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THE GOSPEL
OF LUKE
24 DAY
DEVOTIONAL

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by Torrie Slaughter

Introduction

The Gospel of Luke 24 Day Devotional

Welcome Friends!

This marks the beginning of 24 days of reading the Gospel of Luke. Spending time with God and developing a personal relationship with Him is the goal. Dedicating a specific time to read and pray creates an appointment we don't want to miss. Several years ago I began my journey back to Christ through reading a 30 day devotional. It ignited a fire that had slowly burned down because of misplaced priorities. I am grateful God placed this huge undertaking in my hands and trusted me to deliver His timeless Words with my own understanding. I hope you will enjoy reading and reconnecting with God. May His Holy Word encourage you, thank you for taking this journey with me.

~Torie Slaughter



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Luke Chapter One

Day 1

Save the Turtles, Silence the Gnats

- **Day One Bible Reading:**

- **Luke 1:1-80**

- **Focus Scripture-** Luke 1:20 "And behold, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day these things take place because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time."

This morning I saved a turtle's life. No, I didn't give it mouth to mouth but I saw it on the road, picked it up, and placed it in a safer area. He looked back at me and I felt his gratitude. With a smile on my face and warmth in my heart, I walked away... SMACK!!! I killed the gnat that was flying around my face. Yep, I saved the turtle and "silenced" the gnat. Why??? Well, the obvious reason; gnats get into places they shouldn't!! Buzzing around eyes and ears, they are annoying little... buzzers. GASP!! I shocked myself with my thoughts. I reacted with compassion for the turtle and annoyance to the gnat. (Something I could control, versus what I could not.) We don't always understand the bigger picture; so we question it and may react poorly. I recognized my need to be mindful of my impulses and even though it was a gnat it showed me how quick emotions change.

Luke 1:13-17 The angel Gabriel came to give Zacharias good news. His prayers being were answered! Not only was he going to have a son but this child would grow up and announce the coming of the long-awaited Savior of the world. But, Zacharias smacked down this wonderful news with his questions and doubts. Through the angel Gabriel, God responded to Zacharias by silencing him. Zacharias' posture was in need of change, he needed to slow down. God's divine timing was at hand and Zacharias was unaware of the glorious miracle that was about to take place.

Have you ever worked with an architect, event designer, or watched a conductor direct a group of singers or musicians? One of their talents is seeing and understanding the completed picture. The coordinator assigns duties to his colleagues, as part of the process. If we doubt or question the assignment we may find ourselves demoted to looking for a specific shade of pale turquoise tile, balloons, or bow ties instead of interacting with the main group. The "busy work" given to us, because of our doubt, could usher in a time of self-reflection. We could grow more trusting to those in charge and/or those entrusted by the Master Coordinator, God.

Zacharias' words demoted him. He was part of an intricately woven master plan but questioned the authority and ability of God. He was unable to celebrate until John was born. His season of reflection made the wonder of this miraculous event even more powerful and historic. God's arrival in human form was something to behold, a prophecy fulfilled. But He had to work around His created humans...He often has to work around us.

Whether we meet turtles crossing the road or gnats that fly around us, we are responsible for what we feel, say, or do. Will we react in understanding, doubt, or annoyance? Let's be careful not to quickly dismiss or smack down the events in our lives simply because we can not see the immediate usefulness. God's plan defines us, we all serve a purpose in His WILL being done. How much involvement we have may depend on God being able to trust us.

Journal Prompts Chapter 1

1. What am I idly praying for?
2. Am I living out my purpose in God's plan or have I given myself "busy" work?
3. Has God rendered me silent in an area I wanted to celebrate because I doubted Him?

A Few Points:

Luke introduces himself and gives an explanation for writing his Gospel. Luke 1:1-4

Zacharias and Elizabeth are ready for retirement and had been praying for a child of their own. Luke 1:5-10

Zacharias offers prayer in the temple and is visited by the angel Gabriel. Luke 1:11-12

Zacharias doubts the validity of God's answer to his long cried for prayer and as a result struck silent. Luke 1:18-20

Mary is visited by the same angel Gabriel and told she will be the one to bring Christ into this world. Luke 1:26-38

Joseph threatens to leave Mary, but is stopped by God. Matthew 1:18-25

Mary visits Elizabeth and enjoys meaningful fellowship with her relative. Luke 1:39-56

Elizabeth gives birth to John and Zacharias is able to speak. Luke 1:57-64

Luke Chapter Two

Day 2

Amber Alert: Jesus is Missing

- **Day 2 Luke Chapter 2**

- **Bible Reading-** Luke 2:1-52

- **Focus Scripture:** Luke 2:48-50: When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for you. And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

"I'm looking for Jesus...have you seen Him!!?!" I can imagine the panic that swept over Mary when she realized that Jesus was not with the caravan. She and Joseph frantically running from relative to relative, person to person, asking and searching for Him. Anxious worry rising up over the entire campsite. **Where could Jesus be!?** After searching long and hard they began to retrace their steps journeying back to Jerusalem. I'm sure close relatives went along combing through the well-traveled route calling out, **"Jesus! Jesus! Where are you?"** What if He had been hurt and couldn't cry out because of an injury or worse someone had taken Him? All of those fears, along with guilt and shame for "losing" their twelve-year-old son likely swept through Mary's mind as she considered the worst possible outcomes. I envision the other mothers trying to calm Mary telling her, Jesus: was a special child; old enough to fend for Himself, and at any moment they would see Him walking towards them. Finally, they reached the very grounds they departed from three days ago. (Luke 2:46) Exhausted from searching and frazzled from lack of sleep, Mary's eyes fell upon Jesus. There He sat questioning and listening in the Temple. Perfectly fine, fulfilling His purpose...(Luke 2:49)

The major school field trips I've had the pleasure to chaperone used the "buddy system". This was one of the best accountability methods, especially when traveling in a large city. Pairs of students were responsible for each other's whereabouts. But what if your "buddy" is God the Father? What Jesus had done was show Himself as part of the Holy Triune God. He was found teaching and listening (Luke 2:47); in fellowship with other believers. If we look at this from a different perspective had Mary and Joseph left God?... They had celebrated the Feast of the Passover as a ritual for the week and were going back to their regular schedules. They did not understand why Jesus had stayed or why He answered them the way He had. But Mary pondered it, just as she had when the angel Gabriel called her favored one. (Luke 1:28)

We often leave God when we dismiss Him because we think we've given enough tithe, time, and praise at church or during midweek Bible Study. We go about our daily activities until something happens to jar our memories. If we leave Jesus we can simply and sincerely call on His name. His Holy Spirit is our guide and will give us the peace and clarity we need when we acknowledge we've tried to move ahead without Him. If you've searched and felt like something is absent ask yourself, "is Jesus missing from my life?"

