

Day 1

This week in our lesson we discovered the difference a proper perspective made in Paul's life and the incredible impact it can have in our lives. Throughout this week my hope is to draw our hearts to a deeper understanding of what it is to be a disciple of Christ, that is, after all what we profess as Christians. That the Holy Spirit may work in each of our hearts, renewing our minds, granting us a proper perspective as we follow Christ.

Begin your time today in prayer, first, seeking forgiveness from God for your sin and asking Him to illumine His Word to your heart, teaching you, and growing you. Please read over the following text making observations, take your time and mark it up!

Luke 9:57-62

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever

You go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have*

ests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." ⁵⁹ And He said to

another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ But

He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim

everywhere the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first

permit me to say good-bye to those at home." ⁶² But Jesus said to him, "No one, after

putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Observe with me:

1. What did the first disciple commit to do? (vs. 57) _____

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2. What was the cost of discipleship that Jesus pointed out to the first disciple? (vs. 58)

3. What did Jesus command of the next disciple? (vs. 59)

4. What was the response of the next disciple? (vs.59)

5. What was the response of our Lord? (vs. 60)

**For so many years I read this account and thought Jesus' response was harsh. Wouldn't He want this man to honor his father by burying him? But a little study into Jewish customs helps us to better understand what is being said here. The phrase, "I must burry my father" was a common Jewish figure of speech used to refer to one receiving their inheritance.

So, in essence this man was saying, I will follow you, after I have lived comfortably in my father's house and received my inheritance, which further implies a more comfortable ministry experience.

He was missing the point.

6. Are there any comforts in your life, that you might would struggle giving up if the Lord impressed upon your heart to do so? Confess that here and ask the Lord to forgive you:

7. List practical ways you plan to move forward in obedience in keeping your relationship with Christ and your service to Him first in your life:

Close our your time today in prayer, reflecting on all the Holy Spirit has revealed to your heart today, asking the Lord to lead you as you seek to deny yourself and follow Him.

Day 2

Begin today with prayer, confessing your sins and worshipping the Lord for giving us His Word.

Oftentimes we elevate the people we read about in Scripture to some higher level of righteousness, unknowingly placing them in our hearts to some unattainable righteousness. Today we will be jumping to the Old Testament, to look at the lives of an ordinary couple, who, because of their faith, God chose to do amazing things. A couple who, like Paul, were sold out to following God.

Read the following text, making observations.

Genesis 12:1-5

Now the Lord said to Abram,

“Go forth from your country,

And from your relatives

And from your father's house,

To the land which I will show you;

² And I will make you a great nation,

And I will bless you,

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And make your name great;

And so you shall be a blessing;

³ And I will bless those who bless you,

And the one who curses you I will curse.

And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

⁴ So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.

Observe with me:

- 1. What did God command of Abram? (vs. 1)

- 2. Did God tell Abram exactly where he would be going? (vs. 1) _____

- 3. What was Abram and his wife giving up?

- 4. God commanded them to leave everything they had ever known, their family and their home, and head out to an undisclosed location: “To the land which I will show you”. I know this had to sound crazy to the rest of their family. But they did it anyway. Sometimes obedience looks crazy to this world. Maybe it’s the way you choose to dress, maybe it’s the music you choose to not listen to, or movies

you refuse to watch...these "small" things sometimes lend us to struggle to fit-in.
Be encouraged! We are not meant to "fit-in" we are to stand out!

Copy Matthew 5:14-16:

Years ago, I was having lunch with a group of women who were really close to me. At that point I had stopped listening to secular music, it just seemed dead to me, and replaced it with worship music. This wasn't a conviction I had ever felt the need to share with others, it was personal, I recognized that the secular music generally caused me to focus on myself, while worship music drew my attention back to my Lord. One of the ladies began talking about a secular music artist and their latest hit. I completely didn't even know who the artist was, and while I tried to take part in the conversation it quickly became painfully apparent that I didn't have a clue what I was talking about. The friend who had brought it up looked at me with much frustration and said: "what world are you living in! There is a whole world out there that you are missing out on!"
Sometimes it is the things we choose not to do that cause us to stand out, because we won't know things others know or we won't go to the places they go to.
God may not be asking you, as He asked Abram to pack up and move to an unknown country, but what is He asking you to do?

How is He asking you to be His light in this dark, dark world?

Close out our time today in prayer, seeking His will in your life, remembering His will never contradicts His Word, so to know His will we must know His Word! Meditate on what God has revealed to your heart today, spending time confessing those things you may be holding onto that He is telling you to give up, and trust Him!

Be Blessed!

Day 3

Begin today with confession, asking the Lord to illumine His Word to your heart!

We will be revisiting the Genesis 12:1-5, so ask the Lord to give your fresh eyes!

