

*35-Day
Devotional
Study
of “the
Things Jesus
commanded”*

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How to Use this Book:

God's Word is Awesome! The Lord promises that if we will diligently study the Bible He will use it to increase our faith. Romans 10:17 says: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The first thing you need to do to make this study be everything it can be for you is to **commit yourself to becoming a student of God's Word.** You're going to need to find at least 30 minutes each day to study and to prayer! Don't cop out and say you can't do that! How much time do you spend on the phone each day? How much time watching TV? How much time on the InterNet? You can find 30 minutes for God!

Next you need to begin each session in prayer, asking God's Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth! Then read the passage for the day, preferably in the New King James Version of the Bible. Then follow the study guide for that day, which will guide you through this study.

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all the things that I have commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." At a conference I heard Henry Blackaby ask how many in attendance had ever taken the time to list all that Jesus had commanded. Only a couple of people raised their hand! That was the inspiration for this project. The verses I have selected follow A.T. Robertson's Harmony of the Gospels, so the verses build up from Jesus' early ministry toward his going back to Heaven.

You will also want to be aware that I have not listed absolutely everything Jesus commanded in the gospel. I specifically left out commands given to individuals, such as Jesus saying, "Lazarus, come forth!" I also left out some of the commands given in places like Matthew 10 and Luke 10 where Jesus sent his disciples on specific missions. Whereas some of the commands are clearly applicable from those texts for today, a few were not, such as "go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Other times for the sake of brevity I didn't include texts I thought were mirrored elsewhere.

End each time in prayer, using the things you've learned that day as a launching pad into praying for all the things going on in your life.

God bless you as you study God's Word!!!

Day 1

Read Luke 2:43-49

Write v. 49 here:

Like Jesus, we must be about our Father in Heaven's business.

Read Matthew 3:13-17

Write v. 15 here:

Jesus was baptized because it was the right thing to do. All followers of Jesus get baptized to show they identify with Jesus and His people, the church. Isn't it wonderful to serve a God that doesn't ask His followers to do what He is unwilling to do? We can perform the righteous deeds Christ calls us to, because, among other things, He has done them Himself. He's been there!

Read Matthew 4:3-4

Write v. 4 here:

We humans need not just physical nourishment but spiritual nourishment from God's word, the Bible. Many Christians, spiritually speaking look and act malnourished because they simply just don't spend enough time in God's Word!

Read Matthew 4:5-7

Write v. 7

Don't do dumb stuff and tell people God told you to do it.

Read Matthew 4:8-10

Write v. 10 here:

Don't make any deals with the Devil, or anyone or anything else. Worship God in everything you do. Many set aside worship to gain more of the world, whether it's a shady business deal, cheating to succeed, being in that wrong relationship with someone, dishonoring God in the way you play sports, etc... God demands our ultimate allegiance, and everything we do should be done as an act of worship to Him!

As you begin your prayertime today, Thank the Lord for these commands he has given. Thank Him that he doesn't ask you to do anything that He himself wasn't willing to do when he was on earth. Have you done some of the basics he's called you to? If you have accepted Him, have you been baptized and identified with a church for Him? Are you as serious about spiritual food from the Bible as you are about physical food? If not, get serious about obedience!

Day 2

Read John 2:13-17

Write v. 16-17 here:

Jesus loved the House of God! It pained him to see it misused, more of a marketplace than a place for the people of God to worship, and a place where the lost could hear about God and be saved. Sadly, so many times we are guilty of coming to church for all the wrong reasons. Many times we too ask, "what's in it for me?" maybe Jesus needs to turn over some of our ways of thinking about church!

Read John 3:1-3

Write v. 3 here:

Nick at night: Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. Nicodemus was a great religious leader who wanted to “pat Jesus on the back,” but not in public during the day when it might affect his own religious reputation. Jesus blew him away by saying that he needed to be born again, something God would have to do for Nicodemus rather than something Nicodemus would do for God. WOW! We too must be born again, letting God save us by faith and not by our works!

Read John 3:16

Write it here:

What more can be said! Obviously believing is more than simply acknowledging but receiving, placing our faith in, and following Jesus. It is a rock solid decision to follow Christ the rest of our lives.

Read John 4:19-24

Write v. 24 here:

It is useless to say that we love Jesus in a “spiritual” way but not be applying his truth to our lives. There is a very false definition of love out there that calls for an ooey gooey feeling of love but refuses to be grounded in scriptural truth. Some have gone so far that in the name of worshipping God they do things that violate what’s taught in the Bible. The opposite problem also happens; some are so coldhearted in defense of Biblical truth that they can’t get along with anybody, even on peripheral issues. Jesus calls us to worship in both spirit and truth!

As you pray today ask God to help you be more committed to the life of your church, and helping it be a place that worships God. If you have spurned the title “born again” receive it gladly, because if you are not born again you will not see the Kingdom of God. And if you are out of balance in your worship, with either not enough of the loving spirit or not enough of the “sound mind” that comes from being grounded in Bible truth, realign your priorities to worship in spirit and in truth!

Day 3

Read Mark 1:14-15

Write v. 15 here:

Repent is not just some old fashioned word that Bible thumpers use! It is a command from Jesus to turn from our sinful way of doing things, and believe the gospel, the good news about letting Jesus rule in our lives (that’s what the Kingdom of God being at hand means). Acknowledging Christ as Lord and ourselves as sinners, and turning to his rule in our lives is at the heart of the Christian message.

Read Mark 1:16-18

Write v. 17 here:

People often say, in a negative way, “oh, you’re such a follower.” In these sinful days, we are encouraged to express ourselves, be our own person, etc... But in reality everybody follows somebody, some group, some ideal. Bob Dylan used to sing, “you gotta serve somebody.” It’s funny how different groups think they are so different, but in reality jocks, goths, brains, gangs, often act the same no matter what part of the country or world they are in. They have all conformed to some ideal set by somebody. Christians are known as followers of Christ. Isn’t it interesting that the first trait Jesus identified, as being true of those who would take up the call to follow him would be that they were “fishers of men.” Christians should not be known primarily for big hair, big teeth, the kind of music they listen to, loud suits, etc... They should be known as those who know Christ and make him known.

Read Mark 2:15-17

Write v. 17 here:

Never try to push someone who doesn't sense his or her need for Christ to make a decision for Christ. Simply share what you can in love and then pray for them. Notice clearly here in this passage that Jesus wasn't interested in dealing at that time with those self-righteous people who didn't view themselves as sinners. But to those who would freely admit that they were sinners, and felt conviction of their sin and wanted to repent and believe, Jesus always responds! What a Savior!

Read John 5:24

Write it here:

What a great promise- believers have passed from death to life! That's what I call a bridge!

Read John 5:39-40

Write v. 40 here:

There are lots of people who have a lot of Bible knowledge that is essentially useless because it has not led them to have a deep, personal, abiding relationship with Christ where they bear fruit for God. How sad!

Don't let it happen to you! As you pray today, thank Jesus that He is the bridge from death to life for you. Commit that your Bible study will be a means of greater faith in God for you, and increased fruitfulness for you, not just head knowledge. Don't be self-righteous, but acknowledge that you are a sinner and that it takes Christ the great Physician to make you whole.

Day 4

Read Mark 2:23-28

Write v. 27-28 here:

Some church traditions have made the Sabbath as restrictive as the Jews did, adding so many restrictions to it that it has become cumbersome for those who observe it. God’s plan for a day of rest and worship has not changed, but these folks sometimes forget that the main emphasis is to be a day of rest devoted to God. When it becomes about rules more than about God watch out!

Read Matthew 5:3

Write it here:

The Blessings Jesus gives are in direct contrast with what the world views as the blessed man. The world views the blessed man as the one who is rich in money, because he can “buy the earth.” Here Jesus says that Heaven doesn’t take Visa!

Read Matthew 5:4

Write it here:

The earth basically says, “get over it.” Jesus says there is comfort to the Christian mourner.

Read Matthew 5:5

Write it here:

The world tries to take advantage of the meek, calling them soft. Jesus says they will eventually inherit the earth, or land. David Robinson is an example of a meek Basketball player who eventually won the NBA title without compromising his modest greatness. A Proverb says that the city rejoices when a godly man rules, and almost everybody likes seeing a good man be rewarded.

Read Matthew 5:6

Write it here:

The word translated “filled” is translated “satisfied” by the NIV. The Rolling Stones sing “I can’t get no satisfaction...but I’ve tried.” I can assure you they didn’t try by hungering and thirsting after righteousness. One of the shames of the ministry is seeing even so many Christians starry eyed at celebrities, who upon closer analysis are some of the most dissatisfied people there are. But those who hunger and thirst after righteousness- they are satisfied with what they find! Or rather who they find!

Pray today that the Lord will give you discernment to see past all the glittery but empty promises the world makes and realize just how empty people are that adopt selfish lifestyles. Think of the people they step on and leave in their wake. Pray that you instead will be a person of God, hungering for Jesus, and being satisfied!

Day 5

Read Matthew 5:7

Write it here:

The world believes that if you are merciful you will get stepped on. But God promises you mercy when you become a person of mercy. James says that mercy triumphs over judgment.

Read Matthew 5:8

Write it here:

The world doesn't think much of the pure. In sexual issues many believe you are a fool not to experiment with sex before you marry, even saying you need to do it to see if you are compatible. What a lie! As my sister once said to some girls pressing her to become sexually active, "I can become like you in 10 minutes, you can never become a virgin again." Purity is the best marriage present you can give your future spouse, and it is a type of the perfect purity that comes by being washed in the blood of Christ. And that's how you "see God."

Read Matthew 5:9

Write it here:

So many turn to violence so quickly to solve their problems. What an example Jesus set by being God's ambassador to earth, sacrificing his own life to make peace for sinners with God. We are like him when we bring people to make peace with God and each other.

Read Matthew 5:10-12

Write v. 10 here:

In the movie Braveheart, Mel Gibson played a character who had a cause he thought worth dying for. At one point a Princess asked him "aren't you afraid to die?" He

responded, “everyone dies, but not everyone really lives.” I don’t know enough to know if Braveheart’s crusade was really worth dying for, but I do know that for 6,000 years men and women of God have been persecuted and even martyred for serving God. When some missionaries were martyred in South America Life Magazine entitled its issue that month, ‘why this waste?’ Well, we believe there was no waste, that those men went straight to be with Jesus. Their wives actually completed the mission of taking the gospel to the very men that had killed their husbands, and today, some of those men are elders in the church there! One of the martyred men once wrote in his journal, “he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Pray to God today for that kind of faith! But pray it at your own risk!

