower pace. However, their focus was entirely on how they could best serve and worship the Lord. God honored that desire, and He made known that this baby they saw was the redemption of Israel.

Likewise, Timothy was a young man who also sought to serve the church as he loved the Lord. Paul urges Timothy to live his life above reproach, to continue to devote himself to the church, and to let God’s call on him be his confidence. In our culture today, it is often easy to feel that we are too old or too young to be involved. Perhaps the oldest and youngest Believers feel that their understanding of scripture won’t be valued or that their life experience isn’t relevant. Scripture tells us otherwise. If you identify with Simeon and Anna or with Timothy, take courage in their examples! Remember that the Lord is ready to use you for His glory, and don’t back down from opportunities to do so. Ask how you can serve, and do so wholeheartedly! Do you fall somewhere between these two examples? Don’t discount those older or younger than you just because of their age. Humble yourself to learn from what these Believers bring to the table, and offer them opportunities to teach you. We are all equal at the Lord’s table, and as the church, we are to display that to the world.

CONSIDER:

1. Why is it so easy to overlook insights from those older or younger than us? What does that show about how we view others? What does the Bible say about that?
2. How will you intentionally seek out someone older or younger than you to learn from?

PRAY:

Lord, teach me to realize that your plan for my life never ends. From the moment I am born until I take my last breath, you have a purpose and plan for me. Teach me to find my confidence in you and to be bold in proclaiming your truth and love to those around me. Give me the wisdom and humility to learn from those older and younger than me. Thank you for your grace. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 7 : SERVING THE CHURCH LOVING THE NEXT GENERATION

“Have you ever realized that you can give things to God that are of value to Him? Or are you just sitting around daydreaming about the greatness of His redemption, while neglecting all the things you could be doing for Him? I’m not referring to works which could be regarded as divine and miraculous, but ordinary, simple human things – things which would be evidence to God that you are totally surrendered to Him.” – **Oswald Chambers**

READ:

Ephesians 5

APPLICATION:

This passage uses marriage as an analogy for how Jesus loves His bride. In the same way that the husband is instructed to love his wife, so should we love the church. Jesus loved the church enough to give Himself up for her, to cleanse her and make her holy. We are called to love the church in the same way, willing to do anything to serve her and make her better. As the passage says, “No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.” Are we nourishing and cherishing the church? Do we see the church as the body of Christ, His bride? If so, that should transform our lives. Instead of crossing church off our lists, we become engaged. Rather than complaining about the things we think are wrong, we see the beauty in sanctification. We look beyond the moment to the future God planned for us. And we find ways to help the church fulfill the plan God has for her. By serving the church, we advance the church. As we serve, we model what loving the church looks like for the next generation.

CONSIDER:

1. Do you love the church as Jesus does? Why or why not?
2. How are you serving the church and helping her fulfill her purpose? If not, make a plan to discuss opportunities with Seth or Luke.

PRAY:

Father, thank you for the way you love us. Thank you for redeeming us. Please teach me how to love your church. Give me a desire to serve Your bride. Soften my heart to be receptive to ways to serve and fulfill your purpose. Amen.

NOTES:

BEYOND

WEEK 4: INVEST BEYOND OUR NOW

WEEKLY ACTIVITY >> Pick a luxury that you spend money on every day, like buying a cup of coffee or purchasing a meal out. Commit this week to give those luxuries up and give that exact amount with your offering on Sunday.

DAY 1 : HEARTS REVEALED

*"According to Jesus, our money doesn't just reflect our hearts; our hearts follow our money."
– David Platt*

READ:

Matthew 6:19-24

APPLICATION:

Another way to phrase verse twenty is, "invest in Heaven." We forget that this world is so temporary. The things we stress over today we most likely won't remember five years from now, much less when we are in Heaven. Yet we worry and plan and strive and save. We obsess over our lack of money, feeling like we are unprepared for what could come or comparing ourselves to someone who always has more. We throw money away at the latest and greatest, only to need to upgrade that in a few months. We put our treasure in our status symbols. We get wrapped up in what we want or, conversely, what we can't afford. At times we may justify our obsession with money, saying that we are providing for our families or that we can spend what we want because no one is relying on us. Certainly there is a God-honoring way to manage our money. But Scripture also makes it clear that our purpose is not to have the best savings account or the next new thing. Instead, we are to invest in our heavenly future. That means investing in God's Word, in His people, and in His creation. We are to care for what He has given us and view it through the lens of eternity. We cannot hold on to this life so tightly that we forget what lies ahead. As you look at your life, where are you investing? Spend some time today asking God to show you how to invest in His kingdom. If money (or lack thereof) has become an idol in your life, do what you need to do to destroy it. Give boldly, treat a friend to a nice dinner, or anonymously support a local ministry. Reflect today on where your money is leading your heart and ask God to teach you how to invest in the kingdom.

CONSIDER:

1. If you look at your bank statement, where does most of your money go? What does that say about what you value most?
2. How does the idea of investing in Heaven change how you view your money?
3. Make a plan for how you will intentionally invest in God’s kingdom today.

PRAY:

Father, this world is passing away. Help me to remember that moths and rust will destroy the treasures I accumulate. Reveal to me where my treasure lies and whom I serve as master. Be master of my life, Lord. May I be devoted to Your Kingdom work and lay up treasures in heaven for Your glory. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 2 : WE GIVE BECAUSE OF OUR NEW IDENTITY

“When we are powerless to do a thing, it is a great joy that we can come and step inside the ability of Jesus.” – Corrie ten Boom

READ:

2 Corinthians 5, Galatians 2:17-21

APPLICATION:

We are who Jesus says that we are. Our identity is found solely in Him. Jesus has based our worth solely in Himself. We are found in Him, so we are complete. God has deemed us so precious that He called us to follow the example of His Son, and then He changes the world. We can hide ourselves in Jesus, because He is our source, our satisfaction, our worth, and out of that He plays the gospel out in our lives. We no longer live but Christ Jesus lives in us.

Because we are who Jesus says that we are, we are free to live for something other than ourselves. We don't need to protect ourselves. Our needs are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He has provided. And He will provide. When our identity is found in Jesus, we can give freely, not out of ourselves but out of Who He is.

CONSIDER:

1. What takes up most of your time? How do you try to present yourself to others? What does that show about where your identity lies?
2. Who has Jesus said you are?
3. How does recognizing your identity in Jesus change how you view giving?

PRAY:

Jesus, thank You for redeeming me. Thank You for making me a new creation. Teach me how to live in the knowledge of that. Mold my heart into the person you want me to be. Teach me what it means to follow you, and show me how to give in light of that. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 3 : SACRIFICIAL GIVING

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. ... If our giving does not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say it is too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot because our commitment to giving excludes them." **– C. S. Lewis**

READ:

2 Samuel 24:10-25, Mark 12:41-44

APPLICATION:

When we talk about giving, we often hear stories of people who give their last amount of money, only to be gifted with that amount and more the following week. Those stories are great, and it is always wonderful to hear of God's faithfulness! However, not every story ends like this. Sometimes the check doesn't come in the mail. But God intimately knows our needs, and He has promised He will provide, as Matthew 6:32 says. God asks us to give boldly, trusting in His provision and in His timing. David states in 2 Samuel 22:24, "I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing." True giving always costs us something. But, as we learned yesterday, we seek to invest in God's kingdom, not our own. Reflect on what it means in your life to give boldly.

Where is the Lord asking you to trust Him? What can you do today that demonstrates your desire to sacrifice to the Lord? Perhaps you sacrifice your daily coffee run and give the money you would spend on that to the Beyond Campaign. Maybe you anonymously fulfill a very tangible need of a friend. It could even be as simple as planning your budget so that you can tithe more than 10%. Dream big and be bold! God loves a cheerful giver, and you will see the fruit of your giving, if not now, then in the future.

CONSIDER:

1. Why did David insist on paying Aranuah? Why is it important that our sacrifices to the Lord cost us something?
2. What does that sacrifice look like in your life? How will you build sacrifice into your giving this week?
3. What is so powerful about the image of the widow giving a penny? Has there ever been a time in your life where you gave out of poverty? (This could be financial poverty or poverty of the spirit.)

