



# Discovering Who You Are in Christ

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

**i**IDENTITY

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## Discovering Who You Are in Christ

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# Week One:

## Who Do You Think You Are?

Week One: Day One

### PREPARE

- Which of the following influences what you believe and how you feel about yourself most often?
  - Your present circumstances
  - What people think/say about you
  - What God thinks of you
- Is this source accurate and constant or biased and changing? How is it affecting your sense of identity and self-esteem?

### PARTICIPATE

**Read Psalm 139:13-15.**

Who made you? \_\_\_\_\_

How long does it take to “knit” something? What does the use of this word suggest about the amount of time and care God spent creating you?

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**Read 1 Samuel 16:6-7.**

In this passage, Samuel has gone in search of the king that God had chosen for Israel so that he can anoint and bless him. When Samuel sees impressive Eliab, he assumes that God intends for Eliab to be king. God's response is not what he expected.

Which is more important to people, a person's heart or a person's outward appearance/qualifications? Why do you think that is? Are we able to see into the hearts of others?

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Which is more important to God, a person's heart or a person's outward appearance/qualifications? Why do you think that is? Is He able to see into the hearts of people?

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Taking into consideration the fact that God created us and can see our hearts, whose opinion is more accurate, God's or that of other people? Whom should you listen to?

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**Read John 3:16.**

How does God feel about you? How do you know?

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**Read Matthew 5:44-45.**

In this passage, Jesus is telling His followers how to interact with their enemies. According to this passage, does God allow good things to happen to “good” people only and bad things to happen to “bad” people only?

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**Read John 10:10.**

In this passage, the “thief” is Satan. In your experience, how does he steal, kill, and destroy?

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Consider everything you learned today. How much impact should your present circumstances affect your sense of identity and self-esteem?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for spending time and care in making you just the way you are.
- Thank Him for seeing the real you and loving you enough to send Jesus to save you.
- Ask God to help you recognize the enemy's attacks for what they are, weak attempts to confuse your sense of identity and lower your self-esteem.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Remember that God made me just like I am and loved me enough to send Jesus to save me.
- Place more value on God's opinion of me than on what other people think of me.
- Understand that my circumstances do not define me.
- Recognize and resist the enemy's attacks on my sense of identity and self-esteem.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:3-4.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.

## PREPARE

- Which do you focus on most, the blessings in your life or the hardships?
- Do your circumstances ever cause you to doubt God's love for you?
- Do you believe that hardships can be blessings in disguise?

## PARTICIPATE

Jesus, God's Son, came to earth to pay the penalty for our sin on the cross so that we could be forgiven of our sin and become children of God. He gives eternal life to those who put their faith and trust in Him. In Him, we are truly blessed, but it's easy to forget that when the pressures of this life press in and threaten to choke us.

**Read John 16:33.**

What promise do you find in this verse? Is it one you want to hear?

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What encouragement does Jesus offer with that promise? Is it enough? Explain.

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**Read Romans 8:28.**

Is it hard to believe that God can use ALL things for good? Why or why not?

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Notice that Paul uses the phrase “for the good of those who love God.” When bad things happen, how do people who love God respond? Is that good for them? For others?

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Can hardships be blessings in disguise? How?

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**Read 2 Corinthians 4:18 and Ephesians 1:3.**

What does Paul say to do when our circumstances seem overwhelming? What “unseen” things might he be talking about?

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Does God bless His children while they still live here on earth? \_\_\_\_\_

How has God blessed you? Make a list. Write in the margins if you need to. Here are just a few verses to get you going: Hebrews 4:15, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 4:7, Philippians 4:19.

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**PRAY**

- Thank God for being faithful to work ALL things together for the good of those who love Him.
- Thank Him for blessing you with the opportunity to become His child by putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.
- Ask God to help you view difficulties as opportunities to grow closer to Him.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Focus on the unseen and the many ways that God has blessed me.
- View hardships as opportunities to grow closer to God.
- Point others toward Jesus.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute, once again, to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:3-4.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Did you remember more than you did yesterday?

## PREPARE

- Do you serve God, or do you expect Him to serve you? What, in your opinion, is the point of having a relationship with God?
- Which do you value more, your relationship with God or human relationships?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Matthew 18:14.**

According to this verse, how does God feel about mankind?

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**Read Romans 5:8.**

What has God done for you?

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**Read Romans 10:9.**

How does God want you to respond?

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**Read John 6:44 and Ephesians 2:8.**

What does God do to help you respond?

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**Read 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 2:10, and 2 Corinthians 5:15.**

Why would God choose to have a relationship with us? What does He expect in return? Is that too much to ask? Why or why not?

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How is a relationship with God different than a relationship with another person? In what ways is it better?

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## **PRAY**

- Thank God for making it possible for you to have a relationship with Him.
- Thank God for meeting you more than halfway in that relationship.
- Ask God to teach you how to praise Him and to reveal to you His plan for your life.
- Commit to follow wherever He leads and to complete whatever works He has planned for you.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Remember that God desires a relationship with me and put that relationship before all others.
- Offer God praise for all that He has done and will do out of love for me.
- Look for the good works that He has prepared in advance for me to do.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- If you still need to, read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:3-4, again.
- Write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Are you making progress?

## PREPARE

- Do you think that you can surprise and/or fool God?
- Do you believe that God needs you or that you need God?

## PARTICIPATE

### Read Ephesians 1:11.

God is never surprised when people make the decision to put their faith and trust in Him. As we already discussed, He is constantly working all things together for the good of those who love Him and actually plays a very big part in our decision to follow Him.

Think about your life to this point, the circumstances that have brought you to this moment in time. What evidence do you see that God has been at work in your life, drawing you to Himself and helping you put your faith and trust in Jesus?

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**Read Psalm 139:1-4, 16.**

Is the idea that God knows every thought you have ever had or will have, every deed you have ever done or will do, and every word you have spoken or will speak an encouraging or intimidating one to you? Explain.

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**Read Romans 3:23, 6:23.**

Jesus isn't surprised by your sin. In fact, He made a way for you to be saved before you drew a single breath. How does that make you feel?

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What kind of God rescues a traitor? What kind of response does a God like that deserve from you? Is living for yourself an appropriate response to that kind of love? Why or why not?

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## Read Ephesians 1:11 again.

God doesn't need you. He wants you. He will work out everything according to His will with or without your cooperation, but what a privilege it is to serve such a loving and merciful God and Heavenly Father and play even the tiniest role in what He is doing!

## PRAY

- Thank God for loving you in spite of your sin.
- Thank God for knowing what the future holds and for taking care of you.
- Ask God to get your attention when you start living for yourself and to give you a sincere desire to respond appropriately to His love.
- Commit to trust Him not only for your salvation but in every detail of your life.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Remember that my salvation comes from God.
- Show God how thankful I am for that salvation in the way that I live.
- Obey God in every little thing so that I don't miss out on the blessing of being used by Him.

- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:3-4, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Almost there?

## PREPARE

- Are you sure of your salvation, or do you live in fear and doubt?
- Does the way that you live your life prove that you know God?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Ephesians 1:4-6 and 1 John 3:1.**

If you have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ to save you from your sin, then not only have you been rescued, but you have also been adopted into God's family. God is your Heavenly Father and loves you dearly. In fact, it gives Him pleasure to call you His child. How does that make you feel? Is it hard to comprehend? Why or why not?

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**Read 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Romans 8:38-39.**

Your adoption into God's family is permanent. The Holy Spirit's presence in your heart is your guarantee that you belong to Him now and forever. There's nothing that you or anyone or anything else can do to separate you from the Heavenly Father once you are His.

How should this knowledge affect the way you live your life on a daily basis? Do you have any reason to be timid or fearful about the future?

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**Read Hebrews 12:7-10, Matthew 7:11, and Romans 2:11.**

According to these passages, what kind of Heavenly Father do you have in God? In what ways is he a better father than any earthly father could be?

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**Read 2 John 1:9 and John 8:31.**

Some people claim to have been adopted into God's family, but don't act like children of our Heavenly Father. Not only do they make the kind of mistakes that all people make even after they become Christians, but they also show a disregard for the things of God. According to these verses, have people who behave this way truly been adopted?

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Have you been adopted into God's family? How do you know?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for being the perfect Heavenly Father.
- Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of believers so they don't have to live in doubt and fear.
- Commit to continue to grow in your faith, reading your Bible, praying, listening, and obeying Him.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Think about what it means to be a child of God, the perfect Heavenly Father, and walk in confidence that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ.
- I will argue with the enemy when he tells me that no one can know for sure whether or not they are saved and belong to God.
- Only allow those whose lives prove they belong to Christ have influence over me.

- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:3-4, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.
- Practice saying it out loud without looking. Have someone else listen for accuracy.

# Week Two:

## They Say. He Says

### Week Two: Day One

#### PREPARE

- How would you describe God to someone else? How did you form your opinion of Him?
- Do you believe that Jesus is ONE way to God or THE way to God? Do your words, actions, and conversations with other people prove it?

#### PARTICIPATE

##### Read Deuteronomy 32:4.

What is the last characteristic of God listed in this verse? Is this a good or bad characteristic, in your opinion? Are there times that you are grateful for this attribute? When?

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##### Read Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23.

God is just. He cannot change who He is to make allowances for our mistakes. It is only fair that a person be paid what they earn, and sin earns people a place in hell. Sin separates us from God.

**Read 1 John 4:8.**

Can God be just and loving at the same time? Can He be one without being the other? Explain.

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**Read John 3:16.**

How did God's sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sin prove Him to be both just and loving at the same time?

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**Read Mark 10:45 and Hebrews 4:15.**

If Jesus had sinned, He would have earned Himself a place in hell, too, and would not have been in any position to rescue us. As the only sinless man to ever live, He is the only one in a position to rescue us.

Does it make sense for anyone to worship, follow, or trust anyone/anything else to get them to Heaven? Explain.

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**Read 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Ephesians 4:1.**

If you have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, you have been bought.

What price was paid? Who paid it? To whom do you belong?

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What is your job as someone who has been bought at a very high price?

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Is it a privilege or chore to serve a just and loving God like ours? Explain.

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**PRAY**

- Thank God for being both just and loving.
- Thank God for His gift of salvation and, if you have put your faith and trust in Jesus, acknowledge the fact that you belong to Him.
- Express your desire to please Him.

- Ask God to remind you of the price He paid for your sin when you are tempted to serve yourself or someone/something else.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Remember that I am not my own, but that I belong to Jesus.
- Look for evidence of God's love and justice and praise Him for it.
- Hold Jesus up as the ONLY way to God when I notice others looking for salvation by other means.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:7.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.

## PREPARE

- Do you think it's possible to forgive AND forget?
- Do you ever have trouble believing that God could forgive you?
- Do you ever have trouble forgiving others?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Ephesians 1:7, Psalm 19:12, and Hebrews 10:18.**

To be forgiven is to have your debt, or what you owe someone else, erased. When you ask someone to forgive you for something, you are asking them not to hold that something against you anymore.

Banks hold loans against borrowers and have the right to ask for something in return from borrowers if the borrowers cannot pay their debt. Yesterday, we learned that the debt we owed for sin was paid off by Jesus Christ through His death on the cross. Through Him, we can be forgiven of our sin—the sin we commit knowingly and the sin we commit accidentally, our past, present, and future sin—once and for all.

Why is it so hard to believe that our sin can be and stay forgiven?

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**Read Psalm 66:18-19 and 1 John 1:9.**

The sin we commit after putting our faith and trust in Jesus does not cancel out our adoption as sons and daughters. That is permanent. However, it does cause relational static, interfere with our ability to pray effectively, and make it hard for us to hear the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts.

What are we supposed to do when we sin after becoming a Christian? What does God promise to do when we come to Him with a repentant heart?

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**Read Isaiah 43:25.**

Why does God forgive? Is that understandable? Explain.

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**Read Hebrews 10:17 and Psalm 103:12.**

How does God forgive?

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If God forgives this way, why do we not? What gets in the way?

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**Read Colossians 3:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:20.**

Those of us who follow Jesus have a responsibility to demonstrate His love to others, putting their salvation over any right we may feel to hold grudges. If we do not forgive people, they will have trouble believing that God can forgive them.

Remember, sin is between God and man. When someone wrongs you, they sin against God, not you (Psalm 51:4), even when you suffer the consequences of their actions. When you withhold forgiveness, you overstep and demand a debt that is not yours to collect. You interfere with God's work in the life of another person and exalt yourself above your station.

Is there anyone that you need to forgive? Do they need to hear it from you personally?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for forgiving you and commit to forgive others out of love for Him.
- Thank God for being faithful even when you are not.
- Ask God to soften your heart toward those who have wronged you.
- Ask God to reveal to you the names of anyone that you need to forgive and make a conscious choice not to hold what they have done to you against them.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Refuse to punish myself for sin that God has already forgiven.
- Walk in confidence, knowing that God is faithful and that He forgives and forgets.
- Demonstrate God's love and mercy by forgiving others willingly, whether they ask me to or not.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute, once again, to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:7.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Did you remember more than you did yesterday?

## PREPARE

- Do you study the Bible on your own, or do you wait for other people to explain it to you and tell you what you need to know?
- Are there spiritual leaders whom you simply trust to tell you the truth, or do you check everything you hear about God against the Bible itself?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read John 16:12-14 and John 14:26.**

According to these verses, what is the Holy Spirit's job?

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**Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-20, 27-29.**

Through the Holy Spirit, God blesses His children with wisdom and insight that other people do not have. His doing so forces people to acknowledge Him as the one true God, the source of wisdom. It brings Him glory.



Would spiritual wisdom be as precious and sought after as it is if God gave it away to believers and non-believers alike? Would people seek Him like they do?

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**Read James 1:5.**

What promise do you find in this verse? What encouragement?

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God could give us wisdom without our having to ask for it. Why does He not do that? Why does He make us ask, do you think?

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**Read 1 John 2:27.**

As you grow in your faith and learn more about God, the Holy Spirit will help you tell the difference between the truth of God's Word and the lies of the enemy. He will remind you of everything Jesus said, but He cannot remind you of words you never read. The more you study your Bible, the easier it becomes to discern, or figure out, God's will.

It is good to get advice from other Christians, but nothing is better than letting the Holy Spirit be your tutor. Remember, the same Holy Spirit that lives in the “experts” also lives in you.

Knowing all of this, does it make any sense for Christians to wait for Sunday sermons and Wednesday Bible study to hear what the Bible says and learn from it? Explain. What should we be doing?

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**Read Acts 17:11.**

In what way were the Bereans a great example for modern Christians to follow?

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Is any human being perfect? Who is the only unfailing source of Truth?

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What warning can you take from this passage?  
What could happen if you do not follow the Bereans' example?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for giving wisdom freely to those who ask.
- Tell Him how glad you are that you do not have to rely on other people to know His will for your life.
- Commit to read your Bible more so that you can hear the Holy Spirit more clearly.
- Commit to check the Truth of what you hear against the Bible itself so that you will not be tricked by the enemy.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Ask God for wisdom in all situations.
- Listen for the Holy Spirit.
- Trust God over other people and watch out for the enemy's lies.

- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- If you still need to, read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:7, again.
- Write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Are you making progress?

## PREPARE

- Do you tend to focus more on what following Jesus costs you or on all that is yours because of Him?
- Do you live your life to please Jesus or to appease Jesus? What's the difference?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Hebrews 2:11 and 1 Peter 1:3-4.**

When you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, not only did God become your Heavenly Father, but Jesus Christ Himself became your brother. What an incredible truth to digest! But, wait. It gets even better. As if having Jesus as your brother weren't enough, God also made you a joint heir. That means that you share in Jesus' inheritance just like the true and forever son or daughter of God that you are.

Based on everything we have learned so far, why do you think God would grant such privileges to a sinner? What does this tell you about God? How does it make you feel toward Him?

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**Read John 10:28-30 and John 6:39.**

If you have put your faith and trust in Jesus for your salvation, not only do you have an inheritance waiting in Heaven, but you yourself are part of Jesus' inheritance from the Heavenly Father. Together with every other Christian that has ever lived or will live, you are His gift. As such, you are cherished, protected, and kept.

How might remembering this truth help you cope with opposition and criticism from other people?

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**Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**

As His inheritance, what can you offer Jesus in return now, even as you live here on earth?

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**Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-18, 27.**

How should you treat your brothers and sisters in Christ, your fellow heirs? Why?

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## Read Revelation 19:7.

What can you do to protect the Church, the beloved bride of Christ, until we all get to Heaven?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for the inheritance that waits for you as His child.
- Thank Him for giving you worth and for choosing you to be an inheritance for Christ.
- Commit to treat your body as His temple, do your part as a member of the body of Christ, and protect the Church, the bride of Christ, at all costs.
- Ask God to show you how to live like an heir to the Kingdom.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Remember that I have an inheritance waiting in Heaven so that I do not get caught up in materialism and the things of this world.
- Honor my brother, Jesus Christ, in all that I say and do so that He might be pleased with His inheritance.

- Resist the enemy when he tries to make me feel worthless.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:7, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Almost there?



## PREPARE

- Do you think of Jesus as being far away in Heaven or very near? How does your perspective affect the way that you choose to live?
- What adjectives would the people that you spend the most time with choose to describe you? What adjectives would you use?

## PARTICIPATE

As we have already discussed, God sends the Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. His presence in a person's heart is proof they belong to God and a guarantee of eternal life in Christ. The Holy Spirit helps Christians tell the difference between the Truth of God's Word and the enemy's lies and reveals to them the mysteries of God, things that people cannot possibly understand without His help.

**Read Galatians 4:6 and John 7:38-39.**

God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are, together, the triune God, what we refer to as the Trinity. Though they are equally God, they fill different roles in our lives. Because God sent the Holy Spirit to indwell followers of Christ after Jesus ascended back into Heaven, some people view the Holy Spirit as some kind of substitute or lesser stand-in that we have to settle for until we are reunited with Jesus in Heaven. This is not true. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Jesus Christ Himself.

Does this change the way you think about Jesus? Will it change the way you respond to the Holy Spirit when He speaks to your heart to either encourage or correct you? Explain.

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**Read Psalm 139:1-12 and Ephesians 4:30-31.**

Once we put our faith and trust in Jesus, His Spirit fills us up completely. He knows our every thought, hears our every word, and sees our every deed. He takes up residence within us and never leaves. In Him, we are sealed, and our future is guaranteed. Heaven is His home, after all, and where He goes, we go.

Does knowing that Jesus Himself lives inside of those who surrender fully to Him make you feel more secure about the future? Explain.

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Does it make you feel more accountable for your actions? Explain.

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**Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 5:22-23.**

There is a difference between saying words to God you do not really mean just in case the Gospel is true and truly surrendering your heart to Jesus Christ. The first is not true conversion; it is an experiment that God does not honor. The second is the beginning of a new life in Christ. You can tell when a salvation experience is real because the person will change. Over time, they will look, sound, and act more and more like Jesus because His Spirit lives within them. They will display the fruit of the Spirit.

When did you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ? Have you changed as a result of that experience?

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Do you exhibit the fruit of the Spirit?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for sending the Spirit of His Son to those who surrender their lives to Him.
- Thank God for the security, confidence, and accountability that His Spirit gives Christians.
- Commit to listen and obey when the Holy Spirit speaks.
- Ask God to mold you into the image of Jesus and help you clear out all of the attitudes and habits that keep people from seeing the fruit of the Spirit in you.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Acknowledge the fact that nothing in my life is hidden from Jesus and draw strength and courage from His nearness.
- Be attentive to the Holy Spirit's voice in my heart and respond immediately to what I hear Him saying so that I can watch Him work through my obedience and strengthen my faith.

- Make a conscious choice not to do or say things that deny the Holy Spirit's presence in my heart.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 1:7, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.
- Practice saying it out loud without looking. Have someone else listen for accuracy.

# Week Three:

## The Truth About You

Week Three: Day One

### PREPARE

- How do you decide how you are doing spiritually? Do you compare yourself to Jesus or to other people?
- Why do you do the good things that you do? Do you do them because you love Jesus and are grateful for the sacrifice He made, or do you do them to somehow earn God's favor or make up for the wrong you have done?

### PARTICIPATE

**Read 1 John 3:4, Isaiah 59:2, and John 8:34.**

According to these verses, what is sin? Whose law is broken when someone sins?

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What does sin do to a person?

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**Read Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23, and Psalm 19:12.**

Adam and Eve were the first people to sin. When they sinned against God by breaking the rules that He laid out for their own good, sin became a part of both who they were and who we are today. Our sin condition is hereditary, like eye and skin color. We cannot help it. As a matter of fact, most of the time, we do not even realize that we have sinned, so it is impossible to be perfect.

How does this make you feel?

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**Read James 2:10.**

To us, some sin seems small and insignificant while other sin seems large and weighty, perhaps because the consequences of some sins are more obvious, painful, and lasting than others. However, to God all sin is the same because it all has the same effect; it separates us from Him eternally, a fact He hates.

Is it hard for you to accept the fact that all sin is the same in God's eyes? Why or why not?

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Does it make sense when you think about it from God's point of view? Why is God the better judge of those things?

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**Read Romans 6:23 and 2 Peter 2:4,9.**

According to these verses, what is the penalty for sin?

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**Read Romans 3:20 and Romans 5:6.**

Is there anything that we can do about our own sin condition?

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Can we save ourselves from hell?

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How would your life be different if Jesus had not come?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for giving us the Bible to help us see our sin condition for what it is.
- Thank God for loving us and hating the sin that separates us from Him.
- Ask God to reveal any sin in your life that He needs to clean out for you. When He brings it to mind, confess it and accept His forgiveness.
- Commit to turn away from the things that go against His law out of love for Him and for those who still do not know Him.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Take a moment to imagine my future without Jesus.
- Refuse to laugh at or joke about things that grieve God and separate people from Him.
- Recognize my own helplessness and rely on God's power to save me from sin moment to moment.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 2:8-9.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.

## PREPARE

- Are you living your life in Christ to its full potential or just lying low and waiting for Heaven?
- Of all of the Christians you know, whom do you most admire? Why?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Romans 5:8 and John 10:17-18.**

According to these verses, when did Jesus die to set us free? What kind of people were we?

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Would you be willing to do what He did for people like us? Was He willing? Did He have a choice?

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If you did not already know what the Bible says about Jesus, how would you describe Him based on this information? Is this the kind of man you would choose to follow on your own? Explain.

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**Read Romans 10:9 and Luke 9:23.**

What does it mean to follow Christ? How do we start? Where do we go from there?

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**Read John 10:10.**

What is one reason that Jesus did what He did? What does He want for us?

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What does that look like? Let us find out.

**Read Galatians 5:1, Romans 15:13, Ephesians 2:10, and Isaiah 41:10.**

According to these verses, what would someone living life “to the full” look like in practical terms? How would they spend their time? How would life's difficulties affect them? How would they interact with other people?

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Do you know anyone who lives this way? What specifically stands out to you about them?

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Is it possible to live this way outside of Christ?

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## PRAY

- Thank Jesus for laying down His life willingly when you did not deserve it.
- Thank God for the full life of freedom, joy, power, peace, and purpose that you have through Jesus.
- Ask God to show you what is getting in the way of you living your life to the full and commit to get rid of it.
- Ask God to use you to bless others the way Christians that you admire have blessed you.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Make a point of living my life to the full.
- Remember that Jesus laid down His life willingly for me and lay down my life willingly for Him in worship.
- View every interaction as an opportunity to bless others with the life I have in Christ.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute, once again, to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 2:8-9.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Did you remember more than you did yesterday?

## PREPARE

- Are you ready to go to Heaven, or are there some things that you want to do here first?
- Do you live for right now, or do you make decisions with eternity in mind?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read John 3:16, Matthew 7:21, and Matthew 10:32-33.**

According to these verses, who gets to go to Heaven?

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Do any of these verses bother you? Why or why not?

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**Read Revelation 5:9-13, 21:4, and 22:1-5.**

According to these passages, what will Heaven be like?

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Does that sound like somewhere you want to be?  
What about it appeals to you?

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As limited human beings, we cannot really comprehend how wonderful Heaven will be. Some, particularly those who have been blessed with a relatively easy life here on earth, tend to think of it more as a consolation prize than the glorious inheritance that it actually is. “Well, if I have to die, at least I get to go to Heaven,” or something like that.

The idea of leaving earth, the people we love, and all that is familiar can be intimidating and a little scary, but can you imagine what it will be like to experience the fullness of God’s glory? Think back to the highest spiritual moment you have ever experienced, the moment of your deepest spiritual peace. Imagine feeling that good and that close to God—closer—forever. That is what Heaven will be like.

God will be praised, as He should be, but you will also be blessed beyond what you can imagine!

What does it feel like to be at perfect peace with God? To lose yourself in worship? To follow through on something difficult that He asked you to do?



Describe those feelings.

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Imagine feeling that way forever.

**Read Philippians 3:20 and Ephesians 2:19.**

Once you become a follower of Jesus, it is impossible to feel completely at home here in this world. That is because your home is in Heaven. Things that never bothered you before will bother you, things that people do and say that do not line up with God's Word. Injustice, corruption, perversion, rebellion, idolatry, the Holy Spirit within you will call it all to your attention, warn you not to fall into it, and urge you to take a stand against it.

Do you feel completely at home in this world? Explain.

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How do you feel when you know you have sinned or rebelled against God? Why does sin not bother everyone?

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**Read John 15:18-19 and 1 Corinthians 9:22.**

Once you become a Christian, the Truth of God's Word will burn within you, and you will be miserable if you try to keep it to yourself. When you do take a stand, the world and those enslaved by it will not like it. They may not like you. Be encouraged. You are in good company. That is how they treated Jesus, too, and if you stand strong in His supernatural power, you will glorify the One you love.

The important thing is to keep spreading the Gospel so that others can be saved before it is too late. Thoughts of Heaven are not for someday; they are for right now. They should spur us into action. Everything we do here on earth should be done with eternity in mind.

Do you know anyone who still needs to put their faith and trust in Jesus? Who? Make a list.

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What are you going to do about it? How? When?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for Heaven and for making a way for you to go there.
- Thank God for the opportunity to represent Him on this earth, even when it costs you to do so.
- Ask God to use you to rescue others so they can spend eternity in Heaven too.
- Commit to talk to those whom God has brought to mind as quickly as possible, before you lose your nerve or forget.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Accept the fact that this world is not my home and loosen my grip on earthly things.
- Look forward to the blessing of Heaven and live like someone with a future and a hope.
- Tell someone how to be saved so that they can become a citizen of Heaven as well.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- If you still need to, read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 2:8-9, again.
- Write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Are you making progress?

## PREPARE

- What are you most looking forward to about Heaven?
- What does it mean to “walk with Jesus” here on earth? What does it look like? What does it feel like?

## PARTICIPATE

### Read John 14:1-4.

As we discussed yesterday, Heaven is a real place, and Jesus has gone ahead of us to prepare a place there for those who put their faith and trust in Him. Christians sing about it, look forward to it, and even daydream about it. There are entire songs dedicated to imagining what it will be like to get there and see Jesus and God face to face, but if Heaven is about seeing God and experiencing His presence, then Heaven is not just a someday place. It starts now.

### Read John 14:5-21.

Keeping in mind all that we have learned so far about Jesus, Christians, and the Holy Spirit, how is it possible for those of us who never saw Jesus in human form to experience God’s presence here on earth?

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What is Jesus' tone in this passage? What kind of relationship does He seem to want to have with us? How do you know?

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Again, remembering all that we have learned about Jesus, Christians, and the Holy Spirit, how is it possible for modern day Christians to do even greater things now than Jesus was able to do as one man in human form here on earth?

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According to this passage, are God-sized miracles possible in this day and age?

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According to this passage, how much of our being able to experience God's presence here on earth depends on us?

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**Read Matthew 11:29-30.**

Are you willing to do your part in order to experience a taste of Heaven here on earth? What does Jesus promise if you do?

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**Read Philippians 3:7-10.**

What kinds of things might “your part” entail? Are you still willing to do your part?

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**PRAY**

- Thank God for the promise of Heaven for those who put their faith and trust in Jesus.
- Thank God for letting us experience His presence through the Spirit of His Son while we are still here on earth.
- Ask God to use you to do great things for His name here on earth.
- Commit to do your part to experience His presence right now.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Be aware of God's presence in and around me.
- Rest in the fact that Jesus loves me and find comfort in Him.
- Look for opportunities to be used by God.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 2:8-9, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Almost there?



## PREPARE

- What is your first thought when you feel far away from God? What do you do about it?
- How much effort do you put into your own spiritual growth? How much do you expect God to do for you?

## PARTICIPATE

As you grow in your faith, you will experience both what we call mountaintop experiences, times of thrilling intimacy with God and a renewed sense of purpose, and what we call valleys, or low points, for one reason or another, most of which will have to do with your own mistakes and limitations, not God Himself.

It is simply impossible for our limited human bodies to sustain an emotional high indefinitely. This being true, do not read too much into how you feel when making decisions or examining your relationship with God. Though the Holy Spirit's presence does affect and influence us, there is a big difference between the Holy Spirit's conviction and fragile, fickle human emotion. Remember, God will never contradict Himself. Be discerning and make all decisions in keeping with the Truth of God's Word.

**Read Matthew 28:19-20 and 2 Timothy 2:13.**

What encouragement do you find in these verses?

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**Read Romans 6:9-11 and Romans 8:37-39.**

When Jesus died on the cross for our sin, He died for ALL sin, past, present, and future. Sin you commit after becoming a Christian does not nullify your spiritual adoption into God's family. No one, not even you, can undo what Jesus has done for you. However, as we have already discussed, sin can interfere with your ability to pray effectively and hear the Holy Spirit's voice.

**Read 1 John 1:9.**

What is the first thing you should do when you feel far away from God? How will God respond?

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**Read 2 Peter 1:3-11.**

According to this passage, what can happen when a Christian stops making an intentional effort to grow in their faith and become more like Jesus?

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What is the remedy?

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What is God's role in our spiritual growth? What is our role?

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What's the second thing you should do when you feel far away from God? What will the result be?

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Which attributes from this given list do you need to work on adding the most?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for being faithful even when you are not and for taking care of all of your sin once and for all through Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection.
- Thank God for giving you everything you need to be everything He has designed you to become.
- Ask Him to reveal to you any sin that might be causing static in your relationship with Him. When He reveals it, confess it and turn away from it.
- Commit to make a conscious effort to grow spiritually by adding the things mentioned in 2 Peter.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Remember that while I can be fragile and fickle sometimes, God is strong and faithful.
- Make a list of spiritual attributes that I need to work on.
- Stand on God's Word so that I do not get swept away by my own emotions.

- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 2:8-9, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.
- Practice saying it out loud without looking. Have someone else listen for accuracy.

# Week Four:

## Building Unity

### Week Four: Day One

#### PREPARE

- Does the way that you interact with others prove that you belong to God?
- How would your life be different if Jesus treated you the way that you have treated the people around you in the last 24 hours?

#### PARTICIPATE

We make Christianity out to be something that is just between us and God, but that is not true. Once we give our lives to Jesus, we become members of God's family, a large and diverse family made up of people all over the world with different backgrounds, personality types, strengths, weaknesses, and giftedness, and how we interact with one another and other people speaks volumes to the world about our Heavenly Father.

This being true, we must learn to interact with one another in the same way that our brother Jesus interacts with us so that people will get the right idea about God and want to be adopted by Him, too.

**Read John 13:2-5.**

What character trait is Jesus demonstrating here?

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Did Jesus have to do this? Would anyone who knew that He was the Son of God have expected Him to do this? Why did He do it?

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Are you normally the one who washes the feet of others or expects their feet to be washed? Give examples.

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**Read Matthew 19:13-14.**

Why would Jesus' disciples keep the little children from interacting with Jesus?

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What was Jesus' response? What does that tell you about Him? What character trait did He display?

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Do you pick and choose who is worthy of your time and attention, or do you minister to everyone, regardless of whether or not they have anything to offer you in return?

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**Read John 20:26-28.**

After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, Thomas was one of the last disciples to believe. Instead of condemning Thomas or making him feel foolish, Jesus made an extra effort to help Thomas along in his journey of faith, giving him time to discover and digest the Truth for Himself.

What character trait did Jesus display in treating Thomas this way?

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Are you patient with people, or do you expect them to know what you know, act how you act, say what you say, and do what you do as soon as you learn it yourself?

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Of the three character traits we just looked at, which one do you display the most? Why do you think that is? Which one do you display the least? Why?

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What, if anything, do you need to do differently in order to give non-Christians the right idea about your Heavenly Father?

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## PRAY

- Thank Jesus for treating you with humility, gentleness, and patience and for being the standard to match in those areas.
- Ask God to help you represent Him accurately in your interaction with people.

- Ask God to call to your mind any relationships that might need mending on your part and commit to make those relationships right.
- Commit to put others first and to make a conscious choice to love them just the way they are so that you do not stand in the way of their getting to know God for themselves.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Make a conscious effort to serve others instead of letting them serve me, not so that I will look good, but so that Jesus will look good.
- Give my time and attention to people without expecting anything in return.
- Be patient with those who are not the way I think they should be and let God work in their hearts on His timetable.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 4:1-3.

- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.

## PREPARE

- Is it ever okay to lie?
- Understanding that all sin is equal in God's eyes, in your own opinion, is telling a lie a big deal? Why or why not?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Proverbs 6:16-19.**

How does God feel about lying?

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Would you have guessed that lying would make the list of the seven things God hates? Why or why not?

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Look again. How many times does lying make the list? What does that tell you?

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**Read John 14:6.**

According to this verse, who is Jesus? List all three titles.

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**Read John 8:44.**

According to this verse, who is Satan?

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Taking all of this into consideration, why do you think it is so important for Christians, Jesus' representatives, to tell the truth at all times?

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Why are we tempted to lie? What are the drawbacks to speaking the truth? What are the benefits?

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**Read John 8:31-33.**

How does Jesus, the Truth, set you free?

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How does telling the truth in obedience to Him set you free?

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When it comes to telling the truth, do you represent Jesus well? What, if anything, needs to change?

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## **PRAY**

- Thank God for revealing the Truth to you. Thank God for the person(s) who loved you enough to tell you the truth about Jesus and God's plan for your life.
- Ask God to reveal to you any lies that you may have told that need to be made right and commit to set the record straight as soon as possible.

- Ask God to make your heart hurt when you are tempted to lie so you do not misrepresent Jesus, who is the Truth. Commit to shut your mouth when God tells you to.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Think before I speak and make sure no lies escape.
- Focus on sharing the Truth of God's Word to combat the lies that Satan is telling people.
- Run everything that I hear through the filter of God's Word so Satan cannot trick me.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute, once again, to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 4:1-3.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Did you remember more than you did yesterday?

## PREPARE

- Do you know anyone with a quick temper? If so, how does it affect the people around them?
- Have you ever held a grudge? If so, how did it affect you? How did it affect the other person? Did it help the situation?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Ephesians 4:26 and James 1:19.**

According to these verses, is anger itself a sin?

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**Read Psalm 4:4-5.**

According to this verse, what is the proper way to handle anger?

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**Read Matthew 5:38-48 and Colossians 3:13.**

What are we supposed to do when we feel angry toward other people?

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Why is that so difficult?

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**Read James 1:20.**

Why is it so important to learn how to handle our anger?

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**Read Genesis 4:3-12.**

Now, the story of Cain and Able is an extreme example of what can happen when we do not learn to control our anger, but it happens sometimes.

What other things do people do when they hold on to anger?

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Who suffers when we hold on to our anger?

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## Read Galatians 5:22-23.

Is it possible to display the fruit of the Spirit and display anger at the same time? Explain.

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## PRAY

- Thank God for being slow to anger and for not holding a grudge against you even though He could.
- Ask God to forgive you for the times that you have let your temper get the best of you. Ask Him to show you how to make things right with the people who were affected.
- Commit to let go of any anger that you are holding onto and forgive those who have angered you.
- Spend time praying for your enemies.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Focus on praising the Lord and displaying the Fruit of the Spirit.
- Let God handle things.
- Forgive immediately for my own sake and everyone else's.

- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- If you still need to, read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 4:1-3, again.
- Write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Are you making progress?

## PREPARE

- Have you ever stolen from someone? If so, what? How did you resolve the situation?
- Do you struggle with jealousy? If so, over what? How does it affect your relationships?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Exodus 20:15 and Ephesians 4:28.**

The command not to steal seems an obvious one to most of us. There are legal consequences for taking other people's things, after all, but stealing can take other forms. Intentionally or unintentionally, most of us have robbed people of intangible things at one time or another; confidence, joy, freedom, reputation, opportunity, forgiveness, or peace of mind. The list goes on and on. Taking things from others that God intended for them to have is not only mean; it is a sin. You might fool others, but God knows your thoughts and motives as well as your words and actions. He is not fooled, and He wants better for and from you.

Have you intentionally or unintentionally stolen from others? Explain.

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**Read Proverbs 14:30 and Proverbs 27:4.**

Where does stealing start?

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**Read Matthew 6:20 and 1 John 1:9.**

What should we do when we feel jealous of what someone else has? What should we do when we realize we have been stealing?

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**Read Philippians 4:19.**

Do we ever need to steal? What if we do not get what we want from God? What should we assume?

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**Read Isaiah 46:11.**

One of the best ways to fight jealousy, covetousness, and greed is to focus on giving to others. Do not forget that God often uses one child to bless another, and everyone needs something, even those who seem to have it all.

What is it that you need from other people? Make a list.

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Could you offer any of these things to others? Which ones?

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What other things could you offer? Here are just a few suggestions: time, encouragement, support, attention, social space, friendship, recognition.

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**Read Matthew 6:2-4.**

Do not forget. God does not need you to accomplish His purposes, but He uses you so that you might be blessed and bring Him glory.

According to these verses, what is the correct attitude to have when giving to others?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for meeting all of your needs. Ask Him to help you be content with what He has chosen to give you.
- Ask God to forgive you for being jealous of others and for stealing from them intentionally or unintentionally as a result of that jealousy.
- Ask God to show you how you could be a blessing to others and commit to share with others however He leads.
- Commit to give humbly so He might be glorified and you might receive your reward in Heaven instead of here on earth.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Focus on my blessings rather than on what I wish I had and maintain an attitude of gratitude.
- Recognize jealousy and give it to God when it crops up in my heart.
- Look for opportunities to give and bless others and follow through.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 4:1-3, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Almost there?



## PREPARE

- Have you ever been affected positively or negatively by someone else's words? How?
- Do you use your words as a building tool or a weapon?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Ephesians 4:29.**

What would you say qualifies as “unwholesome talk”? How does it affect those who have to listen to it? How do you know?

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**Read Proverbs 19:5, Proverbs 16:28, James 3:9-11, and Ephesians 5:4.**

According to these verses, what qualifies as “unwholesome talk”? Are there more examples than these?

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**Read James 1:19.**

Anytime we use words in a way that interferes with God's plan in another person's life, those words are unwholesome. Sins of speech are subtle. We may not even be aware of the fact that we are misusing our words until we see what grows from the seeds we have planted.

What is the best way to make sure that we are not saying something we should not say?

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**Read Luke 6:45.**

Fever indicates infection. What does unwholesome talk indicate about the person speaking?

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What do your words indicate about the condition of your heart?

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**Read Matthew 5:23-24, Proverbs 15:1, and Ephesians 5:18-20.**

Sometimes, the best way to avoid going south is to head north. What can we do to make sure that the words that come out of our mouths are acceptable?

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**PRAY**

- Thank God for His Word, the Bible.
- Thank God for the people in your life who have used their words to build you up, encourage you, teach you, and guide you. Ask God to bless them for their faithfulness.
- Ask God to get your attention when you are about to say something you should not. Ask Him to convict you when you say it anyway.

**PLAN**

Today, I will:

- Consider the effect my words might have on others before I speak and speak only words that will benefit those who listen.
- Apologize to those who need an apology from me.

- Make an effort to encourage others and talk about Jesus.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 4:1-3, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.
- Practice saying it out loud without looking. Have someone else listen for accuracy.

# Week Five:

## Walking with Integrity

### Week Five: Day One

#### PREPARE

- Do people ever say that you remind them of someone? If so, whom? Whom do you think you most resemble?
- Where will someone who chooses to imitate you find themselves in the immediate future? A year from now? Ten years from now?

#### PARTICIPATE

##### Read Acts 11:25-26.

The believers in Antioch, under the leadership of Barnabas and Saul, were serious about living for God and stood out in their community. Other people gave them the nickname “Christian,” which means “little Christ.” For this nickname to have caught on like it did, the difference in their lives must have been marked, consistent from believer to believer, and a little troubling to those around them.

Does the nickname “Christian” fit someone who lives their life the way that you live yours?

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**Read John 6:38.**

What was Jesus' purpose?

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**Read John 12:49-50, Matthew 28:18, and John 14:10-11.**

Whom did Jesus obey?

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Whose words did He speak?

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On whose authority did He act?

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From whom did He draw power?

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**Read John 7:16-18.**

What is the warning for Christians in these verses?

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**Read John 8:49-50, 54.**

Whose glory did Jesus seek?

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**Read Mark 2:13,16-17.**

How did Jesus spend His time? To whom did He reach out?

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**Read 1 Corinthians 11:1.**

These words were spoken by the apostle Paul. Taking into consideration all that you read and studied today, could you say the same? What, if anything, needs to change?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for the opportunity to follow and serve Jesus Christ.
- Thank God for the Pauls in your life, the people who have set a good example for you in their faithfulness to Jesus Christ.
- Ask God to mold you into the image of Jesus Christ, chipping away anything and everything that is keeping you from looking like Him, even if the process hurts.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Focus on Jesus Christ and the example that He set in life and ministry.
- Imitate Jesus by living for God's glory, relying on Him for everything I need, and reaching out to those who need to know Jesus.
- Tell those who have been a good example for me that I appreciate their faithfulness.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 5:1-2.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.

## Week Five: Day Two

### PREPARE

- Do you serve God to please God or to impress others?
- How do you define spiritual success?

### PARTICIPATE

**Read Philippians 2:5-11.**

The Jews in Jesus' day had been waiting for the promised Messiah for many generations. While they waited, they did what many of us would have done. They daydreamed and allowed themselves to imagine what their Deliverer would be like. They assumed that He would be a powerful public figure by the world's standards, a military hero. He was not.

What qualities did Jesus show in verses six, seven, and eight that would have bothered people who were looking for a worldly leader?

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Was Jesus successful by the world's standards? Explain.

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Was Jesus successful by God's standards? What was God's response to Jesus' actions?

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Was Jesus' goal to serve mankind or to serve God? How do you know?

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**Read Mark 10:35-45.**

Even James and John, two of Jesus' disciples, had the wrong idea about Jesus, who He was and why He came.

What was it that James and John wanted from Jesus? What did their request reveal about their knowledge of Jesus and God's divine plan?

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Were James and John hoping to give or to gain as followers of Jesus? Whom were they really serving? Do you think they even realized it?

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Can you relate to James and John in any way? Explain.

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What must we, as imitators of Christ, do to be successful in God's eyes? Are you willing to do that?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for sending the servant-king, Jesus Christ, to be your Deliverer.
- Ask God to show you whether your motives in serving and following Christ are pure or impure. Confess any impurity and accept His forgiveness.
- Ask God to help you find contentment in obedience to Him, whether or not it ever brings you recognition or earthly reward.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Put aside selfish ambition and humble myself as Jesus did.
- Not be jealous when others receive recognition for their service and I do not.

- Focus only on obeying God and leave the results of that obedience up to Him.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute, once again, to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 5:1-2.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Did you remember more than you did yesterday?

## Week Five: Day Three

### PREPARE

- Why do you think some people resist God so strongly?
- Do you ever feel like pulling away from God? If so, why?

### PARTICIPATE

**Read John 3:16.**

Why do people like this verse?

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**Read John 3:17.**

What widespread misconception about God is set straight in this verse?

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**Read John 3:18.**

What Truth do you find in this verse that might make some people angry? Why? Do they have the right to be angry about it? Explain.

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**Read John 3:19-21.**

What does a person's reaction to Jesus reveal about that person?

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**Read 1 John 1:6-7 and 1 John 2:9-11.**

Can you love Jesus and hate people?

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What does hatred toward or inability to get along with other people say about your spiritual condition?

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**Read Ephesians 5:7-14.**

Do Christians ever resist the light of Christ? When?

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Knowing this, what should you do when you feel yourself pulling away from church, your Christian friends, Bible study, prayer, etc.? Who can help you fix what's wrong?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for the light of Jesus Christ.
- Thank God for the opportunity to reflect the light of Christ to those around you.
- Ask God to show you how to love others the way Jesus loves you.
- Ask God to show you any darkness in you that needs to come to light. Confess any sin that comes to mind and accept His forgiveness.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Avoid evil at all costs and expose the darkness.
- Remember that I once lived in the darkness and show compassion for those who are still living there.
- Show genuine love for others, no matter who they are or what they have done.



- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- If you still need to, read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 5:1-2, again.
- Write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Are you making progress?

## PREPARE

- Who is the wisest person you know? Where do they get their wisdom from?
- Do you make careful, thought-out decisions that line up with God's will for your life as stated in Scripture, or do you make impulsive, emotional decisions?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Proverbs 2:1-11.**

According to this passage, how does wisdom benefit a person?

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Where does wisdom come from?

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**Read Psalm 119:105 and James 1:5.**

According to these verses, how does a person become wise?

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**Read Proverbs 14:12.**

Why do not more people seek wisdom from God?

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What is wrong with relying on your own wisdom?

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**Read 1 Peter 5:8, John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.**

According to these verses, why is human knowledge not enough? What is the enemy up to?

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**Read Proverbs 13:20, Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 23:12, and Psalm 1:1-2.**

What practical things should a person who is seeking God's wisdom do?

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Are you doing these things? What more could you be doing?

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What should you do with wisdom once you have it?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for making wisdom available to all who seek it.
- Commit to rely on God's wisdom, not your own.
- Commit to read Scripture, make an effort to understand it, meditate on it, and memorize it.
- Commit to share what you learn with others and actually do the things that Scripture tells you to do.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Think about my Bible study throughout the day.
- Notice what happens to people who rely on their own wisdom and do the opposite.

- Pay attention when God brings a Bible verse to mind and do what it says.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 5:1-2, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Almost there?

## PREPARE

- How do you feel about marriage in general? Where do those feelings come from? Do those feelings affect the way that you interact with others?
- Does it bother you when children, young or grown, disrespect their parents? Why or why not? What kind of relationship do you have with your parents?

## PARTICIPATE

### Read Ephesians 5:21.

This verse is written to all believers. How does our submitting to one another prove that there is something different about us? What does it show others about Jesus?

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### Read Ephesians 5:22-24.

Why do people get so worked up over these verses? How might they be misinterpreted and misused?

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**Read Ephesians 5:25-31.**

According to this passage, what is the husband's role in a marriage?

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Would a wife have trouble submitting to a husband that did all of the things listed here? If she did, what would that say about her spiritual condition?

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**Read Ephesians 5:30-33.**

Marriage is a metaphor for the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church. Why, then, does the world need to see healthy marriages between Christians?

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**Read Ephesians 6:1-4.**

According to this passage, what is a child's responsibility to his or her parents? What blessing comes with obedience to this command?

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According to this passage, what is a parent's responsibility to a child? How does a parent's faithfulness to fulfill this responsibility make a child's job easier?

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**Read 1 John 1:7.**

According to this verse what is the key to getting along with other Christians?

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**Read 1 Corinthians 12:13.**

What kinds of things should we be able to assume about any Christian that we meet?

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How does that commonality help us form relationships, maintain those relationships, and fulfill the mission that God has given us as followers of Jesus?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for your earthly family, flaws and all.
- Ask God to work in the hearts of your family members so that you can be the kind of family He intends for you to be both now and in the future.
- Thank God for your spiritual family and ask God to use you to bless them.
- Commit to uphold your end of the relationships in your life so that people can see Jesus in you.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Show respect for the institution of marriage in my words, actions, and attitudes.
- Focus on what my family could be with God's help rather than on what we are right now.
- Uphold my responsibility to my parents, my spouse (if applicable), and other believers.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 5:1-2, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.
- Practice saying it out loud without looking. Have someone else listen for accuracy.

# Week Six:

## Becoming a Warrior

### Week Six: Day One

#### PREPARE

- Do you ever get tired of fighting Satan? What keeps you going?
- Where would you be if the Christians that you look up to and/or the person(s) who told you about Jesus had given up the fight?

#### PARTICIPATE

**Read Ephesians 6:10-11.**

While many people would like to think that there is not a war going on and that all people, ideologies, doctrines, and faiths can coexist peacefully, they are wrong. There is a war going on, and it is God and His army, those of us who have put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, versus Satan and his army.

Think for just a moment. What evidence of a spiritual battle do you see in the world around you?

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Satan is not a gentleman and cares nothing for people, though he tricks them into thinking that he has their best interests at heart. No, guerilla warfare is his game, and he shows no mercy. Most of the time, we do not even know he has been at work until a bomb goes off; i.e. a marriage splits up, a friendship crumbles, a spiritual leader falls, a church is crippled by infighting, etc. He wields deadly weapons that are difficult to detect until they have done their work; i.e. doubt, fear, jealousy, malice, gossip, selfishness, perversion, lust, greed, idolatry, etc., and he uses people like suicide bombers.

How do you fight an enemy like this? You stay strong and stand firm, trusting the armor that God has given you to protect you; and because the enemy never sleeps, you never take your armor off.

Do you know anyone who treats Christianity like a role that they play now and then? What is the danger of living life this way?

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Are these the kind of people that you want to fight beside? Explain.

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What kind of people should you surround yourself with? Why?

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**Read Ephesians 6:12.**

According to this verse, is Satan's army made up of people? What is it made up of?

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Who are the real victims in this battle? Why is that so important that we remember this when doing battle with the actual enemy?

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**Read Ephesians 6:13**

According to this verse, what is our goal as soldiers in God's army?

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Does it seem that we should be doing more than that? Explain.

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**Read Romans 16:20, Revelation 20:10, 15, Colossians 1:13-14, 1 Corinthians 9:22.**

The outcome of this war that we are in has already been determined. In the end, God wins and Satan is thrown into an eternal lake of fire along with everyone who never puts their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation.

What, then, remains to be determined? Why are we still fighting?

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What does this have to do with our standing firm against the enemy? How will our standing firm for all to see, no matter what, help us accomplish the goal that God has given us?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for winning the war against Satan and for giving you everything you need to protect yourself in the battles you face.
- Thank God for the opportunity to help rescue others before it is too late for them.
- Ask God to help you recognize the enemy's attacks for what they are and stand firm.
- Ask God to remind you that your battle is not against people, but against Satan and his spiritual army.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- See people for who they really are, soldiers in God's army or victims of Satan, helpless to understand what is truly at stake.
- Resist Satan's schemes and reveal them for what they are so that no one gets sucked in.
- Stand confident in the One who protects me.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 6:12.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.



## PREPARE

- Does the way that you respond when you are attacked glorify God?
- Do you make an effort to prepare for spiritual battle, or do you just take it as it comes and hope for the best?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Ephesians 6:13-14.**

If we were fighting a physical battle, then tangible armor might be enough to protect us, but our battle is a spiritual one that requires spiritual armor, something we cannot fashion for ourselves. Fortunately, our Heavenly Father provides it for us. All we have to do is put it on and fasten it.

Long ago, soldiers used a leather strap as a belt to cinch up loose clothing and hold everything in place. When they tied it, they did so knowing that it would have to hold or the enemy might be able to grab hold of loose clothing and bring them down. When we put on the belt of truth, we are determining in our hearts not to be brought down by the enemy. We are committing to fight this battle for the Lord alone and not to waver or give the enemy a foothold.

**Read Psalm 139:23 and Joshua 1:8.**

What kinds of things can you do to make sure that all of your spiritual loose ends are tied up and out of reach of the enemy?

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Against what spiritual mirror should you check your readiness for battle?

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Long ago, soldiers wore vests of leather adorned with bits of animal horns and hooves to protect their core and vital organs. They did so to make sure that the swords and arrows of the enemy could not pierce the skin and drain the life from them. When we intentionally pursue the things of God, obeying His commands and enjoying the intimate fellowship with Christ that results from that obedience, we put on the breastplate of righteousness and protect ourselves from corruption, perversion, and possible death.

**Read 2 Corinthians 7:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, and Proverbs 4:23.**

What happens when people get spiritually lazy? What is the danger?

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Are you taking an active or passive approach to your own spiritual growth? Explain.

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What practical steps are you taking to guard your heart?

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What do you do when you notice yourself slacking spiritually? What measures do you take to change?

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Do you leave yourself margin for error when deciding what is and is not acceptable behavior for a soldier in God's army, or do you put yourself at unnecessary risk? Explain.

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## PRAY

- Thank God for protecting you with spiritual armor.
- Commit to use the spiritual armor that God has provided.
- Ask God to show you where you may be vulnerable to the enemy for lack of righteousness.
- Confess any spiritual laziness that you may have displayed and commit to take practical steps to overcome it.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Take intentional steps toward fellowship with Christ to make sure I am not taking steps backwards.
- Take care of any spiritual loose ends in my life that make me vulnerable to Satan's attacks.
- Ask someone to hold me accountable and let me know when they think I am becoming spiritually lazy.

- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Take a minute, once again, to read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 6:12.
- Close your Bible and write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Did you remember more than you did yesterday?

## PREPARE

- When you face challenges and difficulties, where do you find strength, comfort, and the will to continue to fight?
- How do you defend yourself against Satan when he attacks?

## PARTICIPATE

### Read Ephesians 6:15.

Long ago, soldiers wore boots with nails through the sole to help them stand their ground in battle. Likewise, the truth of the Gospel gives those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus the confidence to stand firm against the enemy, just as we have been told to do. Through Jesus, our relationship with God is secure. We have no reason to falter when the enemy, who has already been defeated through Jesus death and resurrection, takes a stab at us.

What kinds of things does the enemy do to scare Christians? How does our confidence in the Gospel protect us?

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**Read Romans 8:35-37 and 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.**

Should anything that Satan does scare those of us who truly know Jesus? Explain.

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Besides holding us firmly in place against the enemy's attacks, the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives us traction in our efforts to rescue others from an eternity separated from God. It secures us. It centers us. It drives us and gives us purpose.

**Read 1 Corinthians 9:20-24.**

How far are you willing to go to share the Gospel? What are you willing to sacrifice? Be specific.

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How do you suppose Satan will respond to your efforts? Then what will you do?

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**Read Ephesians 6:16.**

Long ago, soldiers held up shields to deflect the arrows and sword blows of the enemy. When we set out to share the Gospel, we can expect Satan and/or his army to come after us. Sometimes his attacks are blatant, and sometimes they are subtle, but whether he comes at us publicly or privately, our trust in God protects us; our shield of faith.

In the midst of heavy battle, it is so important that we not get swept away by fickle human emotion, but make a conscious choice to believe the truth of God's Word and trust in God's faithfulness.

What kinds of arrows does Satan usually throw at you?

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Knowing this, what can you do ahead of time to prepare for those times of heavy battle?

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Why do you suppose it is easier for people who have known Jesus for a long time and/or been through something difficult to wield their shield of faith? What can you learn from watching them?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for the Gospel and the strength that it gives you to stand firm against the enemy.
- Ask God for the courage to do whatever it takes to share the Gospel with others and commit to follow through when you are given the opportunity.
- Commit to prepare for Satan's attacks by studying your Bible and strengthening your faith.
- Commit to share what God has done for you with others so their faith can be strengthened as well.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Respond in a way that glorifies God when Satan attacks as an example to others.
- Practice telling the story of how I came to know Jesus personally so that I can repeat it to myself when Satan tries to make me doubt and so that I can share it with other people when I get the chance.
- Spend time looking up verses that remind me of God's faithfulness so that I will not be discouraged when Satan attacks.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- If you still need to, read this week's memory verse, Ephesians 6:12, again.
- Write down as much of the verse as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Are you making progress?

## PREPARE

- When you have questions, where do you turn: other people, your gut or emotions, human logic, or the Bible?
- Are you walking so closely with Jesus that you never have to doubt your salvation, or do you get lazy sometimes and, in doing so, give the enemy room to attack your peace of mind?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Ephesians 6:17.**

Long ago, just as they do today, soldiers wore helmets to protect their heads because the brain inside controls everything else in the body. As Christians, our minds are protected by the helmet of salvation, the assurance that we are in Christ and belong to Him now and forever.

Why is the brain a popular target in combat? What kind of problems does brain damage cause the human body? What advantage does it give the enemy?

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Why would Satan choose to attack our minds with doubt? What kinds of problems might doubt cause a Christian to have? What advantage would that give Satan in battle?

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**Read John 6:37-39 and 1 Peter 1:3-5.**

When Satan attacks and tries to make us doubt our salvation, all we have to do is remind ourselves of the truth of God's word. As Christians, our adoption into God's family is permanent. We did not do anything to earn our salvation, so we cannot do anything to lose it. It is a free gift from our Heavenly Father, and He has promised not to take it back.

**Read 2 Peter 1:5-9.**

Knowing that we are saved because of what Jesus did, not what we have done, what would cause us to listen to Satan's lies even for a second (vs. 9)?

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According to this passage, what proactive measures can we take to protect ourselves from that kind of doubt?

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**Read Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12.**

So far, we've talked a lot about standing our ground and protecting ourselves in battle, but there comes a time when every soldier must fight. Long ago, soldiers fought with swords, knives, and arrows. Our weapon is God's Word. Our sword is the Bible.

According to these verses, how effective is the weapon God has given us?

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**Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.**

According to this verse, how do we use the Bible to fight Satan?

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**Read Psalm 119:11.**

It does not do any good to have a weapon if you are not going to keep it handy. As Christians, how do we keep our weapon handy?

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## PRAY

- Thank God that you can know for sure that your salvation is real and lasting.
- Thank God for giving you an effective weapon against Satan.
- Commit to spend time memorizing Scripture so that you will always have your weapon handy when Satan attacks.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Look ahead with confidence knowing that my salvation is secure if I have put my faith and trust in Jesus to save me from my sin.
- Work on adding these character traits: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.
- Refuse to believe or give any thought to ideas that go against the Truth of God's Word.
- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 6:12, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps. Almost there?

## PREPARE

- Is prayer a big part of your life or something you only do at meals, at church, and/or during times of crisis?
- Is your prayer life powerful? How do you know?

## PARTICIPATE

**Read Philippians 4:6-7.**

According to this passage, what should you do when you feel anxious?

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How should you pray? What will happen when you do?

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Many people misunderstand prayer and its purpose. They think that if they pray for something and God does not give it to them, He is ignoring them or being mean. That is not true.



God has a plan, and, because He is God and knows more than we do, His plan is always best. However, we do not know the plan and sometimes ask for things that go against it simply because we do not know any better. God cannot say "yes" to those prayers because His plan and purposes simply must take priority. It is as simple as that.

The purpose of prayer is not to get God to do what we want Him to do, but to get to know Him better. When we pray with a humble spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to guide our words when we pray, God reveals His plan to us a little bit at a time and uses our prayers to bring about His will. Like the good Father that He is, He lets us help, and we can rest knowing that we have done our part and the outcome is up to Him.

**Read Ephesians 6:18.**

According to these verses, how often should you pray?

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What should you pray about?

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Whom should you pray for?

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**Read Philippians 2:13 and Romans 8:26.**

How do you know what to pray? What happens if you cannot find the right words?

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**Read James 5:16.**

What promise do you find in this verse? How do you know whether or not your prayers are helping?

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Think about everything you learned today. How does God use prayer to bless those who are doing the praying?

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Is it possible to find peace through prayer even before you know the outcome? How?

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## PRAY

- Thank God for the opportunity to pray and for hearing your prayers.
- Thank Him for using your prayers to bless you and to bless others.
- Ask Him to teach you how to pray in accordance with His will so that He can say “yes” to your prayers.
- Commit to make His plan and purposes the priority of your prayers.

## PLAN

Today, I will:

- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's voice and pray for people as I go about my day.
- Pursue righteousness so that my prayers will be effective.
- Find peace through prayer knowing that God is faithful and working to bring about His plan even when I cannot see it.

- Other:

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## PRACTICE

- Try to write down as much of this week's memory verse, Ephesians 6:12, as you can without looking.

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- Use your Bible to go back and fill in any gaps.
- Practice saying it out loud without looking. Have someone else listen for accuracy.