Journal Prompts: Chapter 2

1. When was the last time you misplaced something only to find it exactly where you left it?
2. What are you waiting and praying for?
3. How did Jesus reveal Himself to you in this chapter?

A Few Points:

Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem to be included in the census. Luke 2:1-5

Mary gives birth to Jesus. Luke 2:6-7

The shepherds are told by the Angel of God that the Savior had been born. The shepherds visit Christ praising and glorifying God. Luke 2:8-20

Mary and Joseph have Jesus dedicated at the Temple by Simeon. Simeon also blesses them. Luke 2:21-33

Anna the prophetess spreads the news of the Messiah. Luke 2:36-38

Jesus astounded the religious teachers with His depth of wisdom. Luke 2:46-47

Mary and Joseph are dismayed by "losing" Jesus and search for Him. Luke 2:48-50

Luke Chapter Three

Day 3

Publicly Pious, Privately Perverse

- **Day 3 Luke Chapter 3**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 3:1-38**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 3:3 "And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;**

Social media is messy. Some of the platforms can really get us into trouble. Who our friends are, what their profile pictures advertise, and how much we interact with other men and women may have our significant others, family members, or friends questioning our character. In some cases, social media is the next level of "party all night, Bible study in the morning" culture. Being online we think we are hidden under a veil of privacy because our devices and accounts are password protected. No one has to know we are snap chatting with an ex, browsing nude photos, gambling away our savings, or binge-watching reality shows. We can even snuggle up with our loved ones while downloading wickedness and perversion. But some of these platforms will tell the sordid history of our deeds. Did you know that with a few clicks anyone can view what you've viewed, subscribed to, and commented on?...

John the forerunner of Christ came to preach the two sides of repentance 1. to turn away from sin and 2. turn toward God. (Luke 3:3) John called out the corrupt religious leaders referring to them as "a brood of vipers."(Luke 3:7) They were outwardly appearing holy but inwardly they were sinful and did not want to truly follow God's command. (Matthew 23:1-7) They wore their fine robes, enjoyed a celebrity status, sat with high-ranking politicians and leaders. They rested on the fact that they were descendants of Abraham, earning them a place in eternity simply because of their ancestry. (John 8:33) John was a stark contrast to these refined teachers. (Matthew 3:4) His clothing was something straight out of the wilderness, his diet was odd, and his message made people uncomfortable. What we 'like' or lust over is a choice. We usually aren't suspicious of the wealthy, well dressed, successful, alluring people in life and rarely question their motives. We imitate them and support whatever business venture or idea they're selling. We are turned off by people who push us to become morally righteous because we don't like the way the lesson is 'packaged'. The truth is we **think** we can hide behind our online personas, our excuses, our busyness, and our emotions as if God can not see through it all. (Hebrews 4:13) T

The more we try to conform to this world the less like God we will be. During John's ministry, he called sinners to repent; that message is also for us. When we repent we should regret what we have done, the forgiveness we receive will help us to lead a changed life, turning towards God.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 3

What areas do you lack restraint?

What are you constantly apologizing for but have not turned away from doing?

How did God reveal Himself to you in this chapter?

A Few Points:

Luke clearly defines both the secular political leadership and the religious leadership showing how God is in control of both physical and spiritual realms. Luke 3:1-2

John son of Zacharias begins his ministry quoting from the prophet Isaiah telling us that all obstacles must be removed in order for the Kingdom of God to spread. Luke 3:3-6

John warns the religious leaders to stop blindly leading God's people astray. God and religion were not something that was inherited. Luke 3:7-9

The crowds questioned what they should do in order to be saved? Luke 3:10-14

John points toward Christ as the who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. Luke 3:15-18

The Holy Trinity! The heavens open, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and a voice came out of heaven. Luke 3:21-22

John is imprisoned for pointing out Herod the Tetrarch's (Governor) sins. Luke 3:19-20

Jesus's ministry begins and His ancestry traced through Joseph with God being the end and the beginning. Luke 3:23-38

Luke Chapter Four

Day 4

Opportune Opportunity

Day 4 Luke Chapter 4

Bible Reading Luke 4:1-44

Focus Scripture: Luke 4:13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

You've been offered a promotion! Not by the CEO, but by the liaison to the head of your division. This very attractive offer includes six weeks paid vacation, a large sign on bonus, and an increased salary. What's the catch? 1. You give up future promotions. 2. You hold your position as long as the liaison holds his position. 3. No benefits upon retiring or dismissal. This opportunity comes at the opportune time; because you are hungry, literally. You are barely surviving, your car is running on fumes, the mortgage is late, and the utilities are shut off...again. You want to say yes but this career path terminates advancement and freedom to explore other options. What will you do about retirement? (Luke 4:1-13) Our temptations don't always have a 'too good to be true' element but when we allow the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts, we are able to understand the fine print of every decision we make.

Jesus said no to Satan even in His weakened state of hunger. He had fasted and prayed for forty days and Satan came to Him. (Luke 4:1 If you have ever engaged in a fast you understand the rewarding and clarifying spiritual depth you can experience.) When we think our testing is over and relax, are hit with more. This is endurance. How quickly will we fold under pressure? How long can we stand firm in our faith and devotion to God before we cave into Satan's schemes? For some of us, Satan may not have to do much. Our routines, the people we seek advice from, or our prideful mindsets will do the work for him. Satan's way of convincing us is to distract us from seeking the Holy Spirit for guidance.

This could manifest as a negative emotional mindsets, a competitive nature, or a want to think we accomplished milestones all by ourselves. Satan will give up but he will come back. How he finds us will dictate how well we can handle the temptations he hurls at us. Don't allow him to ruin your relationships, steal your joy, or create unnecessary competition between you and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have proof of a living God that cares deeply for us. Let us submit to His will and grow in His kingdom.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 4

1. When I'm in a moment of weakness what strengthens me?
2. What do I allow Satan to have dominion over in my life?
3. What am I in constant battle with?

A Few Points

1. Luke 4:1-13 Jesus is lead into the wilderness to battle. The battle against His flesh and against Satan.
2. Luke 4:14-15 Jesus goes about His Father's business.
3. Luke 4:16-22 Jesus is rejected in His hometown of Nazareth, the people are angered by his words. A prophecy is fulfilled in His proclamation to deliver salvation to all people.
4. Luke 4:31-37 Jesus continues His ministry and quickly rebukes unclean spirits that recognized Him as the Messiah rendering them silent.
5. Luke 4:38-41 Jesus heals Peter's Mother-in-Law and countless others, all who were brought to Him were healed.
6. Luke 4:42-44 Jesus travels throughout Galilee preaching the kingdom of God, to fulfill His purpose.

Luke Chapter Five

Day 5

Personality Type: Sinner

- **Day 5 Luke Chapter 5**
- **Bible Reading Luke 5:1-39**

Luke 5 reveals at least four different and very distinct personality types.

We are introduced to Simon Peter, an observant fisherman who wants to follow Jesus but questions the breadth of His power and authority. Luke 5:4-5

The man with leprosy is zealous for God and wants to follow Him. He is enthusiastic in spirit, but doesn't understand God's timing. Luke 5:14

The caregivers that go above and beyond to make sure their friend is healed and able to walk.

Luke 5:19-20. Finally the ritualistic non believing religious teachers of the law that were so rigid in their misguided beliefs they missed the opportunity to be saved. Luke 5:36-39

Hello, I'm Torrie ISFJ,-A/-T, nice to meet you. Seriously, those six letters correspond to an algorithm, based on the answers I provided to a personality quiz. I was accurately summed up in less than fifteen minutes. Myers Briggs personality quizzes are informative if we're open to the results. Adjusting ourselves to accept what the Word of God reveals is humbling; leading to self-reflection and guidance through the Holy Spirit. Our postures change as we mature in spirit allowing us to let go of our sin nature through repentance. Luke 5:4-11 tells us how Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John were awestruck by Jesus. All of these men were fishermen, it was their family business, how they earned a living, and what they knew. When Jesus asked Simon Peter to cast his nets out into the deep water, I envision the attitude, frustration, and exhaustion, he must have done it in. Perhaps muttering under his breath, maybe laughing to keep his anger at bay. But when the nets were so full of fish that he had to call James and John over to help, Simon Peter realized what had happened, he recognized his error. Simon Peter repented but asked Jesus to leave him because he was too much of a sinner. (Luke 5:8)

Do you feel like you've sinned so much that God could not possibly want to work within you? This is a lie of the enemy because Satan does not want you to repent or grow in Christ. Jesus responded to Simon Peter's repentance with mercy. Don't allow the enemy to keep you where you're comfortable. Luke 5:10 Jesus told Simon Peter to not be afraid. We should not be afraid to admit when we're wrong! Jesus comforted Simon Peter in that moment and He will comfort all of us. We do not need to turn to other vices, we can turn to God. Jesus revealed Himself as trustworthy and provided an example of how we should respond to an apology and the later feeling of worthlessness by the wrongdoer. Luke 5:32 Jesus came to call sinners to repentance and offered mercy.

Who we align ourselves with can help foster or hinder our intimate relationship with God. The paralytic had God-fearing faithful friends. Their faith was so strong that they cut through the roof of Peter's house (Mark 1:29 and Mark 2:1-5) to lower him down into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. WOW!!! (Luke 5:20) Jesus saw the faith of the friends, their faith was visible. In contrast we could align ourselves with those that will hinder our growth. The fault-finding religious leaders were such a group. The corrupted Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes were the authoritative resources for interpreting the law. Unfortunately, they could not handle being upstaged by the, Truth. Their envy and pride was blinding. We have such people in the world today, their hearts are full of greed, jealousy, and self loathing. No matter what good we do they will find a way to shame us, hinder our progress, and keep us emotionally tied to their desires instead of helping us develop our God-given purposes. How we see ourselves reflects in the way we treat others. But why do we need to change or be refined? God knows our hearts...right? 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just so that He will forgive our sins and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We have the right to become God's children, to be disciplined by Him. Taking a step towards acknowledging our faults is taking a step away from Satan and the life the world wants us to lead. We are worthy of change, love, respect, forgiveness, grace, and mercy; let's pray to accept this new identity in Christ.

Journal Prompts:Chapter 5

1. After taking the personality test were you shocked by the results?
2. Are there areas you've identified a need to fervently pray over?
3. When you have been proven wrong how well do you deal with it?

A Few Points:

1. Jesus calls out and defines His inner circle. These men are privy to events the others are not. Luke 5:1-11
2. Jesus heals a man with leprosy and does not want to take credit for it. He tells the man to show himself to the Priest and Jesus went to pray in the wilderness. Luke 5:12-16
3. Jesus heal the paralytic because of the faith his friends displayed. The Pharisees and other religious leaders question Jesus' authenticity. Luke 5:17-26
4. Jesus calls Levi to follow Him and eats with the despised group of tax collectors and sinners. He is again confronted by the Pharisees. Luke 5:27-32
5. The religious leaders question Jesus about fasting. Â Jesus illustrated how rigid the leaders were in their ideas and why they were unable to accept Him. Luke 5:33-39

Luke Chapter Six

Day 6

Sorry for the Inconvenience

- **Day 6 Luke Chapter 6**
- **Bible Reading Luke 6:1-49**
- **Focus Scripture:** Luke 6:36 "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

How often do we place Bible study, church duties, or our routines above human need? Luke 6:1-11 describes how the Pharisees mingled man-made laws into God's law. The rigidity of their hearts blinded the understanding of service for the sake of of...following the law??? I've done this. We do this. We are guilty of allowing an opportunity to pass by when we know we could serve, but instead, we go about our own schedules. We don't like inconveniences. At least the religious teachers used "laws" that prohibited and "validated" their excuse. What do we use? God allowed me an up close and personal encounter that moved me into action.

I was just about to begin my run, as I rounded the corner to get access to the trail opening I saw a man sitting on the bench. It was a cold day and he had on more layers than I did. Our eyes met and we spoke. As I got almost out of earshot...

He yelled, "Excuse me Ma'am?"

(Irritation shot up my spine.) "Yes Sir?"

"Do you have a few dollars to spare?"

As I patted my sides, I shook my head, "No Sir, I don't I'm sorry."

To which he smiled brightly and replied, "God bless you, no need to apologize; enjoy your day."

I nodded and returned the blessing to him.

Moving further away my heart began to ache and I felt like I was about to breakdown and cry. There was something I could have done. But it would have inconvenienced me; I would have had to wait to run or not go at all. Breathlessly I called my husband and quickly explained why I needed my wallet. I ran faster to meet my Beloved. Feet pounding and heart racing I continued to pray to God for forgiveness, and expressed sorrow for missing an opportunity to serve. I prayed the gentleman would still be there. He was!!!

On approach, I told him I now had cash and placed it in his hand. Without looking at the amount his eyes watered and he thanked me. I reached out, hugged him, and felt his burly mass slump into my embrace. I hugged tighter. When I pulled back he asked if I would pray for him. I did. Walking back to my waiting and watchful husband I realized I had just received an amazing blessing. The more I thought about it, I questioned: what if that had been someone I knew; family member or friend that was homeless, living in a shelter, or even if it were me? How would I want to be treated? It was a profound lesson I will not soon forget. Thank God that this was a gentle teaching of obedience and how I can serve Him by serving others.

I share this story because we often miss the little ways we can be a blessing. We think that being a blessing is a grand jester, stretching ourselves beyond our financial means or depleting ourselves physically and mentally.

I can testify this is not true. It's usually not about money but the time we take to let others know we care; that they are important enough to have our undivided attention. I haven't seen "Mr.H" since our meeting, but I believe my husband may have caught glimpses of him. "Mr.H" is someone people may easily ignore because of his espresso colored skin, seeming strength, the maturity of age, and joy-filled attitude. We think poverty or need has to look miserable, because if one isn't expressing outward angst, then one isn't suffering.

I'm not perfect and I will get caught up in my to-do list, but today's reading along with this story reminds me to slow down and ask myself: will this matter in 5 minutes-5 hours-5 days or 5 weeks from now? If not, I am able to stop what I'm doing and enjoy being inconvenienced out of a love for Christ that wills me to do His will.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 6

1. What opportunities have you missed to be a blessing or provide a need to someone?
2. Are you easily agitated when someone needs your help?
3. How did God reveal Himself to you in this chapter?

A Few Points:

1. The Pharisees questioned why Jesus' disciples picked (worked) grain while walking through the fields on the Sabbath. Luke 6:1-5
2. The Pharisees questioned why Jesus would heal on the Sabbath as it was a day of rest from all work. Luke 6:6-10 Jesus' response outraged the Pharisees as it further pointed out their callous misunderstanding of God's original command. It infuriated them to the point of revenge. Luke 6:11
3. Jesus prays before selecting the twelve disciples (which would become His apostles) seeking guidance from the Father. Jesus is the example of how we should not lean to our own understanding but make sure our decisions are rooted in prayer. Luke 6:12-16
4. Jesus delivers the Beatitudes or blessings. Luke 6:17-23 And the woes or consequences in Luke 6:24-26. Also found in Matthew 5:1-12
5. Jesus teaches us to love those that hate and envy us. Luke 6:27-36
6. Jesus teaches us not to criticize others. Luke 6:37-42 "Or how can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye," when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye."
7. Jesus teaches us about being effective and productive. What comes out of us is a result of what is inside. Luke 6:43-45
8. Jesus teaches us about building our foundations in Him. When we are moved by our emotions we can act accordingly having understood His teaching. If we do not we will ruin the relationships we built because our foundation was not deep enough to withstand the slightest breeze of conflict. Luke 6:46-49

Luke Chapter Seven

Day 7

Hot Sexy Chocolate

Day 7 Luke Chapter 7

Bible Reading: Luke 7:1-50

Focus Scripture: Luke 7:47 "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much: but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

Our social media usernames say a lot about us. I pray I haven't offended anyone with the title of this devotional but let's be honest, there are some unique, attention-grabbing, usernames that may have us question what that person does. We are afraid to pull up their Facebook profile in front of people, or we quickly scroll past it. What could we possibly have in common with Hot Sexy Chocolate? If we continue to think this way as Believers, we cannot point them to Christ. There is always someone ready to receive and hear the Word of God. (John 4:35)

The Roman Centurion likely had this happen to him. After all, he was a commander with soldiers that answered to him and did his bidding. Well, how did he come into a knowledge of our Lord? He revered Jesus deeply. (Luke 7:6) We can infer that someone befriends this career soldier and opened his eyes to the Truth. As believers, we are acting as agents of Christ. We are what the world sees and influence the hearts of unbelievers.

Have you ever been so impressed by someone's actions that it made you want to go out of your way to serve them? This is what the Jewish community felt when they sought out Jesus to heal the Centurion's servant who was like a son to him. This Roman Centurion impressed Jesus. (Luke 7:9) He did not feel worthy to speak with Him or have Jesus enter his home, he had a deep respect for Jesus. Wow, talk about being humble! He recognized Jesus' power and that He was acting on behalf of God the Father. The Centurion understood that if Jesus was to speak a word it would be done, and he explained it from his human perspective. (Luke 7:8) Being in command is trusting others to follow your directions. The Centurion believed that the supernatural powers of God's healing could be commanded by Jesus. That's what he believed!! He converted from some pagan religion to follow Jesus. He embraced the Jewish culture. He embraced God.

Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10

There are several minute details to unpack in Luke's account of this story. I believe it is important to discuss why the Gospels seem to contradict each other in the retelling. First, servants with messages in that era it was as if the person relaying the message was the person in charge. We could regard it as the first virtual messaging system. In our modern-day text messaging and email system, if it comes from your electronic device, regardless of who typed it, YOU are the person "talking" to the receiver. In essence, we have replaced people with technology.

Luke focused on the relationship the Centurion had with the Jews, the Gospel according to Matthew focused on his faith. This is how we get a clear picture of who this Roman Centurion was and the important part he played in the Jewish community as a proselyte (new convert). The servant or son was part of the Centurion's household, it would be understood that he was part of the family. However, just as all scripture is divinely inspired, God knew that 2,000 years later we would be reading these words attempting to understand who was requesting Jesus' divine mercy. We could get caught up on the "who" and miss the "what". The 'what'? Faith, and the amazing display of it by a Gentile... an outsider.