PRAY:

Father, it is often easy to give out of my abundance but You call me to give even when it hurts. Father, give me the heart of the widow that sacrificed all she had for the sake of Your kingdom. I will offer to you a sacrifice that costs me something. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 4 : ALL THAT WE HAVE IS THE LORD'S

"I am wired by nature to love the same toys that the world loves. I start to fit in. I start to love what others love. I start to call earth "home." Before you know it, I am calling luxuries "needs" and using my money just the way unbelievers do. I begin to forget the war. I don't think much about people perishing. Missions and unreached people drop out of my mind. I stop dreaming about the triumphs of grace. I sink into a secular mind-set that looks first to what man can do, not what God can do. It is a terrible sickness. And I thank God for those who have forced me again and again toward a wartime mind-set." - **John Piper**

READ:

Acts 5:1-11

APPLICATION:

Satan is the father of lies. He loves to lie to the church, because his whole aim is to undermine the mission of Jesus. In this story, we see that Ananias not only lies, but he acts without integrity. He offers a little, pretending that he is offering everything. How many times do we do this in our lives? We limit what we offer, because we are protective of the rest, be it our time, our resources, our emotions, etc. We are willing to give until we reach our limit, rather than trusting God with open hands. In this passage, we see that Satan is willing to lie to our hearts by making us question the relation between our possessions and God.

The father of lies leads us to believe that we are in control and that our possessions are ours. The truth is, all that we have God has given to us. Psalm 24 says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." That includes our possessions, our money, and our time. All that we can offer God already belongs to Him. Are you going to listen to the lie that we have control? Or will you live with open hands, ready to give to the Lord that which is already His?

CONSIDER:

1. Why do you think God responded the way He did to Ananias' and Sapphira's lie and lack of integrity?
2. Do you believe the lie that you have control over your possessions?
3. How does the knowledge that our possessions belong to God change the way you view them? How does it change your perspective of giving?

PRAY:

Father, I know that Satan has been a murderer from the beginning, and he does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. I have often allowed the lies of the enemy that I need to withhold what is mine for fear it will not meet my needs. Forgive me Lord for believing the lies of the enemy that my withholding is protection, it is sin. May I come to you with open hands, offering all I have to you. The enemy has spoken out of his own character and taught me that control is my responsibility. Father, I surrender the need to control. I lay down my possessions at your feet believing the truth that all I have is yours, use it as you see fit, God! Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 5 : GOD'S FAITHFULNESS FREES US TO GIVE

"It is presumptuous in me to wish to choose my path, because I cannot tell which path is best for me. I must leave it to the Lord, Who knows me, to lead me by the path which is best for me, so that in all things His will may be done." – **Teresa of Avila**

READ:

Malachi 3:6-10

APPLICATION:

After reading this passage, there is no doubt that God is serious about our giving. We can sense God's frustration. Here He has provided for His people, over and over again, but they are still holding back from the Lord. They know what they should be doing, but they aren't doing it. It seems like the Lord isn't as frustrated at their disobedience as He is their lack of trust. These are the same people God led from Egypt, the same ones to whom He sent manna each morning, the same ones that God led in victory over their enemies time and time again. God has proved Himself. He has proved His immense love, but still His people doubt. If that doesn't sound like a description of us, you should read it again. What more does God have to do for us to understand that He loves us and that He is trustworthy? We still hold ourselves back from Him. We keep our money and our talents to ourselves instead of giving them to God and letting Him transform and multiply them for His glory. Our Father longs to demonstrate His faithfulness, because He loves to show His love, but we hold back. Here God invites us to test Him. So do it! Give your money, give your time, give your talent, give whatever it is you are afraid to give and watch the Lord take that gift and run with it. He will take it farther than you ever dreamed.

CONSIDER:

1. What does keeping our money and talents to ourselves show about what we believe about God?
2. What are you holding on to instead of giving to the Lord? Why are you clinging to it so tightly?
3. Make a plan to “put God to the test” by financially giving more this week than you planned. Say yes to a service opportunity even if you want to say no. How will you do that this week?