Observe with Me:

- 1. Verses 2-3 comprise what is known as the Abrahamic Covenant. This was a promise God made to Abraham, we see it repeated several times throughout Genesis, as God is truly faithful to His Word, even when His servants are faithless. This covenant is not to be misunderstood as one we can claim for ourselves, but there is still so much for us to glean here. We are blessed to have the full counsel of God's Word, we know the end of the story, so it is easy for us to sit back and minimize the incredible faith of Abram (later to be renamed by God: Abraham), but what about his wife, Sarai (later to be renamed by God: Sarah)? Scripture here doesn't record her response, but we are allowed to see her actions. She followed, and God blessed her.

Copy Hebrews11:11

- 2. I absolutely love this, what a beautiful picture of God's redemption. If you are familiar with the story of Abraham and Sarah, you know that they each walked through their own sinful struggles, and yet, for all of time God in the New Testament records their triumphs. She is remembered for her faith, not her laughter (Genesis 18:12-14). For her submission, even when Abraham failed her, not for her demanding he own way.

Read Genesis 16:1-2, then Read 1 Peter 3:1-6 Here we find that yes, Sarah failed, just like you and I, and yet, even in those major life altering events that seem to be monumental failures, God still uses her and hundreds of years later, through His written Word focusses on the good He did through her. What an example for you and I. We will fail, that's a given, it is what we do with that failure that matters.

Reflecting on this, copy Philippians 3:13-14

What is it in your past that you are struggling to forget? What is keeping you from pressing on to what lies ahead? Confess this before God and seek His strength and goodness to help you move beyond it. We will close here for today, spend time in prayer, meditating on the above passage, keeping in mind what we learned last week about the flaming arrows of the evil one. Satan wants to destroy you, one way he does that is through our past. Beating us down with thoughts of what we could never accomplish because of a who we used to be, or a mistake from our past. This couldn't be further from the truth. God equips the called. He moves through the most unlikely people so that He will receive the glory! Be blessed!

Day 4

Begin today with prayer, confessing your sins and praising God for His truth! Yesterday we looked briefly at the Abrahamic Covenant, can how it was a promise from God for Abraham and his descendants. This isn't a promise we can take literally today, but we do learn something about who God is through this covenant. God is a covenant keeping God! He blessed us with a detailed account of how He kept His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This should strengthen our resolve. This should encourage our hearts to remember that the same God who kept this promise, has promised many things to us, and He is a promise keeping God!

Today we will look at two well-known texts from John, both promises Christ has made to us that we know we can hold on to.

Read through both passages making Observations:

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John 14:1-6

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas *said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

John 15:1-5

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Observe with me:

- 1. What does Jesus promise in John 14? _____
- 2. How should this reality alter our focus, our priorities in this life?

3. How can this promise impact our struggles, worries, and temptations to fret?

4. What does Jesus promise in John 15?

5. Jesus promises to “prune” us. He promises to grow us spiritually to allow us to bear fruit. How are you being pruned by the Lord today?

6. What can we accomplish apart from Christ? _____

7. This is exactly what Paul is expressing to the Philippian church in Philippians 1:19-22. He clearly understood. We are here to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, however that may be. How can these two incredible promises our Lord made to us impact our daily lives?

Close out your time today in prayer, reflecting on the goodness of God, asking Him, but the power of the Holy Spirit to grow you, that we might all truly live for Christ!

Day 5

As always, begin your time today in prayer confessing your sins and adoring your Savior!

As I prayed over this week and our study guide, Psalm 23 was on my heart, repeatedly. It is so well known that sometimes we can fail to stop and truly evaluate what it is saying. We will close this week meditating on this Psalm.

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Read through Psalm 23, making observations. Then complete the chart below.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd,

I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside quiet waters.

³ He restores my soul;

He guides me in the paths of righteousness

For His name’s sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I fear no evil, for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil;

My cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Complete the chart below, choosing 7 observations you made from Psalm 23. I would encourage you to do this with each observation you made as time allows.

Observations (what do I see?)	Interpretive Questions Asking questions of each observation.	Interpretations What does it mean? What conclusion can be made?

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Now that we have made observations, and used interpretive questions to better understand the text, let's make some applications, because we all know that without applying the Word to our lives, we will remain unchanged.

A helpful tool as we seek to apply Scripture to our lives is: SPECS.

- 1. S – Sins to avoid. Are there any sins in this passage that I should be intentional in avoiding?

- 2. P – Promises to cling to. Are there any promises in this text that I can hold on to?

- 3. E – Examples to follow. Do I see any examples in this passage that I should follow?

- 4. C – Commands to obey. Are there any commands to obey?

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5. Scriptures to memorize. Are there any verse(s) here that I should hide in my heart to increase my ability to meditate on and further apply the truth to my life?

As our week comes to a close, spend time praising God for the fullness of His Word and the immense blessing it is!