When we love each other as Jesus commanded we will look past the exterior of a person and aim for their heart. (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Luke 10:27) What is their heart seen doing? It shouldn't matter if we have befriended Hot Sexy Chocolate, Boozing Babes, or Out of Control Gun-Slinger because they are the ones that may need Jesus the most. We can push aside our disdain for their choice of clothing, jobs, and sin to point them to the one Who saves. Once we have planted seeds of love we can be effective disciples of Christ. As always our first responsibility is to God, if everything begins from that point our home, work, and social lives will fall into place. *Contrast Luke 7:30, Luke 10:27*

Journal Prompts: Chapter 7

1. Are we embracing God or are we chasing after pagan idols in order to make ourselves appear in command?
2. Do we judge others based on their names, appearances, or job titles?
3. Do we openly and honestly talk with the confidants in our lives about the calling God has placed in your heart?

A Few Points:

Depending on your personal view of the story, the Centurion will affect what you focus on in this study. "Blessed is he that does not take offense at Me" Luke 7:23

1. The Roman Centurion's faith is on display and the Jewish community intercedes on his behalf. Luke 7:1-10 and Matthew 8:5-13
2. Jesus' compassion raised the dead son of the widow, He knew she had no one left. Luke 7:11-17
3. Jesus answers John the Forerunner of Christ's messengers and alleviates all doubt that He is the one they've been waiting for. Luke 7:18-26 and Matthew 11:1-19
4. The sinful woman anoints Jesus' feet while He is reclining at the table of Simon the Pharisees home. He teaches about forgiveness and how much more is forgiven in contrast to the amount of sin committed. Luke 7:36-50

Luke Chapter Eight

Day 8

Dirt Under My Fingernails

- **Day 8 Luke Chapter 8**

- **Bible Reading** Luke 8:1-56

- **Focus Scripture:** Luke 8:10 And He said, " To you, it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest, it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND."

Luke 8:4-18, Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9

One of my favorite teachings is of the Four Soils. I love this teaching because it reminds me to look (literally and figuratively) at what I've planted and made necessary adjustments. I'm not a huge gardener but I have managed to keep a few houseplants alive. I often joke with my Mom at her ability to grown a-n-y-t-h-i-n-g. All she has to do is spit a seed out and four months later... watermelon, tomatoes, squash, or pomegranates appear. Even though she thought I wasn't paying attention to her horticulture lessons I did learn how to properly care for plants. I recently repotted several plants. Since placing my plants in larger containers I've noticed abundant growth.

Soil. What are you planting and where? There is indoor potting soil, moisture control potting soil, outdoor potting soil, soil specifically for roses or orchids, soil for trees and shrubs, the list goes on. Soil can have you going in circles unless you decide to follow directions and plant properly. That's how we are to look at our lives. What will we plant in God's garden(our temple)? Are we nonchalantly allowing weeds to sprout up every once in a while? Perhaps admiring the dandelions that grow for a season and then turns into seeds, metaphorically representing our knowledge being blown away by the wind. Or, will we have a clear direction and plant a tree? A tree requires planning and measuring. We have to consider how large it will grow and where the roots may pop up. Will it be cut down in 30 years or are we planting it for a lifetime free and clear of obstacles? Trees offer a home to woodland creatures, shade, nourishment, calm, and peace, trees don't move because life will come to it.

When we plan our gardens we are determining what we want to see grow. We expect to see maturity and enjoy the beauty of our hard work. We will constantly watch, water and pull out weeds that could be choking out our vegetation, but not too soon. If we start pulling weeds before the plants have developed we may uproot what we purposely sowed. This wastes time, constantly going replanting the same ideas and learned behavior. We won't see the fruit of our labor because we plucked it out too quickly and threw away what we should have kept.

Putting plants in containers that allow them to grow slowly and mature is how we as people should approach what we care about. Our season of repotting is a delicate process of making sure our roots stay intact while moving to a larger area; it is not something to fear. Once we get to our new destination it is important to hydrate and stand in the Son for a while. Meditate, pray, absorb, and get to know the new surroundings. Making God our root for nourishment will have us flourishing. Is it time to change your pot?

Journal Prompts: Chapter 8

What type of soil are you growing in?

What obstacles do you stumble over daily?

What areas have you seen positive growth?

A Few Points:

Luke 8:1-3 Women in ministry, following Christ and providing support by their own means. All people are equal under God. The women were beholden to Christ because of His mercy and grace over them.

Luke 8:4-8 Jesus teaches the parable of the four soils.

Luke 8:9-18 Jesus explains why He taught in parables and that the disciples were able to understand because they desired to do so. The mysteries of the Bible are unlocked for those that want to live by its Word.

Luke 8:19-21 Jesus describes His true family. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ once we accept and surrender unto God. Those that hear the word and live by it.

Luke 8:22-25 Jesus calms the storm. The disciples are afraid as Jesus sleeps peacefully when a raging storm pops up. He commands the winds and waters to obey Him. The disciples are awe-struck. *How many times have you been amazed by God's work?*

Luke 8:26-39 Jesus sends the legion of demons into a herd of swine upsetting the people of the town. They could not rejoice over the man being healed because they were too busy worrying about their food supply and loss of income.

Luke 8:40-48 A woman is healed of a debilitating illness. Her overwhelming faith in Jesus as the Son of God made her well. Even in the midst of a large crowd, God knows who need Him most. When we believe He increases our faith.

Luke 8:49-56 Jesus raised a child from the dead. He instructs the parents not to spread the news as the evidence would speak for itself. *How often are we ready to share every detail of our lives, the accomplishments, tiny victories, instead of letting the evidence speak? What we do with the degrees we hold, the homes we purchase, the lives we live, is evidence of God's great grace and abundant blessing over us. Don't be afraid to be quiet in a season of rising. Your efforts will soon be noticed by all those around. Be known for your steady hard work ethic and not the boastful applause that some require to be noticed.

Luke Chapter Nine

Day 9

Above You but Under God

- **Day 9 Luke Chapter 9**
- **Bible Reading Luke 9:1-62**
- **Focus Scripture:** Luke 9:46-48, Matthew 18:1-6 Additional Reading: Mark 9:33-37, Matthew 20:20-28

You've been preparing all year. The first annual church bazaar is right around the corner. Not only will your prestigious congregation be raising money for a worthy cause, you are the organizer and committee head of this event. Families from all over the U.S. will be in attendance; as well as congressmen, city leaders, radio and news outlets. This is a huge deal and a tremendous undertaking!!! You deserve recognition as a pioneer and humanitarian. You've earned all the applause and praise you are about to receive from your brothers and sisters in Christ. Even though it's a surprise, you know the Mayor is presenting you with an award! Not to mention the gift cards, and newly created parking space next to the pastor's wife. (Luke 9:23) You are ecstatic! The only thing left to do is secure seating at the head table for your two children. After all, they helped and deserve a glimmer of the spotlight.

The night of the event everything is running according to plan. Not one thing is out of place...except the catering company is short-staffed and everyone is juggling multiple duties. You become the extra pair of hands. Instead of sitting at the head table with your family, Evangelical leaders, and dignitaries being adored by the crowd, you are elbow deep in the sink washing dishes, prepping more vegetables, and of all things unclogging the toilet. Your sin nature is on display for everyone to witness because you are fed up! Everything these people are experiencing is your handy work. Not one detail was left untouched by your hand, even down to the font on the program. And the last straw?...neither of your children is accepting the award on your behalf; it's your co-chair the one the Pastor placed with you at the last minute to "ease" your workload.

Luke 9:25 Insecurity in Christ breeds arguments, dissension, jealousy, and envy. It brings out the competitive sin nature; being "seen" as better than everyone else. The loads we carry, the amount of effort we put into our projects, and the way we live our lives should all come from a place of love. When we want better we should encourage everyone around us to do so. Not seen as the motivator but as disciples of Christ. John 13:14-15 Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. He left the example of how we are to treat each other no matter our perceived status. Who is the greatest among us?...No one if we are all clamoring to lord over one another. (Matthew 20:25)

Luke 9:48 The argument between the disciples appears not to have ended with Jesus' teaching about humility. Matthew 20:20-24 and Mark 10:35-41 tells us that Salome the mother of James and John went to Jesus to request her sons be placed at His right and left hand in His Kingdom. (Matthew 20:20) Our motivation for asking or suggesting how someone should live, appoint, or direct as Christ followers need to be motivated by the Holy Spirit. Salome's request caused further tension among the disciples. Matthew 20:24

I believe we may see ourselves in these accounts. Salome wanted the best for her children and was looking towards their earthly future. James and John wanted to be seen as the greatest among the disciples. Jesus the Son of God was about to die for our sins and wanted the disciples to humble themselves like children and to accept, nurture, teach, and shepherd His flock. We are reading about Christ followers that did not have a clear understanding of what Jesus was doing. Luke 9:45 Jesus the Son of God continued to gently teach, up to His last breath. How much more compassion and understanding do you think He has for us?

Journal Prompts: Chapter 9

1. Who are you in competition with?
2. Do you have a place to study God's Word away from distractions?
3. Have you identified ways you have grown in Christ?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 9:1-6 Jesus is both spiritual and physical. He sent out His disciples with specific instructions. Allowing others a way to provide for the disciples gave them a sense of ownership (being part of a greater whole). We often feel united when we can help no matter how small the task.
2. Luke 9:7-9 Herod is perplexed by all the things he is hearing about Jesus. Rumors are swirling about John the Forerunner of Christ being alive. Herod had him beheaded...what could be happening?
3. Luke 9:10-17 Jesus takes a meager lunch of 5 fish and 2 loaves and fed over 5,000. The disciples thought this to be an impossible task, one that would require more money and provisions than they were able to obtain.
4. Luke 9:18-20 Jesus asks the disciples who do they think He is. Peter immediately confesses Jesus is the Christ. Matthew 16:17-18 Jesus told Peter the Holy Spirit spoke this to him for he could not have understood that in his flesh.
5. Luke 9:21-27 Jesus predicts His death for the first time. He instructs us to pick up our crosses daily and follow after Him. We are to imitate the life He led. We can not do that if we do not learn what He did. We are to be unashamed of Jesus and His Words.
6. Luke 9:28-36 The Transfiguration.
7. Luke 9:37-43 Prayer is used to heal a demon-possessed child.
8. Luke 9:44-45 Jesus predicts His death a second time.
9. Luke 9:46-49 The disciples argue over who is the greatest.
10. Luke 9:51-62 Jesus prepares the disciples and us to follow Him. He teaches as He goes to Jerusalem.

Luke Chapter Ten

Day 10

What is Your Heart Seen Doing?

- **Day 10 Luke Chapter 10**

- **Bible Reading Luke 10:1-42**

- **Focus Scripture:** Luke 10:2 And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

God guides us no matter how much we have sinned, how wretched our prayer life is, or how many times we ask for His help. He will forgive us and draw us nearer to Him. Once we acknowledge our sin, He wills us to seek correction. Our God is so amazing that He will continue to teach those that still haven't figured out that His love is unconditional and everlasting.

In contrast...

Have you ever tried to get out of the parking lot of a megachurch? We will quickly resume our normal driving habits, won't we? Honking our horns, rushing people ahead of us, and swerving in and out of traffic, to get home or the closest restaurant. The overwhelming praise and adoration we showed while under the church roof has now been replaced with road rage. We conform back to the world and its fast pace; not thinking about what we saw or the joy we felt.

This was likely what happened with the Priest and the Levite. Perhaps going home from service at the Temple but their empty praise and worship was all for show. They sang with lifted hands and cried through prayers much like we do. I remember being stuck in a parking lot after a service years ago. The choir was amazing and the sermon was given by a dynamic speaker. After closing prayer, everyone seemed to have had their spirits fed and joy filled the room. (I believe somewhere between the church doors and our vehicles we allow the enemy to hitch a ride.) There were two exits getting out of the church parking lot and with over 400 people attempting to do the same thing at the same time you can imagine the chaos. No one could move and we couldn't figure out why. It wasn't until we saw smoke rising in the air that we realized a car had broken down. Easy fix right?.... I'm afraid not. With all the vehicles and thin patience, it took 45 minutes for the car move. But why? Because everyone thought someone else was helping. We had all worshiped together we had, at least, seen each other faces yet no one moved a muscle.

The Priest and the Levite were people who we hoped would have helped the half-dead man. But they ignored him and were not bothered. As believers, we think we would stop to help anyone in need. But that is not the case. We are unfair to each other because our priorities are skewed. (Luke 10:39-42) Martha's eyes were opened to her sin of service...yes service, she didn't prioritize the guest of honor teaching and allowing her sister Mary the opportunity to listen. We may think we know it all and prohibit others from learning. Or we may do as Martha did and ask Jesus to change someone else instead of Him working within us. The rule of 5 would apply to this situation. Make a habit of asking yourself: Will this matter in 5 minutes-5 hours -5 days or -5 months?

The man left by the road would have died if left alone for 5 days. However, Martha's guests could wait 5 hours to eat. Prioritizing our schedules and being able to shift when necessary helps with our attitudes. We can approach being helpful from a different point of view. Some inconveniences don't have to take over our days, we can delegate responsibilities to other trusted people as the Samaritan did. We don't know where he was on his way to but he slowed down long enough to do what God would have wanted.

The Priest and Levite avoided the half-dead man (Jesus) and chose not to receive or help Him. But the Samaritan a Gentile took Him in and made provisions for His care. The innkeeper accepted Jesus and allowed Him to stay. We are the innkeepers keeping watch until Jesus' second coming...

Luke 10:30-32

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

Journal Prompts: Chapter 10

1. Do you recall a time when you could have served someone but did not based on who they were?
2. Do you miss opportunities to fellowship with other Believers or put off individual Bible study?
3. As disciples we all have gifts and we are to share and continue to spread the Good News of God's Kingdom. How do you share your gifts?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 10:1-16 Jesus instructs and sends out the 72 messengers in pairs to spread the word of His coming. They were to mobilize people to pray and join with those who were ready to receive Jesus as the Son of God. They were not to create envy among neighbors or take any resources with them.
2. Luke 10:17-24 The 72 return and Jesus reminded them not to celebrate this victory or become complacent, more work needed to be done. Jesus praises God for the wisdom being revealed to even the most uneducated.
3. Luke 10:25-37 The Parable of the Good Samaritan
4. Luke 10:38-42 Jesus visits Mary and Martha. Martha is busy serving and was so upset with Mary, that she thought Jesus did not care. Sometimes our own busyness is our doing. When we prioritize we will see that God does care about what we are doing. We may need to take our focus of serving others and sit with God.

Luke Chapter Eleven

Day 11

The Persistent Neighbor

- **Day 11 Luke Chapter 11**
- **Bible Reading Luke 11:1-54**
- **Focus Scriptures: Luke 11:9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."**

RIDDLE:

It's 3 A.M you are sound asleep and there is a knock at your door. Simultaneously the phone begins to ring. Your parents are in town and will be there for breakfast at any moment. You are completely confused but quickly try to remember what you have in your kitchen. You believe you may have bread, butter, eggs, and jam. What do you open first?

ANSWER: Nothing! You open nothing! You ignore the knocking at your door, throw the phone across the room, firmly place the pillow over your head, and go back to sleep. Who knocks on the door or comes for breakfast at 3 A.M?

We know not the time nor the hour... Matthew 24:2

Some of us don't handle interruptions well. Jesus' teaching reveals, this attitude is normal. (Luke 11:5-8) In this parable, the neighbor is in need and asking for provisions for the traveler. The neighbor needed food to show complete hospitality. We read that it was late at night and perhaps the obvious solution would have been to wait until morning. But Jesus taught that when it comes to someone else's needs like the traveler, we are to react with compassion, putting ourselves in their shoes, and offer what we would want at that time. Following the Holy Spirit's direction, we will have an attitude of service instead of the irritation of being interrupted. Webster's dictionary defines interruption as a break in uniformity, it could also mean an unexpected change in a routine or plan. Making plans or scheduling out our days puts us in control. It is gratifying to check off the items on our lists, we feel productive. Those lists are a guide, it is a suggestion for what we believe we need to do. Praying over our plans and asking the Holy Spirit to direct our free time helps us stay connected with God. Luke 11:2 Praying makes God our priority and not ourselves.

Luke 11:33-36 Christ is our lamp; how well we see spiritually is strengthened through applying His truth to our lives. Our reflection of His light shines in what we say and do. If we always over-react, get angry, or defensive at the small insignificant situations, how well will we manage a major life change? Our perspective hinges on our perception. If in our own limited knowledge we cannot ask because of pride, seek because of foolishness, or knock because of doubt we will not grow in spiritual maturity. Being aware of the feelings and needs of others deepens our relationship with each other. It builds a believers community. We can grow more insightful by reading, pondering, and meditating, on God's Word. When we saturate our lives with God we will not forget Him. To be mindful is understanding how we react to situations in our head, before we act through it with our words or actions. God is mindful of us. Psalm 8:4 He remembers us always in all ways.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 11

1. Would I feel proud or ashamed if my actions were published in print or online?
2. Do my prayers allow me to use the wealth, talents, and attributes God has given me in a morally useful way?
3. Where are my dark places that need the lamp of Christ to shine on? Luke 11:34-35

A Few Points:

1. Luke 11:1-4 Jesus teaches the disciples about prayer and how to pray.
2. Luke 11:5-13 Jesus teaches about humility and taking care of others needs. We are evil yet we know how to give good gifts, how much better would we be if we allowed the Holy Spirit to work through us.
3. Luke 11:14-28 Jesus answers accusations about being Satan and teaches about a divided kingdom. He who is not with God is against Him, and He who does not gather with God scatters. But blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.
4. Luke 11:28-32 Jesus warns against unbelief and compares it to Jonah.
5. Luke 11:33-36 Jesus teaches about the light within us.
6. Luke 11:37-54 Jesus openly criticizes the religious leaders.

Luke Chapter Twelve

Day 12

The Fly on the Mirror

- **Day 12 Luke Chapter 12**
- **Bible Reading Luke 12:1-59**
- **Focus Verse: Luke 12:3 "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops."**

It's always funny to hear toddlers attempt to whisper. Parents may want to tell children something discreetly. Perhaps, the need to excuse themselves and ask the child to stay seated; only to have them "whisper" very loudly "DO YOU HAVE TO GO MAKE A POOP?" Oh the things children say.