Day 6
Read Matthew 5:13

Write it here:

In the old days, before Cable TV and refrigerators, people used salt to preserve things like meat. The salt would keep it from going rotten. Christians are here called the salt of the earth. That’s why it is so important to maintain our testimony for Jesus. Because if we lose it through being known as being just like the world, we have become rotten, or worthless as far as impacting the world. Spoiled meat doesn’t look to spoiled salt to save it! Neither will a lost world look to you for salvation if you are rotten!

Read Matthew 5:14-16

Write v. 16 here:

When I was in college groups of about 20 of us would go to an overlook of the city called “the Bluffs.” There we would sing, testify, and pray for hours. It was awesome! I’m still jealous of the guys who could play the guitar and lead us in the songs of Zion! By the time we would leave the bluffs it would usually be very dark, and there was no discernable path back to our cars. If you took the wrong way you were in trouble! Either you would be cut up by tree limbs and bushes, walk through poison ivy, or, and worst, fall 20-100 feet off the bluffs! So what did we do? We always followed someone with a flashlight, until we were smart enough to bring and use our own. That’s what you are,

Christian! You light the way through following God's Word for others to follow. If they're smart they'll get their own light! Jesus said "I am the light of the world, if a man follow me, he will never walk in darkness!"

Read Matthew 5:17-19

Write v. 18 here:

Don't ever let anyone tell you that God's Word is not perfect! A misconception is that the Bible is filled with errors. It is not! Jesus essentially here says that even the "commas" are perfect! No document as old as the Bible has even close to having 100 % of what was originally written. We have 101% of the Bible! When you add up the thousands of fragments of manuscripts, we have the Bible and a relatively few number of copyist's errors and comments. And when compared, we are able to say with near certainty what the original, perfect text said. And here Jesus says to know it all, to let it be your manual for living! Just as he is the light of the world, the Bible is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path!

Read Matthew 5:20

Write it here:

Jesus here says something that must have blown them away! They had to be more righteous than the Pharisees to get to Heaven. But the Pharisees were so strict about following rules that whenever they could not understand an Old Testament command, they would make up a half dozen rules of their own on how to obey that command! What Jesus is saying here is to get them, and us, ready for the truth the Apostle Paul will later make plain in his writings. It will take perfect righteousness to get to Heaven, and you and I and the Pharisees don't measure up. But Jesus did! And when we receive Him, his perfect righteousness is counted as fulfilling the debt we owed God.

As you pray today, commit to following Jesus the light of the world, and being a light to others. Commit to being the salt, the preservative of the world. Remember that light hurts people's eyes and salt irritates their skin. As you follow Jesus and his commands you are going to irritate people. But let the irritation be the gospel, not religious

hypocrisy like the Pharisees. And always be looking to help people “get their own flashlight!”

Day 7

Read Matthew 5:21-22

Write v. 22 here:

Is your anger worth it? As James says, “the wrath of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God.” So be slow to anger, especially when you realize that God is no longer angry with you through your reconciliation in Jesus!

Read Matthew 5:23-24

Write v. 24 here:

So simple an instruction, and so often ignored by church members. Jesus says here that he wants his followers to first live in right relationship with each other, and then bring their gifts to church. And notice that he puts the “you go first” on the one who realizes there is friction, not necessarily on the offending party. When I have practiced this, I have almost always seen the result be a step forward in my friendship with the other person. People often run their mouths so much that they don’t even realize they have hurt others. Jesus bids us make things right! And he took the initiative to make things right with us, didn’t he!

Read Matthew 5:25-26

Write v. 25 here:

Jesus would not have us compromise our convictions for the sake of our own ease, so that’s not what he is calling for here. But there are a multitude of matters in which our

convictions are not on the line where it would be ridiculous to make mountains out of molehills. In cases like this it is far better to “agree” with your adversary than to make waves for all the wrong reasons!

Read Matthew 5:27-30

Write v. 28 here:

Gulp! Guys and girls, it’s time to be like Job who said, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?” –Job 31:1. We need to do what Job did! He didn’t want to view the opposite sex as an object, but as people created in the image and likeness of God. So many people in our society view dating as what they can get from the other person. “Did you score?” is often heard in school hallways. This cheapens God’s design, where people are to give to each other, building each other up, helping them be a better person. When you get married, you should not be full of scars from previous relationships that cause you to mistrust your own spouse. Instead, you should be a person used to giving and receiving in friendship and love. Make a covenant with your eyes not to view the opposite sex wrong!

Read Matthew 5:31-32

Write v. 32 here:

In our day many treat divorce as if it were like breaking up was in high school. Jesus clearly teaches that divorce is more than breaking a contract with each other, but it is the breaking of a covenant before God. And covenants are made until death. When this covenant is broken prematurely there are always hard consequences. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin however, and many times in churches we make the innocent party in a divorce feel more guilty than the one who took off. The love of God and his ability to make all things new should never be minimized. But what Jesus is commanding here is that marriage should be honored and upheld, and that sin should be called sin. The person contemplating getting married should view their marriage as a covenant of commitment, more than simply saying with goo-goo eyes “we’re in love.” Don’t ever forget that “God hates divorce.” -Malachi 2:16

As you pray today, imagine the kind of world we would live in if even just professing Christians took more seriously the words of Jesus. How that would bless not only churches but also society as a whole. Pray that it will start with you and me!

Day 8

Read Matthew 5:33-37

Write v. 37 here:

It's not uncommon to hear a person say, "I swear I'll do it." Jesus says here to stop doing that. If someone asks you to do something, say "yes, Sir, I'll do it," and then go do it. Or if you need to say no, say "no, Sir, I can't do it." Be a man or woman of your word. When you mess up, don't say "I swear I'll do it right next time," instead **DO IT RIGHT NEXT TIME!** For Jesus!

Read Matthew 5:38-39

Write v. 39 here:

Ouch! Let's start by saying what Jesus is not saying. Jesus is not saying its wrong to have laws about restitution and retribution. What Danny? The Old Testament said when you did something wrong to somebody you should make it right. If you break someone's window, you should buy that person a new window and install it. That's restitution, or restoring something. Some things can't be restored, like if you murder someone. In the Old Testament that's where retribution came in, where for instance if someone killed someone they had to forfeit their own life, or give an eye for an eye. Many of the laws of Western Civilization were built on the ideas of restitution and retribution. Here Jesus calls for his followers to go beyond the law by not holding people's offenses against them, and not personally taking vengeance. This does not mean that lawlessness should reign in a "Christian" society. If someone does something to a loved one of mine, I want the laws of the land to punish that person lest they repeat that behavior and hurt others. At the same time as a believer I would not hold it against them, would pray for their relationship with God, and would forgive such a one if they repented.

Read Matthew 5:40-41

Write v. 41 here:

In the Roman Empire soldiers could ask citizens to carry their heavy loads up to one mile. The citizen had to do it. Jesus here said if they ask you to carry it one mile, you as followers of Jesus should carry it a second mile. Why? Because the first mile is what you had to do! In the second mile is when people would realize that you were doing something you didn't have to do, and would ask you why in the world you were doing it. Then you could explain that since Jesus had gone the extra mile for you by bearing your burden to Calvary, you could now go the extra mile for others. This teaching applies to all of life! Whether it's a teenager cleaning up their room and taking out the trash without being asked, or someone going above and beyond the call of duty in their profession, this principle almost always leads to opportunities to give a testimony for Jesus!

Read Matthew 5:42

Write it here:

Jesus said give, and we must give. We need to stop and think twice before we spend all of our money on extras for ourselves and neglect our ministry of giving. But be "wise as serpents, and innocent as doves." To give an alcoholic \$5 for "food" when you have a pretty good idea he'll spend it on alcohol is not a good idea. Instead, walk with him into a restaurant and buy him a meal. And even as you act out the "Good Samaritan" remember that Jesus had his disciples minister in pairs, where the personal danger was less and the accountability to act godly was more.

Whew! As you pray today ask God to give you opportunities to "go the extra mile." And then "make the most of every opportunity today!"

Day 9

Read Matthew 5:43-47

Write v. 44 here:

Many people mistakenly say that the Jesus is here calling for something different than what the Old Testament taught. What he is speaking against here is what the Pharisees had added to the Old Testament. They interpreted “love your neighbor” to mean, “love your neighbor that is like you!” But check out the book of Jonah sometime to see if God wanted his people to love people different than they (see Jonah 4:11). Jesus here lays it on the lines for believers- if you only love yourselves, how are you different than others who love their own crowds. Love your enemies, pray for your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to them. Stop whining about how you are being persecuted and try to love them into the Kingdom. Sound Familiar? “...when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son...” –Romans 5:10

Read Matthew 5:48

Write it here:

Whoop there it is! There’s what you’re aiming at! As a professor of mine said, “if you aim for the stars, you might not hit ‘em, but you’ll be way up there!”

Read Matthew 6:1-5

Write v. 1 here:

Enough of Photo-Opportunity Christianity! Do the right thing because it’s the right thing to do. Be a God-pleaser, not a man-pleaser. Heaven is not impressed with your efforts to impress people.

Read Matthew 6:5-8

Write v. 6 here:

Here is the same reasoning as with giving! Be a person of prayer. Your first commitment in prayer needs to be between you and God in a quiet place. Don't have loud music or the television on in the background! Make that time with God the foundation of your day. Do pray with others also, but don't pray to God to impress men. Usually neither is impressed!

Read Matthew 6:9-15

Write v. 9 here:

One of the ironies of Church History is that after Jesus warned in verse 7 not to make prayers meaningless repetitions, the beautiful "Lord's Prayer" to many is recited often without any regard as to its contents. Don't let this model prayer become a dreary repetition to you! It is filled with the way we should think of prayer! We should remember that God is holy, completely different than we are, filled with absolutely pure motives always. We should desire his rule and his will always, not merely ask him to bless our stuff. We should thank him for all of life's blessings and his provision. And we should have forgiving hearts towards those who have hurt us, even as he forgave us in Christ Jesus.

Read Matthew 6:16-18

Write v. 16 here:

Notice Jesus said when you fast, not "if" you fast! We do not fast to twist God's arm and "make" him respond (as if we could), but to humbly express our dependence on him. And then when there is a "rumbly in our tummy" it reminds us to pray.

As you pray today, ask God to help you in your personal commitment to him in loving and giving and praying. This must be the foundation for your public ministry to others!

Day 10

Read Matthew 6:19-21

Write v. 19 here:

These are very tough verses for the average American Christian! We from childhood glory in our possessions. As teenagers we feel incomplete if we don't have cars. As adults we want very big houses. We work very hard to have enough resources to retire early. Now it is clear from scripture that we must take care of our own families, and there is nothing super-spiritual about holding back any necessity your family needs. But Jesus tells us here that for his followers he is not nearly as interested about us raising our standard of living as he is our standard of giving. As families we should love Jesus enough to face seriously how much of our "treasure" is spent on things that don't really last and start laying up more treasure in Heaven by giving, meeting needs, doing good deeds, and intentionally witnessing!

Read Matthew 6:24

Write it here:

Don't let money be your master, Christian! The Bible is quite clear that if you have the wrong attitude about money, and view it as yours, not God's, and don't use it wisely to build up God's Kingdom, it may very well be your real master. You think you possess it, when in reality it possesses you. Stay true to your calling from God, even if it means you will make less money.

Read Matthew 6:25-32

Write v. 31 here:

Interestingly, the things Jesus says here not to worry about are all things that we need: eating, drinking, and clothing. He is not saying don't eat, drink or be clothed, but he clearly confronts us in our obsession with worrying over these things. What he is saying is that our spiritual faith should take priority even over our physical needs. What would happen in your life if you began to spend as much time with God in prayer and Bible study as you do getting yourself physically ready for a day? What would happen if you spent as much time meeting needs and witnessing as you did shopping for more clothes to wear?

Read Matthew 6:33-34

Write v. 33 here:

Jesus first, people! That's really what it is all about!

As you pray today, think about your life. Are you more concerned about your spiritual life and making a difference for Jesus than you are about your physical life? I'm not asking you to choose between the spiritual and the physical. I'm asking you to choose to let the spiritual be the foundation for all you do, including the physical. If Jesus is your Lord you will shop differently! You will want to spend less money on yourself and more on Kingdom causes like missions and ministry to those in need! Ask God to help you seek Jesus and His will first in your life. Don't give God the leftovers!

Day 11

Read Matthew 7:1-5

Write v. 5 here:

What needed verses! Remember: God is the judge, not us. He has been so patient with us, we need to be patient with others. Notice he is not saying that confrontation is not necessary. But we shouldn't ask others to be doing something we ourselves are unwilling to do. We shouldn't ask others to deal with something we are unwilling to deal with. The Pharisees were famous for expecting more from the people than even they were willing to give. This passage does not mean that we don't confront sin in the church, as is plain from Matthew 18:15-20 and I Corinthians 5:9-13. These 2 passages also make clear that there are times when someone should be asked to leave the church for a while,

with the hope that this discipline will result in their return with renewed faith and obedience. But the entire process should not be marked by our being judgmental, but humbly desiring what's best for the individual and church.

Read Matthew 7:6

Write it here:

What in the world does this verse mean? Simply that it is foolish of mature Christians to share with non-Christians more than they are able to handle, just as it would be foolish of an astro-physicist to share complex theorems with an aboriginal Indian from Australia. Many times in my Christian life I have shared with a family member or friend who didn't know the Lord some of the wonderful things God has taught me, only to have them scoff at me. With such people we should lovingly share what we can, and pray for them, but the deep things God is doing in our life should be shared and celebrated with those who are also "children of the holy."

Read Matthew 7:7-11

Write v. 7 here:

Pastor Dan Gregg has often said, "God wants to give revival more than we want to receive it." Jesus here says, "ask, seek, knock." Do you have anyone in your life that you can turn to when in need and ask, seek out, and knock and know they will be there to help you anyway they can? Jesus here says that God is like that for you. Can't you see him "opening" and letting you in to be with him? I delight when one of my children seeks me out, and asks of me something that will help them grow. I delight in giving them good gifts. Isn't it neat that Jesus wants us to think of God like that?

Read Matthew 7:12

Write it here:

This has always been referred to as the golden rule by Christians. In 12 simple words (NKJV) Jesus sums up the ethical teaching of the Old Testament. If you want people to respect you and your property, you need to respect them and their property. Almost all laws are made to try and legislate people treating each other fairly. For the Christian, it can be summed up in 12 words from our Lord!

As you pray today, ask God to make faith simple for you, as in the simple realization that what he is asking you to do is to love God and to love others. This will manifest itself in your having respect for God, his creation, his word, and in people who are created in his image.

Day 12

Read Matthew 7:13-14

Write v. 13 here:

Friend, if you are in control of your own life, if you can take or leave obedience to Christ's commands, you can not have assurance that you are a born again Christian. When Christ speaks of the narrow way he is speaking of his way. I had a coach once that said, "it's my way or the highway." When it came to playing that sport, we had to do exactly what he asked us to do in the way that he asked us to do it, or we were off the team. Friend, in the Christian life, its either Christ's way or the highway. You come on his terms, as sinners whose only hope is Christ's bloodshed to take away your sin and give you Christ's righteousness in which you stand.

Read Matthew 7:15-20

Write v. 15 here:

Many people are so hungry for meaning in their life these days that all it takes to make them think God is at work is to wow their emotions. Millions of dollars are spent to manipulate people's emotions and to get them to believe that this or that movement is from the miraculous hand of God. Jesus said "look for the fruit." False prophets and teachers always start sounding good, but what they try to do over time is make you dependant on them for the way you view God, salvation, and success in the Christian life. Biblical faith always encourages you to stand under the authority of God's word, not the authority of this or that teacher. Don't be deceived by men or women in hideously

expensive suits that ask you to send money to the Lord but give you their address. Jesus died for the church, not Brother Fleecesheep's TV Miracle and Deliverance Ministry.

Read Matthew 7:21-23

Write v. 21 here:

Note here that true disciples of Jesus are not characterized by the kind of outward show they can put on, but by doing the Father's will. He will say "depart from me," or "get out of my face," to everyone who practices lawlessness. God wants us to be people, who "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." –Micah 6:8.

Read Matthew 7:24-27

Write v. 24 here:

Always remember: Christ and the words he spoke to us are a rock to build our lives upon. Why is it that so many Trailers blow away during hurricanes and tornadoes? It is because they have no foundation. Beach houses often blow away during hurricanes also. Why? Because they built them on the sand! These houses can look beautiful and be very impressive, but storms wipe them out. Americans are spending millions of dollars trying to look beautiful, but inside there is no foundation to make it through life's storms.

As you pray today, examine your life. Is Christ your foundation for life, or are you really trusting in sandy foundations that would be wiped out in a storm? Let Jesus be your rock! Then batten down the hatches, because the storms are on the way!

Day 13

Read Matthew 11:28-30

Write v. 28 here:

Keith Green sang: “my son, my son, why are you striving, you can’t add one thing to what’s been done for you; I did it all when I was dying, rest in your faith my peace will come to you. When I hear the praises start, my child I want to rain upon you, blessings that will fill your heart, I see no stain upon you, because you are my child, and you know me, to me you’re only holy, nothing that you’ve done remains, only what you do for me!” Oh precious one, It is a joy, not a burden to work for a good boss. Satan works you hard and mocks you in return. Christ has given you rested through faith in him and he works alongside you, and in you!

Read Matthew 12:31-32

Write v. 32 here:

This is often referred to as the unpardonable sin- the one that can’t be forgiven. So what is it? Well, we know from John 16:8-10 that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they do not believe in me, of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see me no more, of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. The unpardonable sin is the lifelong rejection of Jesus, which is a sin against God the Holy Spirit because he has actively been at work convicting of gospel truth since the sinner came into the world. Today if you hear his voice don’t harden *your* heart.

Read Matthew 12:36-37

Write v. 36 here:

Gulp! Do you think what you say matters? Jesus sure does!

Read Mark 3:31-35

Write v. 35 here:

Jesus put obedience to God even above family loyalty. In fact, he announced the church as a new kind of family, with God as the Father and believers as sons as daughters of his, brothers and sisters of each other. This is not true of all that loosely wear the name Christian, but to those who do the will of God as clearly understood in the Bible. John later said, “if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other.” –I John 1:7. As Christians it is so neat that we can meet up with somebody from another culture that loves Jesus and instantly feel like we have met a long lost relative. Oh what a family reunion Heaven is going to be!

Read Matthew 13:18-23

Write v.23 here:

Notice verse 23 says that they “understood” it. The others did not. The one in verse 19 did not understand it at all. The one in verses 20-21 accepted it gladly until trouble came along and could not “endure” because there was no root to his faith. The one in verse 22 liked it until he realized it would mean a different use of his money than he had planned. But only the last one “understood it” and went on to bear gospel fruit.

As you pray today, let me ask you a question- are you absolutely committed to doing the will of God in your life? Have you come to that place where you have rested in Jesus alone for salvation? If you have, he now bids you to work alongside him in what he is doing in the world. Every word now matters, every action has implications. Can you handle the truth? Live it, baby!

Day 14

Read Mark 4:24-25

Write v. 24 here:

Believers need to be F.A.T.- Faithful, Available, and Teachable! When you hear a truth from God’s word, you become responsible for applying it in your life. That’s why I take notes every time I hear a preacher speak. I’m looking for at least one gem that will help me grow. In school you take notes because the material might be on the test. For Christians, life is the test! Study to show yourself approved, so you can learn more and

be more useful for Jesus. But remember that the Christian call is to be a “doer” of the word, not a hearer only!

Read Matthew 13:24-30

Write v. 30 here:

Jesus is not teaching here that sinful conduct should be tolerated in churches (see Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 5). He is teaching that Satan will be successful in planting in even the best of churches those who can say the right things and appear to be the right things and yet be as lost as an albino guinea pig in a snowstorm. Jesus here says that intense efforts to identify everyone who is false may very well injure true believers and get the church side tracked from its purposes. Jesus teaches here that God will justly take care of all this at the “harvest.”

Read Matthew 13:44

Write it here:

Salvation is free but it will cost you everything! You can’t buy it, because you couldn’t possibly afford it. You can’t earn it, because your best efforts are like “filthy rags.” When you try to wash mud off of a window with a filthy rag, it simply smears the mud. Our best efforts are like that. But there is something required of us to gain the treasures of Heaven and a relationship with our Creator. What? Everything we do have-our life. When we offer it back to God as the only offering we can bring, he delights in changing us and conforming us to the image of Christ. Be like the man in the story; give up everything to gain the riches of Heaven!

Read Mark 4:35-40

Write v. 39 here:

Just a simple observation: there's no such thing as mother nature. Jesus controls weather patterns. The Son controls the sun. The Son controls el nino. And here he calmed the sea. An even greater miracle is that he is able to calm the storm raging in your heart! Let him say to your heart, "Peace, be still!"

As you pray today ponder how great Jesus is, who in majestic power can calm the raging sea *and* the raging heart.

Day 15

Skim Mark 5:1-20

Write v. 19 here:

Yesterday we learned that creation obeys Jesus. Today's verses show us that demons have to obey Jesus also. So many people worry so much about the power of Satan and demons that they live in fear. God doesn't want that. But he doesn't want us to fight Satan and his demons in our own strength either. Occasionally you'll hear a child say, "my Daddy can whoop your Daddy!" Christian, our God has whooped Satan and his demons. The book of Job even seems to indicate that Satan has to get permission from God to work woe (see Job 1-2 if you like). And as Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28 show, God can bring great good out of unspeakable evil for His glory and our growth. The next time demons flex their muscles in your face, tell them "my Daddy can whip your daddy." Then resist the Devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Skim Mark 5:35-43

Write v. 36 here:

As further proof that he is from God, Jesus here raises a girl from the dead. Whereas Satan has come to kill, steal, and destroy, Jesus gives life (see John 10:10). Jesus has this kind of power, so don't be afraid, but trust him. You won't be able to understand all that he does, but he is a refuge in your time of trouble.

Read Matthew 9:27-31

Write v. 28 here:

Jesus is asking you that question today, “Do you believe he is able to do this?” “This” does not mean give you a nice car or a coke and a smile, but that he who controls the sea, the heavenly realm and death will act in your best interest when you trust him to. Do *you* believe he is able to do this?

Read Matthew 9:35-38

Write verses 37-38 here:

Won't you join in prayer that Christian laborers will be raised up for the harvest of souls around the world? But be careful- after Jesus asked the 12 to pray, in chapter 10 he sent them out as harvesters! Really all believers are called to be doing their part in the harvest. Labor to see souls won to Jesus everywhere you go! Be on mission with God! Get out of the pews and make a difference in the lives of others outside the church walls!

Pray today! Join the harvest today!

Day 16

Read Matthew 10:16-17

Write v. 16 here:

Sheep are known for their dependence upon their shepherd. When they stray, they need to be corralled, when they fall down, they have to be helped up. Wolves are known for making meals of sheep. Here in breaking with the sheep analogy, Jesus tells believers to keep the innocence of sheep, but to be “wise as serpents.” We need to be careful as

Christ's followers to keep our innocence by not becoming cynical about people's motives and unwilling to help them. But we also need the common sense of the wise serpent as we are "sent out" to help people. Perhaps an example would help. You and a Christian friend are walking down the road and a man says he needs \$5 for a meal. If you give the man the money (assuming you have it) he may very well go and spend the money on alcohol or drugs, in which case you have not helped him at all. A wiser solution is to walk with the man to the next McDonalds and buy him a value meal, all the while telling him of Christ on the way!

Read Matthew 10:17-20

Write v. 19-20 here:

The context of this passage must be remembered: the 12 disciples have been sent out on this mission to the lost sheep of Israel. Some have used this verse to mean that when you are completely unprepared to witness to somebody, God will give you the words to say. This text specifically refers to the times when believers will be standing in front of hostile government officials and questioned for their message and mission. It is a fair application to say that in times like that God will be with you and will help you know how to "defend yourself" in a way that brings Jesus glory! Elsewhere we are told to study to show ourselves approved, and also to always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us. So don't forget to study the scriptures and the culture you are witnessing in to adequately share the gospel. God will help!

Read Matthew 10:28-33

Write v. 28 here:

We often are afraid of what other people think when we share the gospel with them. Will they still like me? Will they think I'm a freak? Will they want to punch me in the nose? Fear is natural, but remember: God's love is super-natural. We all need to be more concerned about what God thinks than what man thinks! A Muslim once told a Christian, "if you do not stop talking about Jesus, I am going to kill you!" The Christian said, "you can't kill me, I'm already dead! Jesus now lives in my heart, and if you take my life, you'll be doing me a favor, because you'll just be sending me to spend eternity with

Him!” The Muslim and others trusted Christ that day because they wanted what that man had, something to live (and die) for!

Read Matthew 10:37-39

Write v. 38 here:

Jesus here lays out the challenge for us all: being willing to die for Jesus. And of course this happens only when we are already daily living for Jesus. When you study the lives of those “martyred,” or killed because of faith in Jesus, you don’t find people that necessarily wanted to die. They weren’t nuts! But they wanted to live for Jesus, and as they were obedient by faith to Him, they were put in circumstances where routine obedience got them “martyred.” Interestingly, the word martyr is Greek for witness, which all of us are called to be. So don’t read this passage and think that to be a super Christian you have to die for Jesus, simply be a faithful witness for him, whatever the circumstances. He’ll take care of the rest.

Read Matthew 10:42

Write it here:

Jesus here introduces a concept that Paul later develops in Romans 14-15, the concept of believers looking out for those who are weaker in the faith. “Little ones” are children, they are non-Christians, and they are weaker brothers and sisters who need our help in word and deed. Give them a cup of cold water, meet their needs, and share Christ!

As you pray today, ask God to fortify you, to ready you to serve him even in opposition. Ask Him to reveal people to you today that you can somehow “give a cup of cold water to.”

Day 17

Skim Mark 6:30-44

Write v.34 here:

We are perhaps most like Jesus when, moved by compassion, we teach someone the ways of God and meet their physical needs to boot! In our own lives we too should be moved with compassion and meet people's spiritual and physical needs. How are you doing at it?

Skim Mark 6:45-52

Write v. 50 here:

Somehow it's all better when we hear Christ say these words to us! In the midst of what you have going on in your life, listen to Jesus say this to you, "be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid!"

Read John 6:26-27

Write v.27 here:

Jesus gives spiritual food, just as he gave them physical food. Here he encourages the people to "labor" to receive the food he gives. There are many points that could be made from this passage, but perhaps it is best to take this as encouragement to make sure you "prepare and eat" your spiritual food daily. So many complain they are too busy to maintain personal devotion to God through Bible study and prayer. Indeed it is a "labor" to maintain your time with God. But it also takes labor to feed yourself, clothe yourself, study for tests, perform work assignments, etc... Jesus is saying here that obtaining spiritual food should be top priority in your life!

Read John 6:35-40

Write v. 40 here:

What a precious promise from Jesus! Has he broken through to you in salvation? Have you “seen” Him, and believed in Him and made Him the Savior and Lord of your life? Then he will raise you at the last day! In the movie “Bug’s Life” one of the bugs is flying intently toward a bug zapping light. Another bug tells him to stop, but he says. “I can’t help it, so pretty” as he flies toward the light! In Star Trek they have a Tractor Beam that locks onto shuttlecrafts and draws them into the bay. God’s grace is like that- shining a light from Heaven on you that you can’t explain, but all you can do is follow Jesus! What a precious truth coming from the lips of the Savior!

Skim John 6:43-69

Write v. 43-44 here:

People often complain about what they don’t understand. Jesus here says not to complain about God’s amazing grace because it doesn’t fit with our mindset. We and our peabrains want to have to do something to earn our own salvation. Jesus here says that God is at work in the world drawing people to salvation. Instead of questioning what that means we should rejoice and “eat” the bread of life, being fully nourished on Christ and his ability to save us and raise us up with Him in Heaven! In verses 60-69 many turn away from Jesus when he talks like this. As he turns to the disciples and asks if they also want to leave, Peter essentially says, “we’ve got nowhere else to go- you are our hope for eternal life, Jesus!” That’s assurance of salvation- knowing you have nowhere else to go but to Jesus! Those who can take or leave Jesus, on the other hand, can’t be certain they are really His.

As you pray today, rejoice in the God of your salvation who has drawn you to Himself through faith in Jesus. Confess any sin in your life, especially if you are guilty of an “I can take or leave Jesus” attitude in any area of your life.

Day 18
Read Mark 7:5-12

Write v. 6-7 here:

Many people suppose that the Pharisees problem was only that they had added a lot of dumb rules to the Old Testament law. Certainly they had done that, but there were also

times when they neglected Old Testament law by adding new rules that helped them neglect their responsibility. Here they question Jesus by asking about some of their rules on hand washing. Jesus answers by challenging why they have let their disciples get out of taking care of their parents financially. They had made it so their disciples had neglected their responsibility to honor their parents. Elsewhere Paul said that those who do that are worse than unbelievers.

Fellow believer, even the “thou shalt nots” of the Bible are put there to help people. Pharisees hurt people by demanding of them “extra” stuff that often keeps people from focusing on main things, like taking care of those we owe a debt to. And we owe our parents big-time! Don’t neglect “main things” to appease the Pharisees in your life.

Read Mark 7:14-23

Write v. 15 here:

Jesus statement must have absolutely blew his hearers away. His main point is that sin starts in the mind and heart and will. Again, his listeners had demonized things instead of getting to the “heart of the matter.” And our wicked hearts are the heart of the matter. Jesus wanted them to deal with who they were, as sinners in need of life changing grace, not as nit-picky rule followers trying to keep 90 miles away from the nearest potential “sin.” They were so obsessed with the clean and unclean outward rules of the Old Testament and their added restrictions that they hadn’t dealt with inward sin.

Read Matthew 15:12-14

Write v. 13 here:

In Matthew Jesus speaks this to go with the preceding confrontation. The problem with the Pharisees was that they followed their version of the Law of Moses instead of following the Lord who gave the law to Moses. To be cruder, Jesus is saying, “God the Father didn’t plant that tree!” That’s not the faith that helped Abraham and Moses and David point to how great God is! The Pharisees were more like what happens when a blind man leads a blind man: they both fall into a pit.

Read Matthew 16:1-4

Write v. 4 here:

Jesus keeps talking about avoiding the mistakes of the Pharisees, who substituted all kinds of stuff for faith in God. This time it's asking for a "sign." But friends, Jesus didn't come to amuse us, entertain us, to put on the "greatest show on earth." He came to save sinners. You want a sign, Jesus said, you look for the sign of Jonah. That would be that after 3 days he would rise from the dead! Friend if you're looking for a sign, go see David Copperfield. Just remember, those kind of signs are illusions. If you want a changed life, go to Jesus, who rose from the dead and gives life to all those who come to Him!

Read Matthew 16:13-19

Write v. 18 here:

Note that everybody then as now, was asking who Jesus was. He wants to personalize it, and make you personally decide whether he is going to be your Lord and Savior or not. If he becomes your Lord and Savior, he will use your "confession" to build his church, and the gates of Hades won't be able to keep you from crashing through Satan's strongholds in Jesus' name. Notice many 'Christians' today have this all wrong. They worry whether their 'gates' will be able to keep Satan out. They are on the defensive. Jesus here says that it is Satan that has to keep going down to Home Depot and getting new gates because real Christians keep knocking his down and untying his captives and letting them go free. Yeah! Jailbreak for Jesus!

Christian, pray Matthew 16:18-19 to be true in your life!

Day 19
Read Mark 8:31-33

Write v. 33 here:

Christian, you are not obliged to take the advice of even a strong Christian friend when it is against the revealed will of God. In the great book Pilgrim's Progress there is a great scene when a man named Hopeful confesses that he followed Christian down the wrong road (even though he knew it to be the wrong road) solely because he was deferring to Christian's more mature faith. Jesus here tells us that keeping our minds focused in on obedience to God sometimes will mean rejecting as flat out wrong the advice of even other Christians. Remember that just before this Peter had given a great confession of who Jesus is. From this we learn that the will of God as revealed in the Bible is our guide, not the feelings of others.

Read Luke 9:23-26

Write v. 26 here:

The Newsboys sing it well, "what are we sneaking around for." Christian, we have accepted Jesus, the way, the truth, the life. We don't have to be afraid of what people think! We can just live for Jesus and make the most of every opportunity he gives to do the right thing and to share his love with others. The Newsboys conclusion should be ours, "I'm not ashamed to speak the name of Jesus Christ!"

Skim Mark 9:14-29

Write v. 29 here:

Christian, as much as you want to help others, there are going to be some situations that you will not be able to heal. Of course God can, and so there are times in love we simply need to make our main ministry to people intense prayer. This is not a cop-out. An example would be for parents of a young adult who see their child making all the wrong mistakes and have told them that! But in hardness of heart the child goes right on sinning, and for the parent to keep harping on it may mean the loss of the relationship. In such a situation I feel the parent should keep on loving the child and keep the relationship going, all the while intensely praying and fasting for the child. Jesus can still heal when all of our efforts fail!

Read Mark 9:33-35

Write v. 35 here:

Being a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ means viewing yourself as first and foremost his slave and the slave of humanity. People who refuse to meet needs they see are not committed servants but immature Christians, if they are Christians at all. But servanthood takes humility. As I write this a brother just called who is in a wheelchair. He needs somebody to empty his bag, give him his lunch, and bring in his meal. My first thought was to grumble about this assignment, but it is exactly what God wants me to do right now, at this point in the day. So I'll be back in a while, because the Master calls...

Read Mark 9:36-37

Write v. 37 here:

I had a wonderful time serving my friend in the wheelchair today. I always get more out of our times together than I give. He has so much wisdom and loves to share it with boneheads like me. Jesus made things so simple. To him it was always about people. We are to do what he did, love people and serve people. Here Jesus says believers should always receive children in His name. All around us are families asking for help, wild children looking for guidance. Let's commit to looking after all the ones we can for Jesus' sake, okay?

As you pray today, ask the Lord to reveal to you any opportunities to help others you've been missing. Perhaps you have missed some of those opportunities because you have been stressed out about other, more personal situations. Perhaps you need to turn those situations over to the Lord through prayer and fasting, and redouble your efforts to meet the open needs around you. Pray about it.

Day 20

Read Mark 9:38-42

Write v. 41 here:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, always be on the lookout for opportunities to bless other Christians. The key here is to help meet their pressing needs. And even as you meet their physical needs, give them spiritual encouragement. How sad that so many young people only receive negative words from churchgoers. Don't forget the other side Jesus gives in verse 42, that if you cause someone to stumble, you'd be better off dead in God's eyes! Whoaaa. Paul later refers to this as the weaker brother principle, which is almost universally ignored in church business meetings as people protect their own turf at the expense of ministry to the "least of these." The same thing happens in youth groups when a newcomer is slighted and not reached out to. Take note of Jesus' words here, people!

Skim Mark 9:43-50

Write v. 50 here:

While you are watching out for others, be reminded that you will lose all your credibility and people will mock you if you are not a living example of the difference Jesus makes. Be careful little eyes what you see. Be careful little ears what you hear. Be careful little feet where you go. Some movies are off limits to the believer. Some music is off limits to the believer. Some places that people go for entertainment are off limits to Christians as anything but a mission field.

Read Matthew 18:10-14

Write v. 10 here:

This verse shows that God so loves sinners that he has assigned angels to watch over them. That being the case, does any Christian have the right to despise somebody because of his or her behavior? Absolutely not, but we are to love the sinner, even as we hate the sin. We are to view them as lost sheep that need to be sought out. That was Jesus mission, and it is ours: to seek and to save that which was lost!

Read Matthew 18:15-20

Write v. 15 here:

I think that over 75% of the junk that happens in churches would be eliminated if members simply practiced this teaching from our Lord. Instead we talk to everybody *except* the person and many times do more damage than the original offense. Come on, church, let's do it Jesus' way!

Skim Matthew 18:21-35

Write v. 35 here:

Ouch! Could Jesus be any clearer? If in your heart you refuse to forgive others their sin against you, you can't be certain that God has forgiven you. Why? Because when a person is truly saved the heart of the Savior becomes the heart of the saved: reconciliation!

As you pray today, if you need to act on these verses by asking forgiveness or seeking forgiveness from somebody, do it immediately! Don't delay. You may not receive the response from the other person you would like, but you need to do it for the benefit of your own relationship with God to continue growing. Recently I had a chance to go with a friend to a neighboring state and watch him make things right with his dad after 22 years! It was thrilling, and now a relationship has been restored to the glory of God!

Day 21**Read Matthew 8:18-22**

Write v. 22 here:

Jesus wants our full obedience-NOW! This fellow was basically saying, “in a couple of years, when I have fewer responsibilities, I’ll serve you.” Note it would have been a good thing to wait and help his family by burying his father. But if Jesus calls you to obey him NOW, than any excuse delaying obedience is sin. Delayed obedience is disobedience! Follow the Lord!

Read Luke 9:51-56

Write v. 56 here:

Leave judgment and retaliation to God. God’s work must be done in God’s ways and in God’s time. All around us are people trying to accomplish God’s will in their own way and giving Christianity a black eye. A big example of this is those who have killed people at abortion clinics. What a terrible thing to do. Leave judgment for judgment day; these are the days where we persuade men with words, not weapons, and acts of service, not acts of violence.

Read John 7:23-24

Write v. 24 here:

We are so bad as people about judging on the basis of looks. Jesus says here that appearance is not the issue, but reality. Note that Jesus does not say our behavior is not open to scrutiny. They thought it “looked bad” to make a man well on the Sabbath. Jesus basically says, it’s always right to do good on the Sabbath. It’s a no-brainer. We had a guest speaker come in recently who wore an earring in the pulpit. The message he

spoke was outstanding. That's the kind of thing Jesus is here referring to, I think. If a person walked away from that meeting worrying about the earring and didn't hear the wonderful message, they are the ones who need the attitude check. But be careful here: there are some in our society that don't believe any of their behavior should be open to scrutiny. That's not what Jesus is saying here, and that's why he encourages the use of "righteous judgment."

Read John 7:37-40

Write v. 38 here:

Remember, Christian, if you have come to Jesus for salvation, God the Holy Spirit will flow out of your heart!

Read John 8:12

Write it here:

The words Jesus has been speaking today are so wonderful! As you pray today, realize this: as a born again child of God, the Holy Spirit flows out of you. You don't live in darkness anymore, so walk in the light! Let the Holy Spirit flow through you and change whatever in your life is not pleasing to Him. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit by being a nitpicky person! Instead, follow Christ and do the kind of things he did when he walked among us!

Day 22

Read John 8:24

Write it here:

In the Greek language Jesus says, “if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.” When he says, “I am” he is saying that he is the God who talked to Moses at the burning bush, the one who said to Moses, tell them the great “I am” has sent you! Whoaaa! Show this to someone who makes the foolish claim that Jesus never said he was God! Do you believe? If not, you will die in your sins. Whoop, there it is!

Read John 8:31-36

Write v. 31-32 here:

Make no mistake about it, it is meaningless to say you believe in Jesus and scorn anything He teaches. Now you know- you better “abide” in his word! Abide means to dwell, or to live in. Christians are those who have let Christ’s words form who they are becoming, because he is their way, their truth, their life. All this is possible only because of verse 36, where the freedom to obey comes from Jesus making the disciple free. Praise God!

Skim John 8:42-52

Write v. 51 here:

This adds nicely to the last verses. In Hebrews 11:4 we’re told that by faith even though Abel is dead, he yet speaks. In Luke 23:43 the thief on the cross next to Jesus who believed in Him was told by Jesus, “today you will be with me in Paradise.” And in 2 Corinthians 5:8 we read that “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” With integrity Christians can speak of departed believers as ones who have never died! Awesome!

Read John 9:1-3

Write v. 3 here:

Thanks Jesus! There's really no such thing as people that aren't "normal." God delights in making all kinds of people. The important thing is that everybody realizes that the chief reason we are here is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." "Challenged" people who have understood this are much better off than those who just don't get it!

Read John 9:35-41

Write v. 41 here:

The whole theme of today's passages has been that spiritual blindness is unforgivable. Every single individual on earth needs to "see" that they are a sinner incapable of saving themselves, and that their only hope is believing in, trusting in, and giving their obedient allegiance to Jesus. Give yourself to Jesus now if you never have. If you have, pray for someone who is still, spiritually speaking, blind as a bat.

Day 23

Read John 10:1-5

Write v. 5 here:

A lot of Christians, particularly a lot of teenage Christians, whine and complain about how hard it is to know what the right thing to do is in these crazy times. Here Jesus says that his sheep don't follow the voice of a stranger. Why not? Because they have spent so much time listening to the voice of their Shepherd, they only respond to that voice. To spot counterfeit bills agents are trained to know the real thing. They don't spend a great deal of time looking at counterfeits. They don't have to! Counterfeits are obvious when you are very familiar with the real thing. Young person, you can't dabble with movies and television and music saturated in sex and offensive behavior and it not effect your thoughts and behavior. The sheep flee from strangers because they know the stranger's voice is not the shepherds. Jesus leads you the right way. Follow his voice, flee from others!

Read John 10:9-18

Write v. 10 here:

The thief wants to steal your joy, kill your innocence, and destroy your effectiveness. Jesus wants you to know pure joy, innocent laughter, and great effectiveness. He wants you to have real life! Sin always takes you further than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs more than you were ever willing to pay. Wise up!

Read Luke 10:17-20

Write v. 20 here:

This passage is from Luke 10, a very specific passage involving 70 people Jesus sent out on a limited mission. We can learn from it, but we should not rip verses out of their context and claim them as promises for today. For instance, verse 4 says to go without money, supplies, or sandals, and don't say hello to anyone along the way. That was obviously for those on that mission, because those on mission trips in the book of Acts are not seen doing likewise. Some have used verse 19 to justify snake handling as a form of worship. Such careless use of the scriptures is ridiculous. But there is a timeless gem in verse 20, where Christians can draw a great principle. The lesson: what Christians rejoice in is the fact that they are saved and that their names are written in heaven! We don't rejoice because we did or didn't see results from our gospel efforts. Or because we did or didn't see great miracles happen. Salvation is the greatest blessing!

Read Luke 10:25-37

Write v. 36-37 here:

Religious status means nothing if you don't help people. So what if you've walked the aisle, been baptized, taken classes, memorized scripture, held important church positions?

If you don't help people and love them in Jesus name, you've missed the point. Your faith's a sham. Be a neighbor and stop and help people!

Read Luke 10:38-42

Write v.41-42 here:

What great verses! Jesus is not saying that details don't need to be dealt with. They do. But when it is Jesus time, its Jesus time! What a shame that so many of us go through a day like chickens with our heads cut off, consumed with the next thing we have to do. But we all need to cultivate time to sit at Jesus' feet and hear from him, and let him shine the light on our day so we can see more clearly how to serve him. These are also great verses for worship services we attend. We need to put out of our mind other things so we can receive the Word as it is preached to us! As you pray today, ask God to forgive you for being a little too much like Martha. Choose the good part which can't be taken away!

Day 24

Read Luke 11:27-28

Write v. 28 here:

How sad it must make Jesus to see some worship Mary. How sad it must make Mary to see some worship Mary. The Pope even has on his robe the saying, "totally devoted to you, Mary." Listen up: don't worship a person. Don't think you have to go through a saint to get to God. And realize this: the one who is blessed is the one who hears God's word and does what it says. Mary did that! She was an example of a godly woman. But Jesus is the one to worship!

Skim Luke 11:37-52

Write v. 46 here:

The lawyers here referred to are a type of religious lawyer, who along with the Pharisees carefully made sure they understood what the law said. They also loved to be bosses over people. Jesus here rebukes them for this kind of thinking! Today many priests and preachers are too big for their britches, expecting others to carry out their every whim in the name of Jesus. Jesus makes clear that any leader who isn't a servant at heart and in practice isn't worth following. I once helped a family move their belongings (their *heavy* belongings) off a moving truck and into their house while their Pastor ate Pizza in the living room. Such things should not be.

Read Luke 12:1-3

Write v. 1 here:

Jesus' point is plain: don't become like the Pharisees. Don't ask people to do what you are unwilling to do. Ezra 7:10 shows Ezra's heart, which he had set to "study God's word, practice it, and then to teach it to everyone." Many today teach with very little study and don't practice what they teach. That is hypocrisy, and we all should be wary of it. Verses 2-3 make clear that God will bring all such hypocritical words and conduct to judgment.

Read Luke 12:4-5

Write v. 5 here:

Sadly, history has shown that many times those who simply wanted to follow Christ and the Bible and who have resisted huge religious institutions have often had to live in fear of what this or that "established" religion would do to them through the power of the country. Jesus himself was killed through this sort of "unholy" relationship between religious and civil powers. He says to his followers, "fear God-they may kill your body, but they can't cast your soul into Hell- but God can." Clearly Jesus is teaching us to be faithful to Him no matter what happens. You should study sometime the life of some of history's martyrs to see the bold faith they had. Foxe's Book of Martyrs would be a good place to start!

Read Luke 12:15-21

Write v. 15 here:

Wow! Jesus is serious about him being the most important person and “possession” in our life. Here he threatens the person who spends their whole life gathering possessions to spend on themselves. Instead, the disciple should be rich toward God, constantly looking for ways to give extra money back to God and his causes!

As you pray today, ask God to help you get a new attitude about your possessions- they are his, not yours. How are you doing spending God’s money?

Day 25

Read Luke 12:35-40

Write v.37 here:

Jesus is coming back! Will he find you ready, able to say that “as best as I know how, I’m serving you the way you want me to.” Oh to hear him say, “well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Read Luke 12:49-53

Write v.51 here:

Jesus is not saying that you have to be divided against your family. He is saying that from now on Jesus is your first loyalty, and all other loyalties now are viewed through your faith. Inevitably this will cause division among people, in families, on teams, etc... When I came home one semester from college, one of my family members wanted me to have a beer with them. God had given me a conviction not to drink, and the school I went to had a rule against drinking. The family member said, “but no one will ever

know.” I said, “God will know, and I’ll know, that’s enough for me.” Such interactions with people, even in your own family are inevitable when your first priority is God.

Read Luke 13:1-5

Write v. 5 here:

Earlier in this study we saw that people born with “disabilities” are not that way because of sin. Here we see that natural disasters don’t always happen to people because of sin (although that can be the case, like the flood in Noah’s day, and the plagues in Moses’ day). But we shouldn’t speculate and say that bad things happened to someone because they were a really bad sinner (like Job’s friends who accused him, saying secret sin must have caused his troubles). Jesus here places the emphasis not on what has happened in this life, but what will happen after death to the person that doesn’t repent NOW! If the shoe fits, swallow it!

Read John 10:22-30

Write v. 27-28 here:

Praise the Lord for the eternal life he gives to his sheep, to those who hear his voice and follow Him. Isn’t he wonderful! As you pray today, thank him for his wonderful promise that “no one can snatch you out of the Father’s hands!”

Day 26

Read Luke 14:12-14

Write v. 13-14 here:

Boy, is what Jesus says convicting! Jesus asks us to do things for those that could never repay us. Many times I have seen this lived out by individuals, but it is more rare on a

large scale. One church in our town invites whoever will come to a meal on Christmas day. Isn't that neat! Another leaves its doors unlocked for the homeless to sleep at night. The Salvation Army and rescue missions and soup kitchens for years have fed those that are "down and out." May God bless them! And may we as God's people support them!

Skim Luke 14:25-33

Write v.33 here:

A movie from the 90's contained a famous line, "you can't handle the truth." Friend, can you handle the truth that Jesus expects all you have to become his if you are his disciple? Or can you "not handle the truth." Many reject Christ when they realize he wants their allegiance so much. Here he asks us to consider it the same way a King would see if he really had what it took to win a war. We have to consider the opposite of victory- absolute surrender to Christ and his cause. Can you handle the truth?

Read Luke 15:1-7

Write v. 7 here:

Do you want to make Heaven party? Lead someone to Christ! And throw parties for sinners here also! Tell them about Jesus! Someone described Christianity as one beggar telling another beggar where to find food. Have you told anyone about Jesus lately?

Read Luke 16:9-13

Write v. 13 here:

Most people in churches get very troubled when the Pastor preaches on money. Sometimes they are thinking, "what right does he have to keep talking about money- that's all they want is my money." Now certainly there are some money-hungry pastors

out there, and many of us groan when we think about an 8 week series in Stewardship to help a thermometer on the wall rise! But notice how many things Jesus has said in our study about money! He fully expects our resources to be used to advance Kingdom issues! So you better be ready to give an account to God for the way you use your “mammon!”

Read Luke 16:14-15

Write v. 15 here:

We must all decide whether we are going to be men-pleasers or God-pleasers. Not that we seek out conflict with others. Some people are rude to others simply for the sake of being rude to others. There’s nothing godly about that. But if we live out Christ’s teaching, it will bring us into conflict with others, even in churches. We have to decide now whether we will compromise God’s truth to get along with others, or lovingly but consistently share God’s truth because people need it to live.

As you pray today, ask God to give you ways to implement the truth you’ve learned!

Day 27

Read Luke 17:7-10

Write v. 10 here:

Jesus here puts our commitment to serving him in perspective. No student walks into a classroom expecting the teacher to say, “Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you ever so much for doing last night” homework assignment!” Why? Because the student is expected to do homework. Jesus says serving him should become so automatic in our lives, we simply view it as part of daily living. He says this to drill it into our minds, but it is also neat to know that he considers us not just servants, but elsewhere says we are now his friends! But we shouldn’t base our serving him on our expectations to have people saying “thank you” all the time!

Read John 11:25-26

Write v. 26 here:

Note that Jesus says here that the one who will never die is the one who both believes in Him and who lives in Him. Is Jesus your life?

Skim John 11:32-44

Write v. 35 here:

Jesus wept! We need to learn this kind of compassion, weeping for the lost and the effect sin has on individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools, cities, and nations. We need to take the time to prayerwalk for Jesus. We need to gain his heart of compassion, and let God the Holy Spirit move us to action!

Read Luke 17:32-33

Write v. 32-33 here:

When you start following Christ, don't look back! A wise Christian once said, "if you are truly saved, you can no longer live the life you once did because you are no longer the person you once were!" You may fall into sin, but if you are truly saved you will hate the sin and earnestly desire to be rid of it. Lot made it out of Sodom and Gomorrah because he was a righteous man. He brought his wife out, but she still loved Sodom's ways in her heart, and looked back longingly. God judged her rebellion along with the sinners in the city, turning her into a pillar of salt. Yuck! Christian, don't love the world or the things of the world. You may think you own them, only to find they own you. But as one Christian song sang, "it's hard to imagine the freedom you find, from the things you leave behind!" As you pray today, ask God to help you to not look back into old, sinful ways of behavior. Perhaps you need to become accountable to someone in a troublesome

area in your life. Guys, pray for a guy you can share with. Girls, pray for a girl you can share with. We need brothers and sisters upholding us in prayer and accountability.

Day 28

Read Luke 18:1-8

Write v. 7 here:

If an unjust, unloving judge will finally grant the request of an old woman to get her off his case, how much more will a just and loving God hear and grant the persistent prayers of those who love Him. Don't lose heart! Pray!

Read Luke 18:9-14

Write v. 14 here:

God is not impressed with self-righteousness. He is impressed when sinners humbly acknowledge how much they need him and turn to Him alone to save them! As James said, "humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up!"

Read Mark 10:17-22

Write v. 21 here:

By the way some tell us we are to present the gospel today, Jesus messed up this witnessing encounter! Here a guy comes up and asked, basically, "how do I get saved?" Jesus could have said, simply, "accept me as your Savior and you'll be saved!" But Jesus didn't blow this encounter! Being God, he knew that the man wanted eternal life but he didn't want to have someone else tell him how to live his life. He wanted to have future peace, a kind of "Hell insurance," but he had no intention of letting anyone else rule his life and tell him how to use his "treasure." Jesus got right to the point- to have eternal

life the man would have to let Jesus be the new ruler in his life, and all of the man's treasure would have to be used for Jesus' purposes. That's not what the man wanted to hear, and many today don't want to hear it either. They say, "It's fine to talk about Jesus as a Savior and about receiving a gift like eternal life, but don't you dare make any demands of me." "Too bad, so sad" says Jesus- "you will die in your sins."

Read Mark 10:28-31

Write v. 31 here:

Notice the contrast here: The rich man from the last verses will have treasure in this life but not in the next. Meanwhile, those who have let Jesus be their Lord in this life and have used their possessions for his glory will have treasures in Heaven. They will be first there even though not many were first in this life. In Luke's gospel the story of the rich guy who said no is followed shortly after by the story of a rich guy named Zachaeus who said yes to Jesus and as an act of gratitude used his possessions to make relationships right with those he had sinned against. He's a little like Scrooge from the Christmas Carol, who went from hoarding his money to being one of the most giving persons around!

As you pray today, ask the Lord for help applying these truths to your life! Don't be the first Scrooge! Be the one who learned how to keep Christmas better than anyone!

Day 29

Read Mark 11:15-17

Write v. 15-17 here:

Wow! Way to go Jesus! Perhaps a little background is helpful here. The place where all this stuff was being sold was in the court of the gentiles, which was from its beginning the only place where non-Jewish people had any chance of hearing about God, because they couldn't go any further without becoming circumcised. Ouch! This was supposed to be to them a "house of prayer for the nations." Instead of seeking their salvation, the Jewish leaders were selling stuff to them there, caring more about their money than their souls.

I'm glad we in churches today never do anything like that! Or do we? If you look in our local paper's religion section, your eyes will be quickly drawn to the "announcements" section. More often than not there are more advertisements for bake sales, yard sales, cookouts, benefit sings and other ways for the church to raise money than there are announcements about meetings non-Christians can hear the gospel in. Be careful, church! Jesus might turn your tables over on you!

Read John 12:23-26

Write v. 24 here:

I don't know much about wheat, but I know if you blow a dandelion across a yard you will have a dozen more dandelions blooming in the days that follow! Jesus is saying here that he is going to die, but that will by no means be the end of it. From his death much fruit will be born, and as others "die to self" and live for God, incredible fruit will be born. This came true with Jesus. He died for his disciples, and then his disciples died for Him. And throughout the history of the church when people have died for Jesus it is often after that that the church really began to grow where the disciple lived. John Wesley said, "if you set yourself on fire for Jesus, the whole world will come and watch you burn!" And as Jesus said in verse 26, "him My Father will honor."

Skim John 12:42-50

Write v. 48 here:

People often wonder what the unpardonable sin is. It is listed here: rejecting Jesus and his authoritative words in one's life despite the Holy Spirit's efforts to bring a person to humbly accept Christ and publicly proclaim him as Lord of their life. Many of the Pharisees had secretly believed in him but were so afraid of what their friends the Pharisees thought and losing favor with them that they didn't publicly let people know they were Christ's followers. It doesn't appear to me as I study the Bible that this "faith" of theirs was worth a thing. What about you? Are you more concerned with the praise of men than the praise of God? What good is that kind of faith?

Read Mark 11:22-24

Write v. 24 here:

Earlier Jesus said that some types of demons only come out by fasting and prayer. By referring to the mountain being cast into the sea Jesus is referring to the fact that when believers pray in faith they can see the impossible happen. Not that they can do it, but that nothing is impossible with God. Believers need to leave impossible situations with God in prayer. Be careful though not to view this as a “genie in a bottle” type promise. Believers are not promised they or their loved ones won’t have struggles and hardships and sufferings. Believers are not promised that their own bad decisions won’t have consequences. Believers are not promised that God will give them what they want if it doesn’t square with what He knows they need. A good guideline for this is Psalm 37:4, “delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

Read Matthew 21:28-32

Write v. 31b here:

In Jesus’ eyes a promise to do something doesn’t mean anything unless it is followed up on. How many people have rededicated their life to the Lord dozens of times, but have never really yielded their heart to Jesus and let him be the boss of their lives. How many make the promise and then reject it in the life they live. Such promises are really worthless. James said that “faith without works is dead.” Jesus refers to others here that at one time flatly rejected instruction, but later were convicted of their sin and went on to do the will of the Father. The promise keepers are the ones who will be in the Kingdom of God, not the ones who were only promise makers!

As you pray today, ask God to reveal to you anything in your life that God has asked you to do, but you’ve been putting off. Don’t promise you’ll do it, DO IT!

Day 30

Read Matthew 22:15-22

Write v. 21b here:

The Pharisees tried to trick Jesus here. The people hated paying the tax to the Roman occupiers. For Jesus to say that godly people owed no allegiance to anyone but God would have made the people happy, but would have gotten him arrested by the Romans. An answer giving full allegiance to the Roman government would have enraged the people. Jesus knocks the “fastball” out of the park! He tells them that his followers will be good citizens who pay their taxes (and obey other laws), but all the while they will be careful to serve God as well. In our country we have a cool system where we really do get to participate equally with others, but Christians should never forget that we belong to another, far more important Kingdom!

Skim Matthew 22:23-30

Write v. 29 here:

The Sadducees next tried to trick Jesus. Their problem was that they didn’t really know the Bible or God’s power. They flatly rejected the idea that there would be life after death. So the question they ask here really is a mocking one. Jesus’ statement that there is no marriage in Heaven is very interesting, but far more significant is how he blows away their view of death as final by insisting that even the Old Testament viewed departed saints as alive with God. He didn’t say, “I was” Abraham’s God when he came to Moses, but he said, “ I am the God of Abraham! Pretty Cool, hunh!

Read Matthew 23:23-28

Write v. 23 here:

All of the outward religious things you do mean nothing if you don't practice justice, mercy, and faith. In Malachi God had told the Jewish people that what he required of them was to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God! That had to be what Jesus was referring to. The Pharisees had lost this simple yet joyful approach to faith by adding all kinds of nit-picky laws to clarify Old Testament laws (which at times are pretty specific).

An example from modern life would be the good advice for Christian girls to dress modestly. There are good reasons to ask Christian girls to do this. For one, wearing immodest clothes that show too much skin can be a stumbling block to guys. Or give the wrong kind of guy the wrong impression. A better reason is that Christian girls know that their real beauty comes from within, and they don't need to imitate the worlds cheap fashion tricks to be noticed. They'd rather let their inner beauty speak for them!

That wouldn't have been good enough for the Pharisees. They'd be insisting that all girls wear skirts no more than 3 inches off the floor. They'd insist that if a guy was caught looking at a girl wrong he would have to beat his head against the wall 3 sets of 10 times each. You get the idea. Jesus gives us more credit for having brains about stuff like that. Occasionally we abuse our privileges and should be open to people speaking to us about issues. But the goal should always be to help people grow in Christ, do the right thing, and help people. These are all more important than side issues which some get so caught up in!

Read Luke 21:1-4

Write v. 3 here:

Jesus isn't impressed with anyone's leftovers! He loves the "widow's offering," the offering of the best we have to God. Christian friend, don't bring your leftovers to God, give him your best!

Read Matthew 24:1-2

Write v. 2 here:

Jesus wasn't super impressed with buildings! In particular, the disciples were in awe of the Temple. Jesus here predicts its destruction. The Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70, and the destruction was so complete that they still can't identify where the sanctuary in it was!

As you pray today, realize that God is not as impressed with outward things as we are: with the amount people give, the buildings they build, etc... Jesus has promised to make you the temple of the Holy Spirit through your new birth experience. Let him live his life through you!

Day 31

Read Matthew 24:4-14

Write v. 4-5 here:

Let no one deceive you, Christian! False Christ's are going to come, claiming to show the way to God, but enslaving their followers with false claims. Mohammed of Islam was essentially such a false prophet, his followers demanding that everything you know about God now comes through Mohammed. Joseph Smith of the Mormons was the same kind of false prophet. But Neither lived a sinless life like Jesus did. Neither died for your sins like Jesus did. And neither rose from the dead like Jesus did! Jesus lives! But false Christ's will rise with their own ambitions to have people follow them. Note that as the end time approaches, lawlessness will also abound. People will do whatever they want to do and will spurn the idea of anybody having authority in their lives. It is the one who faithfully endures to the end that will be saved. And one thing we know, that the gospel must reach the whole world before the end comes. This is now conceivable in our lifetime, with every unreached people group now having someone committed to taking the gospel to them. And Revelation 7:9 gives us a future look into Heaven, where we see at least one person from every people group on earth goes to Heaven! Awesome!

Skim Matthew 24:15-31

Write v. 31 here:

I'm not sure what all this means, except to rejoice in the promise of God that he will take care of his elect in horrific days. Even if we get killed because of our faith our souls

won't die- we'll be in Paradise with God! And we may get to live right up until the time he gathers believers in the sky!

Skim Matthew 24:32-51

Write v. 44 here:

Ready or not! Here he comes!

Skim Matthew 25:31-46

Write v. 40 here:

How are we to show ourselves ready when Jesus comes? By doing the works that Jesus would do if he was here: feeding the hungry, taking care of strangers, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and seeking and saving the lost! To not be concerned about doing these things may reveal that a person is not a sheep after all. Watch out!

As you pray today, be mindful of what Jesus is teaching here. There is an urgency about sharing our faith that comes because we know the end is nearer every day!

Day 32

Read John 13:12-20

Write v. 14-15 here:

Jesus' words here do not mean that we need to have foot-washing ceremonies (although those are cool), but that Christians are to serve one another in love. No act of service is too small for any true believer. Christians see needs and meet them, whether it's cleaning the toilets or preaching to thousands. Billy Graham is no greater a servant than the High School girl who rises early at camp each morning to voluntarily clean out the kitchen. We make our lists of great Christians based on what we observe, but God is keeping his

own list based on the acts of servanthood he sees. So when you serve, do it as act of worship before an audience of one, God.

Read John 13:34-35

Write v. 35 here:

Love will mark us as disciples. This is not the wishy-washy kind of love that never confronts shortcomings in ourselves and others, but the deep kind of love that helps us grow more like Christ and helps us get past besetting sins. I am reminded of the story of a man that brought a new Christian into his home. The new Christian had just given up drugs, and was going to leave the house because he didn't want the man's children to see him go through withdrawal symptoms. The man refused to let him go, putting him in a bed and covering him with blankets. The new Christian began to shiver and shake. What did the kids see next? They saw their dad get into the bed with the man and hold him until morning, loving him through the shakes! There's Christ's love!

Read Luke 22:14-20

Write v. 15-16 here:

Jesus gave us the Lord's Supper to visually remind us of his body broken for us, his blood spilt for us. What a day it will be in glory when the Last Supper happens and the redeemed from all over the eat celebrate Jesus! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Break out in singing and dancing! Our God reigns!

Skim John 14:1-11

Write v. 3 here:

Keith Green used to comment on these verses, “if it took 6 days to make Earth but Jesus has been working on Heaven 2,000 years, this must be like living in a garbage can compared to what’s going on up there!” Then he would burst out in song, “I can’t wait to get to Heaven!” Heaven is going to be awesome. The best thing about it though, will be that Jesus is there!

Read John 14:12-18

Write v. 12 here:

What is Jesus saying here? He is saying that after he goes to the Father and the Holy Spirit comes upon believers, the full power of the gospel will then be unleashed through believers as they share! Peter preached at the day of Pentecost (when the Holy Spirit came upon believers) and 3,000 were saved. Paul faithfully labored to plant churches that mushroomed around the Roman Empire. Wherever Biblical faith has gone since incredible things have happened. And we have the promise that God will answer the faithful disciples’ prayers! Ask him now to bless your gospel sharing efforts. And remember, the Spirit of Christ is with you!

Day 33

Read John 15:4-9

Write v. 5 here:

Yesterday we shared from the passage that said greater works will come from the disciples. Today’s verses help us from getting the “big head.” Christian, without Jesus you can do nothing that matters! He is our strength, which we appropriate by abiding in him. You may think a branch on a vine is very beautiful. You may then cut the branch off so you can have it with you at home. In just a couple of days, though, your branch will be dead. Why? Because it is cut off from that which it depended on for life. Another way to look at it is to do gospel math. I was a “0” before I was saved. In Jesus I’m a “10.” Take Jesus away and what do you have- “0” all over again! Don’t pull away from Jesus, big head, but abide in Him and so bear much fruit!

Read John 15:11-17

Write v. 13 here:

Jesus obviously was the biggest example of this in his death for sinners. Laying down your life is more than dying for people, though. It is a lifestyle of J.O.Y. living! That's putting Jesus first, others second, and yourself last. Laying down your life for others means setting aside your own agenda to bless people. It is living unselfishly, looking out for the best interests of others. Have you laid down your life for your friends? Aren't you glad that you're not just Jesus' servant, but his friends. He chose us to be his friends and share his love with others. What a great thought!

Read John 15:18-20

Write v. 20 here:

One Christian once said, "if they put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head, why should his disciples expect a crown of roses." That's well said! Yet the Christian faith is presented in such shallow words these days that many accept the offer of eternal life with no idea that the gospel calls for absolute surrender to Jesus and the lifestyle he calls us to. Are you up for the challenge of a lifetime?

Read John 16:7-14

Write v. 7 here:

Many times you'll hear a Christian say something like, "boy, if I could have just lived when Jesus lived, my faith would be so much stronger!" Here Jesus actually says that it was to the advantage of believers that he go away, because with his work completed God the Holy Spirit will help people come to Christ and live for God. Note the ministry of the Holy Spirit will always prompt people to glorify Jesus and grow in the truth Jesus taught.

Many today have tried to use the Holy Spirit to justify acting like fools and calling it worship. One Pastor said he was “drunk in the Holy Spirit” and that’s why he plowed his car into his Youth Minister’s car! The same folks claim that the reason their students twitch in their classes is because they are so “full of the Spirit.” But 2 Timothy 1:7 says the spirit we have been given is one of power and of love and of a *sound* mind! People are free to do dumb stuff, but don’t blame it on God! He loves order, not confusion (see 1 Corinthians 14:33).

Read John 16:33

Write it here:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, here is a great truth you need to know: in the world you will have troubles if you are Christ’s disciple. Some today think that if trouble comes than its because you are not spiritual enough. But throughout history some of the godliest people had lots of troubles, and many were killed for their faith. We shouldn’t take comfort in our circumstances but in Jesus, who has overcome the world. In World War II My Granddad was on a plane flying into Japan when Japan surrendered. The war was over, but there were still battles to fight. My Granddad’s flight was redirected to China where he helped convince the Japanese there that they were defeated. They didn’t take to kindly to the news, and battles continued. So it is in the Christian life! Jesus has one the war, but Satan and his demons still have to be rooted out of their strongholds. Victory ultimately is ours, but the battle continues.

As you pray today, be of good cheer, Jesus is where the peace comes from!

Day 34

Skim Mark 14:32-42

Write v. 38 here:

There is something very significant about this passage. Note Jesus’ prayer in verse 38. As we learn to pray it is important to note that God does answer, either yes, no or wait according to what’s best fits into his will. Here we see the Father answer Jesus’ prayer request with a no. The cup could not be taken from Jesus. And because Jesus was absolutely committed to doing the will of his Father he submitted with resolve to what

had to be done. We too must pray with total confidence that God's answer will be best, even when the answer is no. And we must note that if we would increase our prayer time, it is going to be a battle of discipline, spirit versus flesh. Are you ready for the fight?

Skim John 18:1-11

Write v. 11 here:

Note here Jesus' resolve. We know from the last passage that Jesus struggled with going to the cross. But it was his Father's will, so in love he obeyed. Here Peter tries to take matters into his own hands, but Jesus makes clear that violence is not the answer, and that He must fulfill his mission. From this we learn that obedience will be costly, and our feelings may try to keep us from doing what we know is right to do. We must forge ahead in doing what God wants.

Read John 18:36-38

Write v. 37 here:

Christian, you are an alien in the world, your citizenship is in Heaven. And if you love truth, Jesus says here you will be drawn to Him. Because he is the truth. At one of Jimi Hendrix last concerts, a man yelled, "Jimi, you are the truth." Hendrix stopped the concert and said, "no,no, I'm not the truth, if anyone knows what the truth is, come on up here and tell us." No one came forward. A few weeks later Jimi Hendrix was dead. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Him.

Read Luke 23:39-43

Write v. 42-43 here:

Remember this: it is never too late to cry out to Jesus and say, “Lord have mercy on me, a sinner.” Jesus saved this man on the spot, despite all the sinful things he had done that justified him being crucified.

Read Matthew 27:45-46

Write v. 46 here:

God is holy and can not look directly at sin. That’s why in Romans sinners are called God’s enemies. At the moment Jesus hung on the cross and made this statement he was bearing the sin of the world on him, and something happened that had never happened before or since in the Godhead. God the Father turned his back on God the Son, and Jesus felt the pain and isolation from his Father that he had never known before. That’s why he cried out, “why have you forsaken me?” And he did that for you and for me, fellow sinner. He had become our sin-bearer. As you pray today, thank Jesus for bearing your sin on the cross.

Day 35

Read John 19:28-30

Write v. 30 here:

The mission Jesus had been sent to do he had done! He had died for the sin of the world. Jesus here voluntarily gives up his spirit, and we know that the rest of the story is that he not only laid his life down, but also had the power to raise Himself up from the dead and regain his seat in heaven! Christian friend, you have a mission that God is calling you to do. Never think of yourself as unimportant. God has chosen to work through people like you to be salt and light in the world. You have great promise!

Skim Luke 24:13-27

Write v. 27 here:

Christian, study God's Word! The Old Testament pointed forward to Jesus, and the New Testament points back to him. We all should be able to see him coming off the pages of the scriptures and into our lives!

Read John 20:24-31

Write v. 29 here:

I have never seen Jesus, but he is my best friend. He has been teaching me everyday now for 15 years. He's made me a better person, a better citizen, a better husband, and a better father. He is my life!

Read John 21:15-19

Write v. 17 here:

If you love Jesus, you'll feed his people, its that simple. The Lord doesn't need more committee members, he needs people who will spiritually feed people!

Read Matthew 28:18-20

Write v. 19-20 here:

Christians call this the Great Commission. The things that we have been taught by God we are to share all over the world. Every Christian needs a strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission in their own back yard and around the world through praying, giving, and going. And as we go we are to teach "all the things Jesus commanded." The purpose of this devotional has been to get you to personally wrestle with key teachings of Jesus. And now you can consider yourself commissioned to share these truths here and around the world! God bless you, and don't forget that the Spirit of Jesus is with you until the end of the world! Pray now about your part in feeding His sheep!