PRAY:

God, forgive me for holding back my trust. Forgive me for believing that I am protecting myself by not saying yes. I want to trust You. Remind me of Your faithfulness, and teach me how rely on that, not my own strength. Change my heart, and mold me into a cheerful giver who loves to tell of Your faithfulness. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 6 : GIVE TO SHOW HONOR TO OTHERS

*"We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God."
– John Stott*

READ:

1 Samuel 25

APPLICATION:

In this passage, David is asking for help. He has a tangible need that Nabal is more than able to supply, yet Nabal responds with scorn. Abigail, on the other hand, recognizes that David is a man of God and wants to honor the Lord by honoring David. This is a powerful picture: a woman giving because she has a holy fear of the Lord.

Two weeks ago, we devoted time to praying for our partners in Boston, Quebec, and Bangalore. Throughout the year, our church sends teams to work with and support these partners, and those teams need both our prayer and financial support. When we hear of the need for money to fund these trips, it is easy to overlook it, particularly if we aren't part of those teams. However, in these requests, we have an opportunity to give because we know the Lord. By giving to others, especially when it enables them to fulfill the Great Commission, we honor them, and we become part of the work the Lord will do through them. Although we may not be there in person, through giving financially, we enable the Lord to work through His people and advance His kingdom. What an opportunity that is!

CONSIDER:

1. Do you know someone preparing to go Beyond to serve others and advance the kingdom? What can you give now to enable them to go in Jesus' name?
2. If you truly have nothing to give financially to one of these opportunities, what can you do to help the team raise financial support? Let them know what you think of and take the necessary steps to make it happen.

PRAY:

Father, teach me to love to give to others when they go to advance Your kingdom. Help me learn to have open hands. I want to honor others with my finances because it honors You. Thank You for always providing for me. Please let my confidence in that overflow as I seek to provide for others in Your name. Amen.

NOTES:

DAY 7 : MULTIPLY WHAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO YOU

“Abundance isn’t God’s provision for me to live in luxury. It’s His provision for me to help others live. God entrusts me with His money not to build my kingdom on earth, but to build His kingdom in heaven.” **– Randy Alcorn**

READ:

Matthew 25:14-30

APPLICATION:

The definition of entrusted is to give over something into the care or protection of another. In the parable of the talents we see the Master entrusting the servants with the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of dollars today. Each servant was entrusted with a different amount yet their responsibility was the same. They were to take what had been entrusted and multiply it. The first two servants returned having doubled what they had initially received. Their reward was to enter the joy of their Master. Can you imagine? One day that will be Believers laying all that was entrusted to us before the feet of Christ, and afterwards we enter into His joy. Yet, the last servant hid what was entrusted to him. He was fearful and instead of multiplying what he had been given to care for, he hid it.

Sometimes we convince ourselves to forget the mission we’ve been given. We content ourselves to live easy lives, acting like Believers but limited in our trust and obedience to the Lord. D.A. Carson says, “It is not enough for Jesus’ followers to ‘hang in there’ and wait for the end. They must see themselves [as] servants... who improve what [their Master] entrusts to them. Failure to do so proves they cannot really be valued [as] disciples at all.” What we do with what Christ has given into our care reveals whether we are His disciples. Christ calls us to act on that which He has entrusted to us. As a church we are commissioned to multiply His resources that have been entrusted to our care.

CONSIDER:

1. What ways do you hide the things God has entrusted to you? Why is it easier to hide than multiply?
2. What does it mean to multiply that which God has given you? What would that look like in your life?

PRAY:

Father, I am in awe of your willingness to allow me to take part in your kingdom work. You have entrusted part of your great wealth to your bride for your glory and kingdom. Forgive me for the moments that I have fearfully hidden your resources and kept them back from you. In withholding I have been a faithless servant. Help me Lord to be a faithful servant maximizing all the resources in my care. I want to lay all that you entrusted to me at your feet. The greatest desire of my heart is to one day hear, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Father, I have the opportunity this week to see what you have entrusted to me be multiplied. God, may I give generously and sacrificially. Multiply it, Lord! Amen.

NOTES:
