

# First Steps



for  
New Christians

by Lynne Modranski

# **First Steps**



**Forty Days  
of Devotions  
for  
New Christians**



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First Steps: Forty Days of Devotions for New Christians

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## **Introduction**

Early in the Spring of 2015, I began to think about the people I know who've started their relationship with Christ as well as my own walk with Christ during those first several years. And as I did, I realized there are a few basic things we need to know as we begin this new life with Jesus.

Our enemy, the devil, prowls around like a lion. (1 Peter 5:8) All he wants to do is steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). And much like the pattern we find in the wild, the ancient serpent will stalk the youngest of the flock because they're the easiest target. So I'm writing these short readings to encourage new Christians during the most vulnerable part of their journey.

I want to remind new followers of the "Way" that the Christian life is best lived in community with others who are striving to follow Jesus. One of our first responsibilities as a new Christian is to spend as much time as possible with others who are being real with their faith. Just as a soldier would never go into battle alone and unarmed, we must remember that though our struggle is not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12), it's still a battle. It's

important to make sure we have other soldiers around us and we are armed with the Sword of the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:17 & Hebrews 4:12)

One thing that the enemy will try to do is make you doubt your salvation. The last thing he needs is one more person confident in their relationship with Jesus Christ. As you read through these short devotions hold on to this truth: Salvation was yours the moment you acknowledged your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10-12), repented of your sins (Acts 3:19) and confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord. (Romans 10:9-10) Hopefully, you'll find other truths to hang on to as you move through the pages of this book.

So hold on to what you have (Revelation 3:11), hang tight with your "platoon" (Hebrews 10:24-25) and use the Sword (Hebrews 4:12 & Ephesians 6:17) you'll find in the following pages for your weapon as the words that accompany the Scripture give you encouragement to stay the course.



**Week One**  
**Discovering Your New Identity**  
**in Christ**

Day One: Genesis 1:26-27

*You've Been Made by Hand in the Image of God*

Day Two: Psalm 139:13-16

*You've Been Woven Together & Wonderfully Made*

Day Three: Isaiah 43:1-7

*You Are His ~ He Knows Your Name*

Day Four: Ephesians 4:24

*You Are a New Creation*

Day Five: 1 John 3:1-2

*You Are a Child of the King*

Day Six: Ephesians 1:3-8a

*You Have Been Adopted by the King*

Day Seven: 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

*New Life, New Perspective*

# 1

## Day One

### Genesis 1:26-27

You've Been Made by Hand in the Image of God

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

One of the first things we need to realize as Christians is we are created in the image of our Heavenly Father. It's a fact that the enemy works hard to make us forget or disbelieve.

Do you realize that in all of creation, humans are the only thing that God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit actually formed by "hand"? Everything else was spoken into existence, but humans were important enough to our Father that He "got His hands dirty," so to speak, in order to give them life.



Understanding this foundational concept of Christianity can help us as we develop a Godly self-esteem. It's this beautiful tidbit of information that encourages us to have self-confidence; because we are, after all, created in our Father's image. On the other hand, as we gradually become aware that even the most annoying person we encounter every day is also created in the image of the Living God, this same nugget of truth can keep us from becoming too full of ourselves. Holding on to these few words from scripture can teach us to appreciate ourselves and others in light of who we are as uniquely created individuals.

As you read the other scripture passages for this week, allow this concept to sink in. You have been created in the image of the One and Only God, formed in the likeness of the Sovereign Lord of the Universe, and you are loved by the One who made you.



**Day Two**  
**Psalm 139:13-16**

**You've Been Woven Together & Wonderfully Made**

- <sup>13</sup> *For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- <sup>14</sup> *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.*
- <sup>15</sup> *My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*
- <sup>16</sup> *Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.*

Often when I'm wondering about my life and my purpose, I read these verses, and I am reminded that I am special to God. On the beginning of our Christian journey, we are often tremendously excited about our new found faith. But as the days pass and the world starts crashing in, sometimes it's easy to forget that we are

created in the image of the living God. This reminder from King David is a welcomed refresher course on those days.

You are a handmade work of art, crafted by the Master Designer, worth more than a Rembrandt. The Deceiver would like us to forget this beautiful fact, so it's important that we continually remind him of the truth.

The truth is you have purpose because the One who made the stars and the planets and put them all in their places also made you. He knit you together, and because He is incapable of making anything less than wonderful, you are exactly that!

We may question our worth because of our beginnings or things other humans have done to us in the past. Parents, other adults and even our peers may have been damaged by humans who didn't realize their worth. These same folks may have passed along their feelings of worthlessness by being abusive or hurtful. Many who start this journey are convinced they have too much sin to be redeemed by a Holy Savior. But just because we and others who've helped form us have neglected to live like we are created by Jesus in the image of God doesn't make our purpose and calling any less.

These less desirable events in our life do tend to shape us, but they don't have to define us. Our true identity is found in the scripture, and these words from the Psalms are a perfect example. I pray that as you begin this Christian journey you will embrace your true identity as a Child of the Living God, woven together and wonderfully made by your Loving Heavenly Father.



**Day Three**  
**Isaiah 43:1-7**

You are His ~ He Knows Your Name

<sup>1</sup> . . . *“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are mine.*

<sup>2</sup> *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; . . .  
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; . . .*

<sup>5</sup> *Do not be afraid, for I am with you; . . .*

<sup>7</sup> *everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”*

Created for His glory, called by His name; He formed you and made you so you have nothing to fear. Isn't that a beautiful promise?

The further removed we are from that day we committed our lives to Christ, the easier it is to forget these simple truths from Isaiah, so I want to put this out there right at the beginning so you will be able to come back to this thought often as you walk with your Savior.

We have nothing to fear because He has redeemed us. Jesus Christ bought us back from slavery to sin . . . that's what

redemption is! We've been purchased because we are precious to our Father.

Isaiah reminds us that we're bought back not as a slave or a servant, but as a son or daughter, as a friend. God knows your name! The names of servants and slaves were unimportant when the Bible was written, so the fact that God says He calls us by name and we are His is monumental.

Not only does the One who created the universe know your name, He has given you His Name. Verse seven says we are "called by His Name." That means we have been adopted as sons and daughters. As such, we get His surname; our identity is now firmly attached to our Creator.

Just as you've been known as the "son of" or "daughter of" your earthly father and mother since the day you were born, now you have the distinct privilege of being known as Daughter or Son of the Living God. It's up to us to spend the rest of our life living up to the family name.



**Day Four**  
**Ephesians 4:22-24**

**You Are a New Creation**

*<sup>22</sup> You took off your former way of life,  
the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires;  
<sup>23</sup> you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds;  
<sup>24</sup> you put on the new self, the one created according to God's  
likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth. (HSCB)*

This is one of those pieces of scripture that the enemy doesn't want us to remember. The ancient deceiver loves to remind us of our past mistakes. He likes it when we beat ourselves up over who we used to be, and he really prefers that we forget we are constantly being made into the likeness of God, restored to our original form you might say.

When we accept Christ as our Savior, the transformation begins. It's not an overnight change; it's gradual, sometimes so slow that we don't even notice. However, the more we read scripture and get with other Christians to study the Bible, the more evident the change can be.

One of the biggest differences will be the things we desire. Ephesians 4:22 tells us we were being corrupted by deceitful desires. Yep, a lot of the things that we think we want, things that cry for our attention, are deceiving. The closer we get to Christ the more we see that the happiness and contentment those old desires promised isn't going to happen. Most of the time it's the instant gratification of our deceitful desires that's the most appealing. But after we discover a new life in Christ, we realize that the best things in life are worth waiting for.

Never forget that you are being renewed, recreated in your spirit. You were handmade by Your Heavenly Father in God's image, and you are being transformed back into that likeness. So, put on that new self like you just got a new Easter outfit. Wear it with honor and humility, righteousness and truth.

# 5

## **Day Five** **1 John 3:1-2**

### You Are a Child of the King

*<sup>1</sup> See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! . . .*

*<sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, . . .*

One of the most wonderful things about salvation is that once we accept Christ, we are from that moment on called “children of God.” Your heavenly Father loves you more than you can imagine and lavishes His love on you.

In the book “Having a Mary Spirit,” Joanna Weaver tells the story of a young woman who often reported, “God loves me best, I am His favorite.” These few words inspired me. When I shared them with our youth, they argued that I couldn’t be God’s favorite, but one young pre-teen finally understood and repeated the phrase, making it personal.



You are God's child. He loves you best, and you are His favorite. It's a very simple concept, but it's a mighty Biblical truth. And it's a truth that, once fully embraced, can sustain us when life gets tough.

You are God's child. Your Father is the Creator of the universe. He is the King of kings! And as we struggle to decide what that means for our future, these short verses from First John can help us. Just like we have no idea what a newborn baby will become, John tells us that what we will be has not yet been made known.

It's easy to get so caught up in trying to figure out what's next. But if we simply live like a child of God and spend time getting to know Him, what's next will take care of itself. Right now just bask in the knowledge that you are loved passionately by God. He loves you best and you are His favorite.

# 6

**Day Six**  
**Ephesians 1:3-8a**

## You Have Been Adopted by the King

*<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love <sup>5</sup>He predestined us for adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace <sup>8</sup>that He lavished on us.*

One of the awesome things about your new life in Christ is the realization that you’ve been chosen by God to be his child, adopted “according to His pleasure and His will.” In other words, God adopted you because He wanted to and it makes Him happy! You being God’s child brings your Father happiness.

I have a few friends who’ve adopted children. I know that one of them hung the child’s picture on the refrigerator for months before

the wee one came to live with them. Plus the pictures from the day the adoption became final are precious, so many smiles all around!

In every case, adoption changed the life of the child forever. In addition to the child taking on the identity of the family like we talked about earlier in the week, each child I'm familiar with was rescued from life as an orphan. They went from a life of poverty, having nothing to call their own, to a world of belonging and comparative riches. Our adoption into the family of God is similar. Overnight we are ushered into the spiritual abundance that Jesus promised in John 10:10 as well as the riches of God's grace. Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, you now have a "forever family," the church. You'll soon discover the folks there aren't perfect, just forgiven; and like you, they are learning how to be a son or daughter of the King of the universe every day!



**Day Seven**  
**2 Corinthians 5:14-17**

**New Life, New Perspective**

*<sup>14</sup>For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup>And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

*<sup>16</sup>So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.*

*<sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

Over the next few days, weeks, months and years, your perspectives are going to change. There's a chance you've already noticed it. As we get to know who Jesus really is, our view of Him begins to change. We'll discover that there are things we've learned from the world, well-meaning Christians and even our own interpretation of what was taught that may not have given us a good picture of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. But don't sweat it right away! As you read your Bible, you'll soon find that even the

disciples had issues sorting out what they'd been taught about the Messiah compared to the truth they were learning from Him.

Another change we'll notice is how we view others and ourselves. That's because when we make Christ the Lord of our lives, he recreates us from the inside out. Don't worry, He doesn't generally change a person's personality; after all, He created you that way. However, as you heal from past hurts, are delivered from habits that enslave you and let go of those hang-ups that are holding you back, you'll begin to see a new you. Depending on where you are in life, others might not even see it! And sometimes it's so gradual we don't notice the change ourselves, but right now, at this very moment, you are being made new. Jesus promises!

As you continue in this new journey, I pray you'll remember a few simple truths.

1. You are created in the image of God
2. God has given you His name because you are His child.
3. You are loved by Christ, and He is in the process of making you new.

The enemy might try to convince you otherwise, so it's important that we hold on to what Jesus tells us even when the propaganda from the other camp starts pouring in.

No matter how slow the change seems to be coming, never forget that you are a new creation in Christ. The old, sinful you is gone. A new forgiven you has taken its place and is being transformed into the likeness of Jesus more and more every day.



**Week Two**  
**Understanding**  
**How Much You are Loved**

Day Eight: John 3:16

*Jesus Thinks You are To Die For*

Day Nine: Romans 5:8

*Jesus Loves You Anyway*

Day Ten: Jeremiah 31:3

*His Love for You Has No End*

Day Eleven: Romans 8:38-39

*Nothing Can Separate You From His Love*

Day Twelve: Ephesians 2:1-5

*His Love Gives Us Life*

Day Thirteen: Ephesians 3:17b-19

*It's a Love that Goes Beyond Your Imagination*

Day Fourteen: Zechariah 2:8

*You Are the Apple of God's Eye*



**Day Eight**  
**John 3:16**

Jesus Thinks You are To Die For

*God loved the world so much  
that He gave His One and only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in Him will never die  
but have eternal life. (Paraphrased)*

I don't know about you, but I'm not sure I'd be willing to give one of my three daughters' lives for someone else. I love my nephews a lot, but I can't say I'd be willing to give one of my girls for them. And I'm confident I couldn't be persuaded to sacrifice one of them for the world. But God did just that.

It's really difficult for me to wrap my brain around that kind of love, a love big enough to care for the world yet individual enough that He knows my name and every hair on my head. (Check out Luke 12:6-7) No matter how hard it is for us to comprehend, it's still a solid truth, God loves you like that!

The word love you see in that verse is a word that most scholars believe Jesus coined. There are several Greek words that we

translate “love” in English. This one is the word “agape.” It’s not the kind of love between a husband and wife or even a parent and child, there are different Greek words for these. Agape love is the kind of love that Jesus brought to earth. It’s something that humans had never really experienced before. Agape is unmerited. It is a preference or affection for someone without any strings. Agape is unconditional.

This week we will explore that love. But as much as we delve into God’s love over the next six days, we will still only brush the tip of the proverbial iceberg. If you are like most of us who are walking this faith journey, the love God has for you is something that you will be amazed by over and over again as you get to know Christ. The important thing to remember, especially on those tough days, is that God loves you . . . more than you can possibly imagine.





**Day Nine**  
**Romans 5:6-8**

Jesus Loves You Anyway

<sup>6</sup>*You see, at just the right time,  
when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

<sup>7</sup>*Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person,  
though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.*

<sup>8</sup>*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:  
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

The “I’m OK, You’re OK” philosophy of the 70’s, while potentially helpful from a psychological perspective, is really damaging to the Christian world view. A big part of appreciating the enormity of God’s love is realizing that without Christ I am NOT OK. If we are ever to truly understand how much our Savior cares for us, we have to realize that compared to a Holy and Perfect Deity, we are ungodly, unrighteous sinners.

Created in perfection, humans messed it up. It started with Adam and Eve, and a lot of people would like to blame them. But the truth is, if I could get it right, I could pass on perfection to my

descendants like those first two parents passed on sin. I've tried. I've failed. I even thought it was working for a time . . . until I failed again.

But no matter how many times I failed, Jesus loved me. One of the things that amazes me about Christianity is that Jesus loved me even BEFORE I accepted Him as my Savior. If that's not agape love, I don't know what is.

Yesterday we read that God loved the world. It's a phrase that gets repeated often because a huge section of the population has heard John 3:16 even if they've never read the Bible. But very few people really believe the Almighty loves the ungodly and the unrighteous that much. Most folks want to clean themselves up before they come to Christ. (Some churches even make people think they have to clean themselves up before they can come to church, but obviously our verse today makes that thought ludicrous.)

The Maker of the stars loved you even before you asked Him to forgive you. He cherished you and cared about you long before you realized He was watching and waiting. Thousands of years ago He died for you. He knew you'd sin. He saw that you'd be ungodly. He went to the cross despite all of that, because Jesus Christ loves you anyway!



**Day Ten**  
**Jeremiah 31:3**

His Love for You Has No End

*I have loved you  
with an everlasting love;  
I have drawn you  
with unfailing kindness.*

Jeremiah 31:3 is a good verse to memorize. It's so simple, yet it speaks volumes about God. And it's an important aspect of our heavenly Father, one we need to always remember.

Often people who know just a little about the Old Testament picture the Creator as a tyrant, full of wrath. However, as we study this precious Book, we find that instead He is patient and kind. Yes, God did wipe out nations to make room for his chosen people, but He tolerated the wickedness of those same foreigners for centuries before He gave the people of Israel permission to take over the land.

When you study the scriptures, you find over and over again a loving, patient King. In Second Peter He tells us that the reason it

seems as though He is slow in coming is because He wants everyone to turn to Him. God wants as many people in heaven with Him as possible.

God loves you with an everlasting love. His love does not quit even when we do. In Second Timothy Paul tells us that God is faithful even when we aren't. It's God's nature to be kind and to love you. Whether we deserve it or not, God's kindness and love are ours. Take Jeremiah 31:3 and write it on a post-it note or two. Put it on your refrigerator or your car dashboard. Memorize that bit of truth about God so that on the days when you don't "feel" very loved or even lovable, you will remember that your Father's love for you has no end.

# 11

## **Day Eleven** **Romans 8:38-39**

### Nothing Can Separate You from His Love

*<sup>8</sup>For I am convinced that  
neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,  
<sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God  
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I wish I could tell you that the Christian walk was all grins and giggles. I came to Christ when I was in my teens with grand illusions that my new found faith would make my life easier. I'm not sure where I got that idea, but I do know that when the hard times hit, my delusional picture of what a Christian life looked like cost me years of growing in Christ. I fell away quickly and wandered in darkness before returning to Jesus. I think the primary reason was my limited understanding of the love of God.

When bad times came, I thought it must have been because I wasn't doing something right. And after I fell away and started

really messing up my life, I was sure that God couldn't love me because of my sin. I often wonder how those early years might have been different if I'd have really understood this verse.

God loved me through all of my mess. He never promised a bed of roses, but He did promise that when the trials of life try to separate me from His love, He will remain faithful. My own foolishness separated me from my heavenly Father for a short time, but even during those few years when I walked outside of His will, His love was still there because NOTHING can separate us from the love of God that we have received because of Jesus Christ.

When someone dies and it feels like God doesn't love you, remember these verses. When the enemy presses in and you think life is getting too hard, don't allow yourself to forget that God loves you. When the world, your job, fame or poverty try to separate you from the one who loves you most of all, speak these words from Romans out loud. Remind the enemy and the world that nothing, no way, no how will ever be able to separate you from your Father's overwhelming love.

## Day Twelve

### Ephesians 2:1-5

#### His Love Gives Us Life

<sup>1</sup> *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, . . .  
Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.*

<sup>4</sup> *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,  
<sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in  
transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

There are so many lessons we can learn from these few verses, but this week we're exploring God's love. Paul reminds the people from Ephesus (pronounced ef-a-sus) that God's love is great. Paul also tells us that our heavenly Father is rich in the mercy department, and mercy is a form of love.

The Bible is pretty clear that we can't do anything to deserve God's love or Christ's gift of salvation. Paul tells us we deserve God's wrath, but because of His great love, God decided to forgive us and save us from what we deserve. It's like a pardon from death row. That is mercy, and God has more mercy than we can imagine.

It's God's mercy that demonstrates His love for you. He forgives everyone who asks even though each of us deserves His wrath. Then He gives us life, abundant life while we are here on this earth and forever life in His presence when our physical body gives out, and that is grace.

Because of God's loving mercy, we are forgiven, saved from punishment we deserve. And because of His loving grace we have gift, a beautiful gift we can't earn or secure on our own, the gift of life.



# 13

## **Day Thirteen** **Ephesians 3:17b-19**

It's a Love that Goes Beyond Your Imagination

<sup>17</sup> . . . *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,*  
<sup>18</sup> *may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people,*  
*to grasp how wide and long and high and deep*  
*is the love of Christ,*  
<sup>19</sup> *and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—*  
*that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

If you're reading this, there's a good chance you're at the beginning of your faith walk. It's only fair that right up front you know it's a lifelong journey. One of the misconceptions I had when I asked Jesus to be my Savior was that I was done. After all, salvation is the goal, right? I figured since I was saved, I was ready for heaven.

It didn't take long for me to discover that salvation was more than that moment when I prayed and accepted Christ's sacrifice for me. In fact at one point I even told Jesus that heaven was too far away. I was really struggling with my faith. I had not yet grasped how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ flowed. It truly

was to me, and perhaps still is to some extent, a love that surpasses knowledge.

However, the longer I walk with Christ, the more this life event turns into a relationship, the better I understand, and I am in awe of the unfathomable love the Father has for me. It seems as though every time I think I might truly understand the enormity of His love, He does something unexpected. He surprises me, demonstrating His love for me in a brand new way.

So, as I write this, I pray for you. Even though I may never meet you, and I can't know for sure at this moment who will read this in the future, I am asking my Father right now. My prayer is that you, as you grow in Christ, might very soon begin to grasp just how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge is for you.

# 14

**Day Fourteen**  
**Zechariah 2:8**

You Are the Apple of God's Eye  
*Whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye*

The way God created the eye is amazing. Over your pupil is a cornea and over that you have eyelids that close faster than you can think about it to protect the most important part of the eye. Your pupil, that round spot that allows the light to enter may be one of the most valuable parts of the optic package. It's the part God called the "apple," and in several places in His Word, it's what He calls you. You are as precious to God as the "apple of His eye."

It seems the Bible was the first place this idiom was used, but ever since God coined the phrase, it's been a description of something of unspeakable value. Grandchildren are often called the "apple of the eye." It's a term of endearment, a recognition of something precious.

After two weeks of hearing about who you are in Christ and how much you are loved, I have to wonder. Do you feel valuable, dear and precious to your heavenly Father? The world will attempt to pull us down nearly every day. So it's important that we understand our worth in Jesus Christ. We don't want it to go to our head and make us arrogant, but a healthy, humble confidence in who we are and how much we are loved in the Kingdom will enable us to live out our purpose and become everything we were created to be.

Your heavenly Father loves you. You are dear to Him. On the days you feel defeated and begin to doubt your worth, I hope you'll return to the verses we've looked at so far and remember that you are created in the image of the Almighty, woven together by the hand of the Father and made into a new creation by the Son. The King of the Universe knows you by name. He loves you more than you can imagine, and you are the precious apple of His eye.



**Week Three**  
**Hope for Believers**

Day Fifteen: Psalm 139:7-12

*God is With You*

Day Sixteen: 1 Peter 1:3-5

*Hope, Hope and More Hope*

Day Seventeen: Isaiah 40:31

*Soar Like an Eagle*

Day Eighteen: Romans 8:28

*God's Got This*

Day Nineteen: Ephesians 3:20-21

*More Than You Can Imagine*

Day Twenty: Jeremiah 29:11-14a

*God Has Plans for You*

Day Twenty-One: Revelation 21:6-7

*Heaven, The Ultimate Hope*



**Day Fifteen**  
**Psalm 139:7-12**

God is With You

*<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit?*

*Where can I flee from your presence?*

*<sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

*<sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,*

*<sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.*

*<sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"*

*<sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.*

The entire 139<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a favorite among many seasoned Christians. In the first few verses of the Psalm, David reminds us that God knows us inside and out. He knows our every thought, even the words we'll say before we speak them. And despite how

intimately the Holy, Perfect Creator knows us, those few verses from Psalm 139 remind us, He chooses to stay close to us.

Perhaps the reason that even the most mature in the faith love this Psalm is because no matter how long we live on this earth, there will be rough days. Those days may even lapse into weeks or months, but this Psalm reassures us that regardless of how bad it gets, whether our troubles come from external sources or they are made from our own bad decisions, God is there to pick us up whenever we're ready to let Him.

Now that you've made Christ your Savior, you have this hope: There is no place to hide from God, no place to run that you will be out of His sight. Even though He may allow us to make our mistakes, and we might even break His heart from time to time, He will never leave us alone. Wherever you go, whatever you do, the Spirit of your Loving Father is with you.

# 16

## **Day Sixteen** **1 Peter 1:3-5**

### Hope, Hope and More Hope

*<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

These short verses from Peter are teeming with hope. We already know that Jesus' death on the cross was the payment for our sins, and now we're promised that we also have new birth and a living hope because of Christ's resurrection. We have hope that is alive.

Peter starts by telling us we have the hope that comes from the new birth. We are a new creation because of Christ's redeeming work on the cross and His resurrection. We don't have to live the life of slavery to sin like we did before, but that's not the end.



You'd think adoption and forgiveness would be enough, but we also get an inheritance. Our Father who owns the world has prepared an inheritance for us. He's keeping it safe in heaven. It can't be stolen or lost, it can't even lose its value like an earthly inheritance. Heaven is waiting for us, rich with promise and hope. Yet, there's still more.

Because Jesus Christ is now our Lord, he is shielding us from our enemy. God's power is protecting us until the day when our salvation is complete and we receive our inheritance in heaven. We have even more hope! This isn't a promise of a problem free life, but it is the assurance that when things get tough, the King of kings will have your back.

We have hope. Hope of heaven, hope of new life here and hope of the Almighty holding us safely in the palm of His hand.

# 17

## **Day Seventeen** **Isaiah 40:31**

### Soar Like an Eagle

*. . . but those who trust in the Lord  
will renew their strength;  
they will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary;  
they will walk and not faint. (HCSB)*

There's a story I tell from many years ago about a turkey that flew in front of my truck. I felt so bad for him. He was flapping his wings with all his might and never got more than eight feet off the ground. With his tail feathers all spread and his neck stretched as far as it could, he looked as if he was giving it all he had to get to the other side before he met some oncoming traffic that could take his life.

As I watched that turkey struggle, with no way to know I would slow down to avoid hitting him, I was reminded of our Christian walk. I see so many people trudging along like a turkey, they just can't get anywhere, and they feel like others are speeding ahead

getting the better view in life. After all, a turkey never gets to coast along on the breezes or just play in the wind.

But the Bible never says we're supposed to strut like turkeys; Isaiah says we can soar like eagles. We weren't created to struggle through life, we were created to rise above the struggles. It's not God's plan for us to become weary or grow faint.

Sometimes the road we're traveling seems difficult, even for Christians. During those times we can choose to flap and struggle like a turkey, or put our hope in Jesus Christ and soar like an eagle.

It won't be easy at first. Right now you're like a baby eagle. You'll need to stay close to the nest for a while. But if you feed on God's word and watch the beautiful way He lifts up others in the faith, you'll find it becomes more and more natural to trust in the One who loves you more than you will know this side of heaven.

And the more you trust in Him, the more you will discover you don't grow as faint when you are dealing with those difficult issues, you aren't as weary of those irritating co-workers. In fact, before you know it, you'll begin to trust Christ completely, and you will begin to soar!



**Day Eighteen**  
**Romans 8:28**

God's Got This

*<sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things  
God works for the good of those who love him,  
who have been called according to his purpose.*

Anyone who knows me well, knew that when they saw a week that offered scriptures of hope, this one would be included. It's my personal life verse. This is my go to verse when I need encouragement, especially when I feel like I blew it.

On those days when I'm sure I couldn't have messed it up anymore even if I'd have tried, I repeat my paraphrase of Romans 8:28. It goes like this: "I can't mess up anything so badly that God can't use it for good as long as I always love Him." And if that doesn't give you hope, I don't know what might!

Christians mess up. We say the wrong things, we don't do what we should, and we do what we shouldn't. In fact, if you're ever really feeling bad about yourself check out what Paul wrote in Romans 7:14-20. Sometimes it's hard for me to believe that Paul, the guy

who wrote most of the New Testament, ever felt like he messed up more than I do. But because he was honest and wrote those words, it really helps me to keep from beating up on myself too badly.

So, whether the stuff that's happening is created from your own mess or the actions of someone around you, remember that your job is to love God. And if you love Him, and are living like you love Him, He will take all of those things that look like they are irreparable and work them for good. It may not turn out the way you thought it would, but it will work out for good, because God's got it all under control!

# 19

**Day Nineteen**  
**Ephesians 3:20-21**

More Than You Can Imagine

*<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able  
to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,  
according to his power that is at work within us,  
<sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church  
and in Christ Jesus  
throughout all generations,  
for ever and ever! Amen.*

Ephesians 3:20 is a tremendous verse for Christians to memorize. It is a great accompaniment to Romans 8:28 (yesterday's verse). They remind us of the beauty of the power of God. Not only can He take every circumstance of a believer's life and use it for good, He can do it in ways that we can't even imagine.

One of the things I've learned about prayer over the years is to be a little less specific about what I pray for unless I'm confident of God's will in my prayers. I used to sort of "tell God" how to fix things in my prayers. I always ended with "Thy Will Be Done" so I figured

that made it OK. But in my heart I really wanted my will to be done. That tagline at the end of the prayer was just to ease my conscience, not because I really wanted God to work His will. I had my own ideas about what the best outcome would be, and I expressed those often.

That might sound a little arrogant, but truth be told, I've talked to a lot of Christians, and that's how most of us started our faith walk. We treated God like a giant Santa Claus or a genie who should grant our every wish.

Now that I've walked a bit further with God, I'm glad He didn't limit Himself to my wish list. I can't tell you the blessings I'd have missed out on if God had simply granted my prayer requests instead of doing "immeasurably more than I could ask or imagine."

I will warn you that sometimes it seems to take more time than we'd like. Don't worry; there are plenty of times when God comes through even before we have a chance to ask. But sometimes there's a lesson for someone to learn before our loving Father will intervene on our behalf. And often the timing that is best for us and those around us isn't the same time frame in which we'd originally hoped God would work. So as we're waiting and growing, it's helpful to remember Romans 8:28 and Ephesians 3:20, holding on to the hope that the Almighty is about to shower on us even more than we could possibly imagine!

# 20

**Day Twenty**  
**Jeremiah 29:11-14a**

**God Has Plans for You**

<sup>11</sup> *For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,  
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.*

<sup>12</sup> *Then you will call on me and come and pray to me,  
and I will listen to you.*

<sup>13</sup> *You will seek me and find me  
when you seek me with all your heart.*

<sup>14</sup> *I will be found by you,” declares the LORD . . .*

Jeremiah 29:11 is another popular verse among those who’ve been on this journey for a while. It is a verse of hope. I’ve talked to more than one person whose faith walk took them through what some might call a dark forest, and this was the verse that carried them through, the promise from God that He had plans for them, plans that included a future, plans that included hope.

Originally written to the Israelites who’d been taken to Babylon because of the nation’s blatant disregard for everything God had



spoken to them over more than 400 years of prophets, this scripture still holds tremendous promise for the followers of Jesus Christ.

God has plans for His followers. He will never lead us into harm. Our Father wants us to prosper. That doesn't necessarily translate become wealthy, but it does mean to live a full life. He wants you to know that He has a future for you, a future that is full of hope!

And as we live out the plans Christ has laid out for us, we have the promise that when we call on the King of the universe, He will listen. When we look for the Almighty with all that we have, we will find Him. He obviously doesn't give us permission to become lazy in our faith; we have to seek Him with every fiber of our being. But He promises that when we do, we will find Him. And as we follow Him, we'll discover what He means by prosper. We'll begin to enjoy the beauty of the hope He gives and live out His plan for an abundant future.

# 21

**Day Twenty-One**  
**Revelation 21:6-7**

Heaven, The Ultimate Hope

*<sup>6</sup>He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
the Beginning and the End.*

*To the thirsty I will give water without cost  
from the spring of the water of life.*

*<sup>7</sup>Those who are victorious will inherit all this,  
and I will be their God and they will be my children.*

The twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation give us a beautiful picture of heaven. John tells us that one day everyone who has accepted Christ's sacrifice to save them will be in the presence of God forever. He talks about a place with no more crying, no death and no pain.

We read the description of a magnificent city filled with bounty and blessings. And in this city will be no evil, nothing shameful or deceitful. This place is reserved as the inheritance of the "victorious," those whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of Life.

On the day that you asked forgiveness and accepted the gift of Christ's death on the cross as payment for your sins, your name was written in that book. You became a true child of God, worthy of His inheritance. The more we grow, the better we recognize that Jesus' resurrection renders death meaningless to followers of Jesus Christ and we begin to understand the truth of our inheritance. The final inheritance is heaven, life beyond this life, the ultimate hope for those who trust in Jesus Christ.

In John 4 Jesus said that He will give living water to everyone who asks. That's a promise for life today. I picture that refreshing coming by the cup full, much like Jesus received from the woman at the well. But there will come a day when we will drink directly from the Spring of Life. Imagine an abundant flow of water bubbling up out of the rocks and running down a hillside always there for anyone who thirsts.

And finally Jesus tells us through John's Revelation that we win! One day the war against evil will be over. We will have small victories while we walk on this earth, occasions when we overcome in a battle with the enemy. Your first victory was the day you accepted Christ. As we become free from our past hurts, addictions, bad habits and those things that keep us in turmoil, we have victory. Each of those is a battle won. But on the day we see Jesus face to face, when we achieve the reward for our hope, the war will be done. Jesus will call us victorious children of the Almighty God.



## **Week Four**

### **It's All About the Relationship**

Day Twenty-Two: John 14:15-21

*The Key to the Relationship*

Day Twenty-Three: Galatians 3:1-5

*Rules versus Relationship*

Day Twenty-Four: Isaiah 64:6 & Isaiah 1:18

*Trying to Be Good Enough*

Day Twenty-Five: Ephesians 4:4-6

*Your Relationship with Other Christians*

Day Twenty-Six: Hebrews 6:7-8

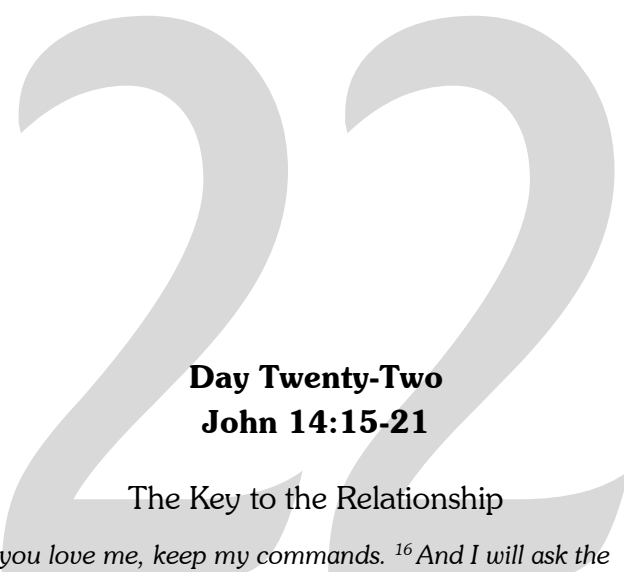
*How to Grow a Good Crop*

Day Twenty-Seven: Galatians 6:12-15

*The Cross and the Relationship*

Day Twenty-Eight: John 17:20-26

*Jesus Prayed for You Two Thousand Years Ago*



## Day Twenty-Two

### John 14:15-21

#### The Key to the Relationship

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. . . . for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. . . . I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

Keep my commands . . . that’s what Jesus said. It’s the same thing that God had been telling the Israelites for centuries. Up until Jesus arrived on the scene, humanity hadn’t been doing a very good job. Fortunately for us Jesus knew this was a tall order, so He made a beautiful promise. Before his death, He told the disciples He was going to be with them forever. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” He told them He would be in them, and in us, and He would do it by sending the Holy Spirit.

I love the Greek word for Holy Spirit; it's "paraclete." I don't really know much Greek, but occasionally when I hear a teaching on a word, it will stick with me, and this is one that did! In our English Bibles, the word is translated "advocate" or "comforter." The beautiful thing is both are correct, but there's more. The Greek word that Jesus used to describe the Holy Spirit, paraclete, means "one who comes along beside you, helper, intercessor, legal defender."

Jesus said He wouldn't leave us alone. He was sending Paraclete to be with us. Jesus' Spirit would be our paraclete. He will always be right there beside us, helping us, comforting, advocating, interceding (negotiating) on our behalf, defending and standing up for us.

It's only by this power that we are able to keep the commands. Generations before us have tried, and many among us are still trying to do it on their own. But we weren't meant to be Christian Lone Rangers. We were created for relationship. We need good Christian relationships within our church, but most of all, we need a real solid relationship with Jesus Christ. We need His Spirit, our Paraclete.

## **Day Twenty-Three**

### **Galatians 3:1-5**

#### Rules versus Relationship

*<sup>1</sup>You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup>. . . Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? <sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? <sup>4</sup>Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? <sup>5</sup>So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?*

One of the first mistakes many Christians make is taking on a list of “rules” for keeping the faith. And while it is important to “keep the commands” (we read about that yesterday), the Bible tells us over and over that nothing is more important than the relationship.

Obviously the Galatians fell into the trap, and it may have been well meaning, more mature Christians who pushed them over the edge. Sometimes those of us who’ve walked the path a bit longer

get a little zealous with the “rules.” We’ve discovered that keeping the commands brings blessings, and we want others to experience the same thing. Unfortunately when we focus on the dos and don’ts instead of the relationship, we become like the foolish Galatians.

What we forget is that by allowing the Spirit to permeate our lives, we will gradually, but naturally, begin to “keep the commands.” It just happens! When we try to follow the rules for the sake of the rules, we burn out. At that point we’re trying to do it on our own, by means of the flesh.

I encourage you, as you begin this journey with Jesus, to concentrate on the relationship right now. No matter how many well-meaning Christians insist that you follow the rules, make your life about the relationship. You may feel the Holy Spirit changing you right away. The adjustments in your lifestyle could start happening immediately. But if not, don’t sweat it. Focus on the relationship. Allow the Spirit of Christ to have room to move in your life. Begin with the Holy Spirit and just keep moving in the Holy Spirit because it’s really all about the relationship!



# 24

**Day Twenty-Four**  
**Isaiah 64:6 & Isaiah 1:18**

Trying to Be Good Enough

*All of us have become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;*

*Isaiah 64:6a*

*Though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;*

*Isaiah 1:18b*

Good enough . . . we spend so much of our lives trying to be good enough. When we are children, we long for our parents' approval; then in middle school, we look for that affirmation from our peers. If we are conscientious at all, we'll spend at least a few years of our career trying to impress our boss. And all of that working for goodness and approval generally leaks over into our Christian walk.

Even those who know better usually expend some effort trying to be "good enough" for God, but Isaiah is pretty clear when he tells us that even our most righteous acts are like filthy rags to our heavenly Father. The Creator's goodness is beyond our comprehension. So it doesn't matter how hard we try, we can't

measure up. For some who are striving for salvation, that's really bad news.

But there's good news!!! Jesus' blood is good enough! When we accept the gift of eternal life that Jesus gives, His blood covers our sins. He makes us white as snow. Instantaneously, we go from filthy rags to clean as a new fallen snow, ready to stand before the Almighty. Psalm 103 tells us that He removed our sins from us. They are separated from us as far as the east is from the west.

As you walk with Christ, I encourage you to never strive to be good enough. It's impossible. Our striving in this life should be to love Jesus more. We should do something every day that will help us know God better and appreciate the gift of our Savior in a greater way. So, let's stop trying to be good enough and just enjoy the One who is!

## Day Twenty-Five Ephesians 4:4-6

### Your Relationship with Other Christians

*<sup>4</sup>As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup>Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup>Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

One of the things the Bible talks about a lot is relationships. You'll find details on how to have a relationship with your spouse, your kids, your friends, your boss, those in authority and more. And while He was at it, our Creator gave us instructions on how to have relationships within the church.

Something a lot of people get confused about is the number of churches in the world. You see, the Bible tells us there is just one Church (one body, one faith). I compare it to my family. I have two sisters and a brother. We are all one family, but because each

of my sisters and I married, we have four different last names on our mailboxes. We are all the same family because we have the same mother and father; the names on our driver's licenses don't change that.

The Church is much the same. You'll find all kinds of names and descriptions out there, but every church with Jesus as the head is a part of the same family. I don't know about your family, but in mine, we have different points of view on some things. In the same way, denominations, worship styles and political views will cause us to have our differences. However, Paul tells us we can still have unity through the Spirit. That's because we all agree on the main thing.

When you find a Christian who doesn't have the same political stance or attends a different denomination, it's good to agree to disagree on some things as long as you agree on the main thing. The main thing is Jesus Christ is the head of the church. We believe that He was crucified for our sins and rose again so that we can live forever. I encourage you to check out the Apostle's Creed for a nice breakdown of the things the Church has agreed are important for us to agree on.

When you do find yourself in a disagreement with your brother or sister in the faith, always be humble and gentle, and hold one another up in love. Unity doesn't mean we have to give up our principles or standards. It simply means we love those who love Jesus more than we love our differences.

## **Day Twenty-Six** **Hebrews 6:7-8**

### How to Grow a Good Crop

*<sup>7</sup>Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it  
and produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed  
receives the blessing of God.*

*<sup>8</sup>But land that produces thorns and thistles  
is worthless and is in danger of being cursed.  
In the end it will be burned.*

These couple of verses from Hebrews can seem like a hard teaching, especially if you focus on verse eight. But because of verse seven, it's been a favorite of mine for many years. I used to "work hard" for the Kingdom of God. I was raised in the church, I played the piano for the wee ones when I was a teen and taught the Jr. High Sunday School in my late 20's. There was even some decent crop being produced. But the harder I worked the more I felt dry and parched.

When I came across this verse one time in my reading, it stopped me in my tracks. I loved Christ, and I was definitely working for

Him. But I was confident I wasn't drinking in the rain. I wasn't even sure the rain was "often falling." That's when I realized I was doing too much "work" on my own. There are a lot of things the Bible tells us to do, and Jesus often says, "If you love me, you will obey." However, He never says we have to do it on our own.

Jesus Christ is constantly pouring out His Holy Spirit on us. The rivers of His mercy never dry up. His springs of refreshing always run free. Hebrews tells us the rain often falls, and we are the land. Dry and parched when we come to Christ, sometimes we can't even soak up all that Jesus has for us because our surface has become too hard. But the more we drink in His goodness, the more we'll be able to absorb. We will quickly become soft, workable, fertile soil producing a crop that is useful for our Master. And it's then we receive even more blessing from God.



## **Day Twenty-Seven**

### **Galatians 6:12-15**

#### The Cross and the Relationship

*<sup>12</sup> Those who want to impress people . . . are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast . . . <sup>14</sup> May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . <sup>15</sup> . . . what counts is the new creation.*

During Paul's day, the religious people wanted new converts to the faith to be circumcised. This served two purposes. First it kept them from taking heat from the old Jewish leaders who hadn't accepted Christ. Second, they could boast about the number of people who had joined their religion. Paul had a problem with both.

The sad thing is there are well-meaning Christians today who are doing the same thing. They want to help people dress differently, hide or get rid of piercings and tattoos or follow a big list of dos and don'ts. Now, don't get me wrong, there will be things you'll

change, because like Paul said, you're a new creation. But change for the sake of change has nothing to do with the relationship.

Any changes we make should be inspired by the cross. Because Jesus died for me, I want to obey Him. Out of my great love and appreciation for my Savior, I want to become the person He created me to be.

I sometimes get frustrated because in most churches we keep track of attendance, baptisms and membership. Hopefully, we do this as a gauge, a way to know if individuals are growing in Christ, like a mark on the wall measuring a child's height. But it's easy for leaders to take these same statistics and turn them into bragging rights. Your church attendance isn't meant to be something to brag about, it's meant to be something that helps you grow to become the best "you" you can be in Christ.

I pray you've already found a great Christian mentor who will love you and guide you in the faith. Not someone trying to change you so he or she can boast about the work they've done, but someone who genuinely cares about you becoming a new creation in Christ. And I can't wait until the day you become that person for someone else, never bragging about any human effort, but always boasting about the Cross of Jesus Christ.





**Day Twenty-Eight**  
**John 17:20-26**

Jesus Prayed for You Two Thousand Years Ago

<sup>20</sup> “My prayer is not for [the disciples] alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

<sup>24</sup> “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

<sup>25</sup> “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

On other days you've seen ellipses (...) in the scripture because I've only included the most relevant parts of the passages to save space; but as I read through this passage from John, I couldn't bring myself to edit it.

Those verses from John are part of a prayer that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane just before the soldiers came to take Him away for His crucifixion. He was in terrible anguish because He knew that torture and execution awaited Him, but even in these moments when His soul was in turmoil because of the human fate He would suffer, He was thinking about you.

In the final moments before His crucifixion, Jesus asked His Father to strengthen our relationship, the relationship we have with each other and the one we have with Him. When He could have been asking God to get Him through His painful ordeal, He was lifting prayers that He could have a relationship with you.

A relationship with you is that important to Jesus Christ. He created you and loves you. He offers you hope in this life and the next. And more than anything else He wants to be a part of your life, a part of you, your very best friend.



## **Week Five**

### **Building the Relationship**

Day Twenty-Nine: Romans 6:1-4

*The New Life Begins*

Day Thirty: Hebrews 10:24-25

*Don't Try to Go It Alone*

Day Thirty-One: Romans 12:12 & 1 Thessalonians 5:17

*Conversations Build Relationships*

Day Thirty-Two: Hebrews 4:12 & 2 Timothy 3:16

*The Word of God Builds the Relationship*

Day Thirty-Three: Micah 6:8

*What God Wants from the Relationship*

Day Thirty-Four: Luke 4:8 & John 4:23

*Dedicated to the Relationship*

Day Thirty-Five: John 4:23

*Get Real*

## **Day Twenty-Nine** **Romans 6:1-4**

### The New Life Begins

*<sup>1</sup> What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

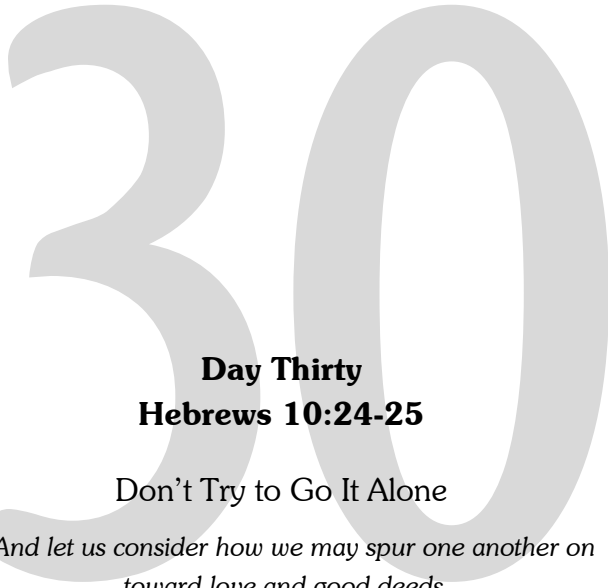
Because we have accepted Christ's sacrifice on the cross, we have died to sin. Part of our new identity in Christ is that day by day sin has less of a hold on us. Unfortunately, it's not always easy.

Let's face it, sin is generally fun. And when we are in the midst of it, we don't often consider the consequences. There are a lot of things in the world that will continue to tempt us. Friends and family may top the list of temptations. And on those occasions when we give in to the temptation, we may feel like giving up.

The good news is Jesus wants to help us live a new life. And while grace doesn't give us an excuse to continue in sin, it is the beautiful gift that forgives us when we do stumble.

Baptism is a symbol of your new life in Christ. So if you've not been baptized yet, I encourage you to talk to your pastor about taking this step in your faith. It's a tremendous way to get your new life started. When we go under the water, it reminds us that we have died to sin. And when we come out, we can celebrate because we've been given new life because of Jesus Christ.

Hopefully, your baptism will be (or was) celebrated in front of your church family. That's important because we need one another to build this relationship. We hold one another accountable and encourage each other as we walk the path together. It doesn't matter what our old life looked like, our heavenly Father wants us to have a new, better life in His Son Jesus.



**Day Thirty**  
**Hebrews 10:24-25**

Don't Try to Go It Alone

*<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on  
toward love and good deeds,  
<sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together,  
as some are in the habit of doing,  
but encouraging one another—  
and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Don't give up meeting together, or in a more contemporary colloquial, "Get your butt to church!" As the book of Hebrews was being written, some were starting to skip out on corporate worship. It wasn't that they didn't want to go as much as it was dangerous. Christians were being persecuted, so if your enemies knew that you were meeting with the other Christians, you were more likely to be killed.

Today folks don't have quite so good an excuse, yet they'll still miss out on getting together with the body of Christ. But anyone who is mature in the faith or growing in Christ will tell you that the

encouragement we receive from others we worship with is one of the foundational building blocks in our relationship with Jesus. We weren't mean to do this alone.

It's OK for you to look around until you find a congregation where they talk more about Jesus and the relationship than the rules. It's NOT OK to hop around from church to church till you find someone who will tell you everything you are doing is alright or switching it up just cause you have a disagreement with someone.

And meeting together doesn't mean just on Sunday morning. Find a small group within the larger church where you can ask questions and share your doubts. Go out to eat with others in the church, make arrangements to hang out with those who will encourage you and spur you on. Your enemy, the devil, will be trying to get you back. You'll need the love and support of those who have already traveled the path you're walking now.

Building the relationship means being in relationship. Jesus said the Church is His body. If you aren't willing to spend time with the body, you can't really be in relationship with the head. So, it's settled then. I'll see you with the Church!

# 31

**Day Thirty-One**  
**Romans 12:12 & 1 Thessalonians 5:17**

Conversations Build Relationships

<sup>12</sup> *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

*Romans 12:12*

<sup>17</sup> *pray continually,*

*1 Thessalonians 5:17*

I can't even begin to tell you how many times prayer is mentioned in the Bible. If I do a search on the word pray, I find it's in there more than 350 times, but that doesn't include the places that say, "cried out to God" and the like. That number also doesn't include the Psalms that are obvious prayers, but the words pray, prayed, prayer or praying aren't mentioned. Let's just agree that communication with the Sovereign is a central theme of scripture.

Last week we established the fact that your Creator wants a relationship with you. God wants to be your friend, so it only makes sense that the King of the universe wants to converse with you. He wants to hear your fears and doubts, your cries and your praises. And He wants to talk to you, too. In the Old Testament



we see God speaking to Adam and Noah, Abraham, Joseph, the judges, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah and Elisha, the Prophets, Daniel and more! And in the New Testament, Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit, He told us that He would live within us, so the conversation doesn't ever have to end.

I usually recommend to everyone (because it's been recommended to me, and I've seen it work) to set aside some time every day for dedicated prayer. For some people it's a few minutes and for others it's an hour. But your prayer time doesn't have to stop just because you've gotten up from your knees or don't have your head bowed.

Most of those who are mature in the faith have an ongoing conversation with Jesus all day long. We intercede as we drive by an accident and praise when we see the first leaves in the spring. When a memory causes us pain we cry out, and in those moments of joy throughout the day, we share our heart with the One who loves us more than we can imagine.

Prayer is a spiritual discipline that is developed. The more you practice, the more comfortable you'll become. So, talk to God, as often as you can, every day, all day, because He wants to hear from you!



**Day Thirty-Two**  
**Hebrews 4:12 & 2 Timothy 3:16**

The Word of God Builds the Relationship

*<sup>12</sup> God's word is alive and working and is sharper than a double-edged sword. It cuts all the way into us, where the soul and the spirit are joined, to the center of our joints and bones. And it judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts.*

*Hebrews 4:12 (NCV)*

*<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*

*2 Timothy 3:16*

Reading Scripture is the spiritual discipline that most who call themselves Christians ignore. The excuses for not reading the Bible are never ending, but include, "It's boring," "I don't understand it" and "I don't have time." Many excuses have some validity. There are parts of the Bible that are downright uninteresting, and depending on the version you use, it can be hard to understand.

Everything worth learning has those moments when it's confusing or hard to understand. Even learning to play an instrument can be

boring on occasion. But it's constantly going back and trying again that makes the difference between the one finger piano player and the virtuoso. The mathematician that gets a little tutoring will always go further than the one who quits learning when the multiplication tables get too difficult.

God's Word is alive and active. It's more than just letters on a page. It has the power to transform us into all that Christ created us to be. Yes, it's hard sometimes. It might even feel like we're being judged, but according to Hebrews that's its purpose! Paul told Timothy to read the Word so he could be corrected and trained.

If we want a true relationship with Jesus Christ, daily Bible reading is one of the top ten ways to succeed. Some folks start with just a verse or two every day. I generally recommend that new Christians start in the New Testament; Luke, John or First John make great starting points. And there's nothing like a small group where you can ask questions and hear the victories and struggles of others to help your relationship blossom. Find folks who want to discuss the Bible. Take time to listen, ask and share. The Word of God is one of the greatest gifts Jesus Christ left here for us, so just read it!



**Day Thirty-Three**  
**Micah 6:8**

**What God Wants from the Relationship**

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.*

*And what does the Lord require of you?*

*To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.*

God gives so much and asks for so little in return. All of the things that we've discussed over the last four days aren't requirements any more than you are "required" to have lunch with your best friend. There are some things you do simply because you are friends, because you want to be with him or get to know her better. Baptism, fellowship, prayer, Bible reading and study are those kinds of things. They aren't requirements, they are relationship builders.

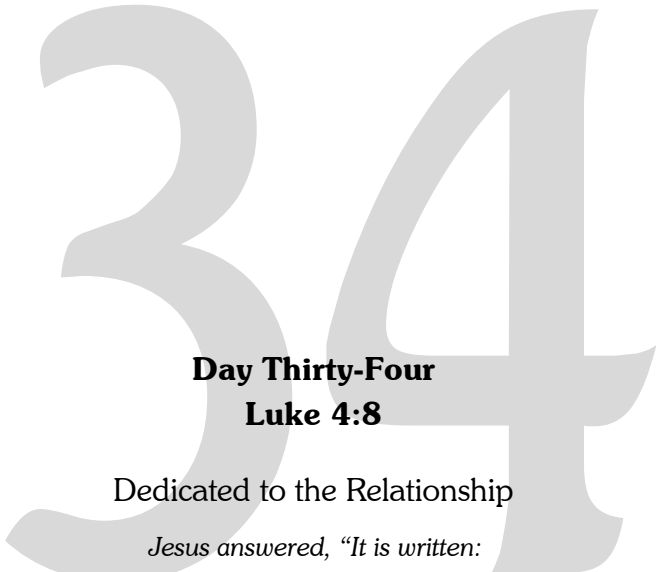
The relationship with God is a little bit different than the ones we have with our human counterparts. If we are going to be in relationship with our Creator, He wants it to change our lives and

make us better than we were before. That includes the way we treat others.

God created a perfect world, and humans messed it up. But He is preparing us to live in a perfect world again. So the things that He “requires” of us change our hearts and lives in such a way that we are ready to stand in His perfect, holy presence. Those in relationship with the Messiah, those who allow Him to create a new heart within them will begin to see Micah 6:8 play out in their lives.

I think God worded this verse from the least important to the most, because I believe the whole process begins with walking humbly with God. Until we understand who we are in Christ (true humility) and are walking with Him daily, it’s nearly impossible to do the rest.

And believe it or not, loving mercy almost always has to come before acting justly. If we try to promote any kind of justice before we long to be kind and loving, it will most often result in becoming judgmental. The more we walk with Christ, the more we will be able to understand true mercy and kindness. We’ll be able to see the plight of the abuser as well as the abused. Christ will help us to love the sinner and at the same time recognize sin for what it is. Because that is the key to acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with the God who loves you!



**Day Thirty-Four**  
**Luke 4:8**

Dedicated to the Relationship

*Jesus answered, "It is written:*

*'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'*"

A huge part of the God/human relationship is built through worship. A lot of folks wonder what worship is, but the truth is if you have ever been completely dedicated to something, you have probably worshipped it. Humans worship celebrities, athletes, jobs, children, possessions and more. However, the only thing worthy of our worship, and the only One that won't abuse our dedication is the Creator of the universe.

There are many ways to worship Jesus Christ. When you use your talents to serve Him, it is often worship. Crying out to Him in prayer and building the relationship are forms of worship. We call the Sunday morning service the "worship service" because that's its primary function. The whole point of the body of Christ getting together to sing songs and read scripture is to spend an hour or two

completely focused on the One who gave His all for us. That complete focus is what we call worship.

Worship is one of the most phenomenal ways to build your relationship with Christ. There is something about giving Him our undivided attention that will spur our growth more than anything we've mentioned all week. Perhaps that's because when we incorporate worship into our prayer, fellowship and study, we are able to get closer to Jesus and hear the Father speak to us more clearly.

Your personal worship time is essential. Perhaps you'll worship as you read your Bible or pray. Brother Lawrence worshipped while he peeled potatoes. But even more important for new Christians is corporate worship, or worship with others. If you aren't already a part of a body of Christ that truly worships God, it's time to get involved. You read earlier this week that you need others to help you on this journey, and worshipping with that body of believers at least once a week is a vital part of you growing in Christ.



**Day Thirty-Five**  
**John 4:23**

Get Real

*Yet a time is coming and has now come  
when the true worshipers will worship the Father  
in the Spirit and in truth,  
for they are the kind of worshipers  
the Father seeks.*

In order for any relationship to survive, truth is essential. A friendship built on deceit is really no friendship at all. Jesus is clear that He is looking for those who will worship Him in truth. In fact Jesus called Himself the Truth.

From the very beginning we humans have tried our best to keep our flaws from God as well as other Christians. Adam and Eve started the ball rolling when they attempted to hide their nakedness after eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

But honestly, God knows it all anyway! He knew that the father and mother of humankind had eaten that fruit, and He loved them



anyway. He just wanted them to fess up! In First John 1:9 it says if we confess, God is faithful. James 5:16 tells us to confess to each other. Mark tells about those who came to Jesus confessing their sins so they could be truly cleansed in their baptism, and Proverbs 28:13 tells us that when we try to hide our sins, we can't be successful. Jesus wants us to get real with Him!

There is one statement I hear often from those who are confessing. "I hope you don't think any less of me." Actually, when I hear someone getting real with Jesus and giving me the honor of being there to witness it, I don't think less of them, I think MORE of them. I know that when we get real with Christ, we are on the road to true healing and real life. I can't even begin to describe the freedom I've found in being downright honest with Jesus. And I am delighted when I know others have taken this first step out of bondage.

Don't be afraid to be real with your friend, Jesus Christ. The fact is He already knows, but once you admit your flaws and face them, they no longer have a hold on you. He can handle anything you have to tell Him. He just wants the truth, and unlike that line from that old military movie, Jesus CAN handle the truth.



## **Week Six**

### **Gifts for You**

Day Thirty-Six: Hebrews 12:1-2

*Part of Something Bigger than Yourself*

Day Thirty-Seven: Romans 8:26-27

*The Gift of the Holy Spirit*

Day Thirty-Eight: John 14:27

*The Gift of Peace*

Day Thirty-Nine: 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

*The Gifts from the Holy Spirit*

Day Forty: 2 Corinthians 13

*The Greatest Gift*

## **Day Thirty-Six** **Hebrews 12:1-2**

### Part of Something Bigger than Yourself

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

If you get into a good Bible study, you'll soon hear the phrase, "Every time you see the word 'therefore,' it's important to find out what it's there for." In the case of these two verses of Hebrews, you really have to read chapter eleven to get the full effect. Chapter eleven is often called the "Faith Hall of Fame." It's a list of those who, since the beginning of time, have walked with God regardless of the outcome.

The writer of Hebrews wants to remind us that when we live a life of faith we are in good company. There is nothing you will go

through that others who have followed God have not already experienced. The enemy would like us to feel alone and isolated. He likes it when I feel as though I'm the only one who fails.

But this business of walking by faith has been going on for more than six thousand years, and as a disciple of Jesus Christ, each of us is privileged to be numbered with this "great cloud of witnesses." It's that knowledge that we are part of something bigger than ourselves that can help us when we are tempted.

The writer of Hebrews knew that sin is easy. It's a snare that we fall into with no problem at all. But hopefully, the knowledge that men and women just like us have gone before us in faith will help us to keep on keeping on.

We just have to stay focused, keep the main thing (Jesus Christ) the main thing! That's the strategy for the race. Fixing our eyes on Christ is what enables us to "throw off" the burdens that bring us down. It keeps us from getting tangled up in the mess that life tries to bring.

Jesus endured the cross for you! You are the "joy set before Him." Yep, you make Christ happy! So, with the beautiful gift of all of our spiritual ancestors watching, let's run! Let's head toward the finish line like we mean it, so some day we can join that great cloud and cheer on the next generation.

# 37

## **Day Thirty-Seven** **Romans 8:26-27**

### The Gift of the Holy Spirit

*<sup>26</sup>In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings. <sup>27</sup>And He who searches the hearts knows the Spirit's mind-set, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (HSCB)*

Back in week four we talked a little bit about the Holy Spirit, but I think it's important to know that the gift of the Holy Spirit may be one of the greatest gifts the Heavenly Father ever gave to His people. Only the gift of salvation is greater in my opinion.

Unfortunately, it's the gift that most people don't really open. I often compare the gift of the Holy Spirit to getting a birthday present on your birthday and setting it on a shelf for a few years before you open it.

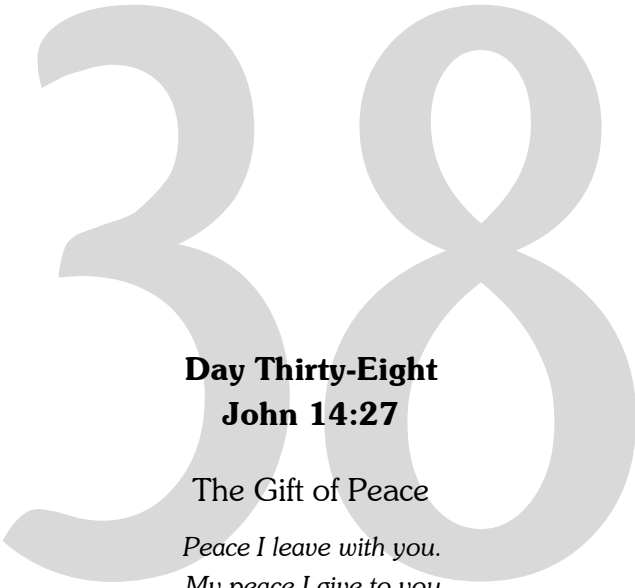
Ephesians 4:30 tells us we were sealed with the Holy Spirit on the day we asked Christ to be our Savior. But as I said on day Twenty-Two and Twenty-Three, Jesus promised to send the Spirit so we'd

never be without Him. And in Luke 11:13, Jesus told His disciples that He would give the Spirit to any of His children who asks.

The Holy Spirit is scary for some because He has been known to point out sin (John 16:8) and help folks change to become more like Christ. He's also sent more than a few folks into the mission field (Acts 13:4). But most often the Spirit gives God's people power (Romans 15:13), the power to overcome trials as well as the power to be bold for Christ.

Perhaps the best thing about the Holy Spirit is that He is our Redeemer's constant presence. Jesus wants to help us when we feel weak, and He does that by sending the Comforter and Counselor, the Holy Spirit. When we are so distressed we don't even know how to pray, it doesn't matter, because the Holy Spirit knows God's heart and mind, so He knows the perfect prayer to pray. Our prayerful attitude and cry to our Heavenly Father is enough when we invite the Spirit to pray for us.

Take some time in your faith walk to learn about God's Spirit, make it part of your prayer that your Heavenly Father will pour out His Spirit on you daily and praise Christ that He sent this wonderful gift so we would never be alone!



**Day Thirty-Eight**  
**John 14:27**

The Gift of Peace

*Peace I leave with you.  
My peace I give to you.*

*I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Your heart must not be troubled or fearful.  
(HSCB)*

The world longs for peace, but most of us look for it in all the wrong places. We think we’ll find peace when we have the right job or the perfect mate. Some imagine peace is found in religion, and others brag about finding peace within themselves. But all of that is peace as the world gives.

The peace that I’ve seen Jesus give is contentment during unemployment. It’s confidence that God has everything under control while watching your baby struggle on life support. It’s the unexplainable ability to be calm when trials come. Philippians 4:7 calls it “peace that goes beyond understanding to guard your heart

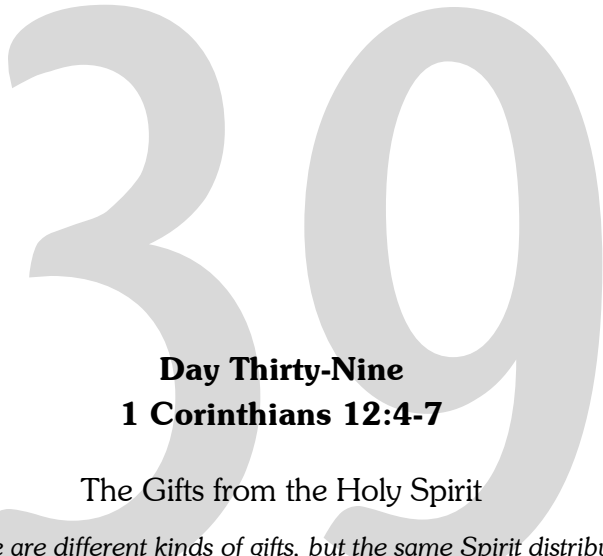
and mind.” It’s a package deal that comes with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In my own life this kind of peace comes whenever I put myself in a place to receive it. When I am doing my best to do what I know is God’s will for me, I feel peace. The more I read scripture and pray, the more peace I encounter. As I worship and praise, especially with other Christians, the peace within me grows. As I let go of me and grab hold of Christ, peace builds.

And just the opposite is also true. I often can tell that I have walked out of God’s will because I get this terrible feeling of discontentment. I can tell when I’ve missed reading scripture for more than a day or two because my anxiety levels start to rise.

I call the Holy Spirit my gyroscope. A gyroscope is like a wheel within a wheel, and as they turn with each other, they can keep even a large ship in stormy waves on a pretty even keel. I feel as if that’s what the Holy Spirit does for me. When I let Him in, when, by obedience and filling myself with the things of God, I give him power to work in my life, the Spirit keeps my mind steady and my heart strong. No matter how rough the waters get, when I allow my Spirit gyroscope to have control, I know the peace that Jesus promised. I experience the gift He gives to those who aren’t afraid to open it.





**Day Thirty-Nine**  
**1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

The Gifts from the Holy Spirit

*<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. <sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

A couple of days ago we talked about the gift of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit himself is a tremendous gift. But when you open that gift, it's just the beginning. Yesterday we discussed peace that Jesus gives us through His Spirit, and today I want to be sure you know about all of the other gifts the Spirit has to pour out!

Peace is a gift that everyone receives. In fact, in Galatians 5:22-23, it's called fruit, something that grows inside of us after we allow the Spirit to take control. (Now I wish perhaps I had dedicated a day in this book to the Fruit of the Spirit . . . so much wonderful scripture and so few pages to share . . . perhaps that will be the next book)

Anyway . . . ALL of the Fruit are given to every believer who allows the Spirit to have a place in his or her heart. The Gifts of the Spirit (aka Spiritual Gifts) are a little different in that every believer has just a few of the many gifts. The key to that sentence; however, is that EVERY believer has gifts.

I hear people say so often, “I just don’t have any gifts from God.” But when we say that, we call the Bible a lie. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says “to each one” a gift is given for the good of the body of Christ. Paul goes on to compare the church to a human body. When one of us doesn’t use our gifts, it’s as if the body of Christ is without a hand or a foot! Discovering and using your gifts is important, not just to you, but to the entire body of Christ all over the world!

The gifts of the Spirit include preaching, teaching, prophesying, apostleship, healing, helping others, serving, giving, encouraging, leading, showing mercy, faith, wisdom, knowledge, speaking in other languages and MORE! Most Christians will tell you they feel the most blessed when they are working within the arena that God has gifted them. For some it means cleaning the church, for others it will include mission trips to a foreign land. In my life it leaks out as I teach and write and share with others what God has placed on my heart.

Discover your gifts! Ask your pastor and mentor for help. Then take those gifts and help to build the body of Christ. Using your gifts and being a gift to others is giving back to God. It’s a blessing for us as well as those we share with. It’s the gift that never stops giving.

# 40

## **Day Forty** **2 Corinthians 13**

### The Greatest Gift

*<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. . . . <sup>13</sup>And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

Jesus loves you. I pray that if you've gained nothing else from what you've read over the last thirty-nine days, you are now tremendously confident that Jesus Christ loves you! Love is the greatest gift. That would explain why we look for it so diligently, even more than we seek out peace.

We have been created in the image of God. This means that we've also been created with the capacity to love much. However, we can't give away what we don't have inside of us, and without Jesus, the place that holds all that capacity to love is empty. Some call it a big God-sized hole. It's called a God-sized hole because those

who've attempted to fill it and failed miserably have discovered the only thing that really fits and fills that emptiness inside of us is our Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Whenever we try to fill that hole with people or things we will be sadly disappointed.

Unfortunately, some have come to the faith, filled up their hole and then forgotten that it's love that brought them to that place of filling. Those were the people Paul wrote to in this letter.

You may have thought this passage was intended for married couples since it's read at nearly every Christian wedding I've been to. But as much as it applies to marriage, these words were written to a church that needed to practice love.

As you walk out in your faith and begin to develop your spiritual gifts, it will be imperative that you always use them in love. Nothing in all of Christendom will ever trump love. There are no rules, no gifts, no sin that will ever excuse us from acting in love. Occasionally we will find it's best shown in a manner we currently call "tough love." But even when it seems tough, the motivation behind our actions must always be love, love for Christ and love for His children.

As I write this final paragraph, I want you to know that I have prayed for you. I have asked Christ that every person who reads these words hear His Spirit speak to them. I don't want your next steps in Christ to be motivated by anything I've written. My goal is that these pages might help you to hear Christ better, receive His Spirit and understand just how desperately the Father loves you!

*Be blessed my brother or sister-in-Christ  
and rest in the knowledge that you are loved!*



## **More Scripture to Help You in Your Walk**

### **More for Week One: Your Identity**

Psalm 104 (especially verse 30)

Second Peter 1

### **More for Week Two: You are Loved**

Ephesians 5:1-2

1 John 4:7-12

### **More for Week Three: Scripture for Hope**

John 14:1-4

Philippians 4:13

### **More for Week Four: The Relationship**

John 15:1-17

First John

### **More for Week Five: Build the Relationship**

Galatians 5:13-26

John 20:15-19

### **More for Week Six: Gifts**

Romans 12

1 Corinthians 12

2 Corinthians 9:10-15

There's also a video that I love to recommend.

It's thought to be a children's clip, but it speaks to the heart of discovering the truth of who you are in Christ.

Check out Veggie Tales "A Snoodles Tale"

It's on DVD and on YouTube



## **Reading Recommendations**

I encourage you to read the Bible first and foremost, but as you have opportunity, check out these books. I look at books outside scripture like sermons, words from those further along in the faith that help me as I study God's Word. There are so many resources to choose from, these are just a few that have blessed me.

*The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren

*Experiencing God* by Henry Blackaby

*Firsthand* by Josh and Ryan Shook

*The Five Love Languages of God* by Gary Chapman

*Facing Your Giants* by Max Lucado

*When God Whispers Your Name* by Max Lucado

*Wild Goose Chase* by Mark Batterson



## **The Most Excellent Resource**

The Bible will always be the most excellent resource for every Christian. But God had also given us another great gift. Don't underestimate the value of your pastor and church leaders. These men and women of God WANT to talk with you about your faith walk. The greatest joy your church's spiritual leaders get is watching someone grow in Jesus Christ. Their job can be wearisome at times, but the knowledge that YOU are anxious to be all that you were created to be makes everything they do worthwhile! Meet one of them for coffee soon!

## Devotions by Lynne Modranski



### Devotions for Church Leaders and Small Groups

Forty or more devotional readings to help you grow in Christ.

### Quiet Times with Jesus

Forty-five more devotional readings to help you grow in Christ.



### Quiet Times for Busy Moms

Devotions written especially to inspire moms on the go!

## More Devotions

*Every devotion on this page is available on Amazon and at [www.LynneModranski.com/store](http://www.LynneModranski.com/store)*



*This QR Code will take you to the first of more than 20 pages of devotions online at: <http://lynnemodranski.hubpages.com/hub/devotions-2>*

## Devotions in Your Inbox



Lynne has two devotion lists that go out by e-mail about once or twice a month each. You can sign up for them with these QR codes or links:



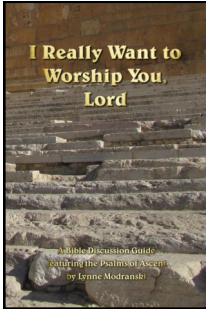
### Moms Devotions

<http://tinyurl.com/momsdevo>

### General Devotions

<http://tinyurl.com/devolist>

# Bible Studies by Lynne Modranski

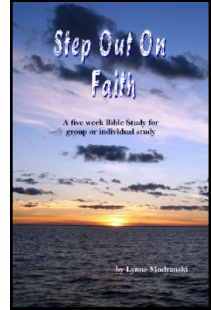


## **I Really Want to Worship You, Lord**

*Eight weeks exploring the Psalms of Ascent (Psalm 120-134) and discovering the heart of worship.*

## **Step Out on Faith**

*A five week study written for folks new to the faith, but even a more mature group can grow from it.*

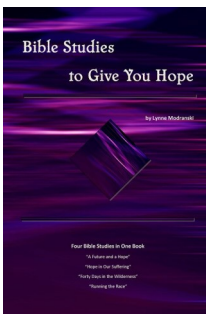
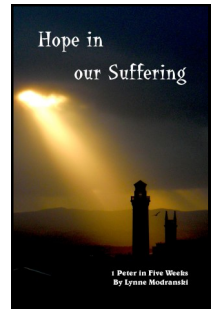


## **Running the Race**

*Paul compared the Christian walk to a race. This five lesson study is designed to help Christians run the race well*

## **Hope in our Suffering**

*First Peter offers so much hope! This five week study on Peter's words will help you in your time of need.*



## **Bible Studies to Give You Hope**

*Four studies in one book:*

- *Hope in Our Suffering*
- *Running the Race*
- *A Future and a Hope*
- *Forty Days in the Wilderness*



## **Other Resources by Lynne Modranski**

### **ADVENT READINGS**

The Angels Speak

The Greatest of these is Love

Journey to Bethlehem

The Ultimate Gift

Expect the Unexpected

Jesus is . . .

This Year I Want a Rock in my Stocking

A Christmas of Heavenly Peace

Advent Through the Eyes of Mary

The Word Became Flesh

### **CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM**

Jesus, Teach Us How to Pray

Heroes, Heroines, Champs and Chumps

Fruit of the Spirit

Children of the King

## Meet the Author



Lynne Modranski took her first steps in the faith in her parents' home, but she didn't really start walking with Christ on her own till the 1980's. A lot of her early steps were taken as she raised her three girls.

She and her husband, Steve, have been journeying together with Christ for more than thirty years. As a pastor's wife, Lynne has created a lot of resources for Children's Ministries, Advent, Bible Studies and more. Her devotional books are some of her most popular resources.

Besides writing, Lynne enjoys golf and genealogy. But some of her favorite times are the ones she spends with her four grandchildren. Her passion is to become everything that Christ has made her to be and to help others on their journey too!

For more information, check out:  
[www.LynneModranski.com](http://www.LynneModranski.com)

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Monica Lynne Photography