Well, we should get comfortable with our private words and thoughts becoming public spectacles. Luke 12:3 Tells us that everything even our inaudible utterances will see light. In other words, we cannot hide who we truly are for long. Because hypocrisy is exhausting; living a lie is confusing, and being apart from God is excruciating. As believers, we must reflect, have the Holy Spirit refine us by removing any untruths, and sin away from our hearts. Acknowledging we are not perfect by identifying areas God has urged us to change, this is a step closer to Him and away from sin.

Fearing those that can kill our bodies is focusing on the temporary. We become weak-minded when we follow man and his ideals. Luke 12:4-5 Teaches us that we are to fear the Lord who can cast us into hell. Standing firm in Christ is our calling. But how? When someone opposes what we know to be true we are to hold it up against the Holy Word; our strength will come from the Lord. Do not be ashamed of Christ who died for our sins. Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit will help us defend the name of God. Do not let man silence our faith in Christ out of fear.

Satan wants to create doubt and for us to play the victim in his underhanded schemes. However, we must not give credit to Satan for sin we want to commit. (James 4:17) This type of excusatory action is often linked to prideful emotions. We say the Holy Spirit is still working on us yet we continue to sin. Where is the work? Cooperating with God through the Holy Spirit is the way to grow spiritually mature. Denying our flesh, humbling ourselves before God is the refining process; it will be painful at first. I am a witness that once you've humbled yourself before God and reverence Him, the opinions of other people will become background noise.

Luke 11:33-35 Put God first by allowing His light to shine on the dark areas. Once a problem is illuminated the cleaning process can begin. What we say, do, feel, act on, and think are a direct reflection of God's work within us. Do not allow the enemy to tell you it is better to put your light under a cellar or under a basket. Allow God's light to shine brightly so that all may see and be guided by it. May His perfect work be completed in us all. Philippians 1:6

Journal Prompts: Chapter 12

1. What do you see when you look in the mirror?
2. Do you feel positive about yourself?
3. How does the image you have of yourself show up in conversations with others?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 12:1-3 Jesus teaches not to fall for the hypocrisy of false leaders, those who do not follow God's commands but expects everyone else to do so.
2. Luke 12:4-12 Jesus teaches us to fear Him. Our focus does not need to be on man's expectations but on God's. He is the one that decides where our souls will go.
3. Luke 12:13-21 The parable of the rich fool. Jesus teaches about greed. We are not to build larger dwellings to house things that no one can use, nor are we to continuously store up things here on earth. This person is not rich in God but has enriched himself.
4. Luke 12:22-34 Jesus warns about worry. We are not to be anxious for anything because it will not add a single hour to our lives. We are to live wisely. The products we purchase should be long-lasting, not searching for the next better item. Our treasure is in the Lord and when we spend time with Him our hearts will be there as well.
5. Luke 12:35-48 Be ready for the Lord at all times!

Luke Chapter Thirteen

Day 13

Waiting by the Phone

- **Day 13 Luke Chapter 13**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 13:1-35**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 13:6 - And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any."**

When I was in elementary school one of the games we played was 'Telephone'. All the students would sit together in a circle and wait for their "phone to ring". With a cupped hand, the teacher would whisper in the ear of the student to her left. The student would then repeat this message in the same way. The anticipation would build as student after student waited for their 'phone to ring'. Once the message went through all the students, the last to receive it stood up and stated what he heard. It usually ended up being gibberish and we would giggle uncontrollably. However, the joy would come to a screeching halt when the teacher (starting with the last student) would ask, "what did he hear?" Squirring around on the floor not knowing what the original message was, each child would try their best to deliver something that may have been closer to the original statement. Having played this game many times the error usually came from the first student.

Hmm if the first person was inaccurate how would someone get the correct message unless he went to the source??? There was no rule prohibiting any student from going to the teacher, and asking for the correct message. But that meant exerting effort, being looked at as different, and not trusting the person seated next to you. It was playground sabotage if you went against the popular person in your class.

Luke 13:8 Being planted choose: who fertilizes us and what nutrients we absorb. While we could easily blame our lack of growth in our living conditions, exposure to opportunities, or economic status, we are responsible for what we produce. Christ followers make difficult decisions, by going against the grain of society and standing out. We have a right to go to the Source to receive the nourishment to feed our souls. Feeling like a useless waste of space is a scheme of the enemy and he will keep us from repenting if we allow him to use our insecurities.

*Repentance is a profound change of mind. To stop living a sinful lifestyle, or to determine to refrain from committing a particular sin. Repentance is usually accompanied by regret and the desire for forgiveness; but the key element is a change of mind and attitude from one's former outlook or way of life. (ESV Bible Concordance)

Moving our minds from self-centeredness to God or Christ-centeredness is the only way to receive God's forgiveness. The positive side of repentance, is conversion, the real turning to God for grace. We can turn away from sin and become fruit-bearing, purposeful servants of God. Luke 13:3 and Luke 13:5 Jesus repeats the same message. We are to repent or we will die in sin. We do not have to stay dead. We who believe in Him have an eternal life. In every season of our lives, we can be of service to our Lord and Savior. The years we have spent on this earth toiling for riches, being self-centered and not producing any fruit, will have us cut out of God's glorious kingdom. Luke 13:7-9 Where we are planted is as important as what we produce while we are there. What do we entertain that is just taking up space? What is keeping us from producing 'fruit'? These barriers may also keep us from repenting because it is easier to blame than to own our faults.

Let us resolve to not stand in an untruth attempting to prove our behavior. We will grow weary and the enemy will attack us and wear us down. We will give up the fight for righteousness. Our lives need not be difficult emotionally draining tirades of childish temper tantrums. Let us repent and stand in the grace of God's forgiveness and consistently applying His Word to our lives.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 13

1. What fruit do you believe you should be bearing?
2. Have you been paying attention to your surroundings?
3. Is it time to weed your garden?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 13:1-9 Jesus calls the people to repent and to do away with their old lives of being unproductive.
2. Luke 13:10-17 Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath infuriating the religious teachers.
3. Luke 13:18-21 Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God growing from a tiny speck of a mustard seed into a great far-reaching abundant tree.
4. Luke 13:22-30 Jesus teaches how to enter the Kingdom of God.
5. Luke 13:31-35 Jesus grieves over Jerusalem for not accepting Him or the prophets before Him.

Luke Chapter Fourteen

Day 14

Cancelled Reservation?

- **Day 14 Luke Chapter 14**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 14:1-35**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 14:11 "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

You sold some of your prized possessions to afford tickets to THE event of the decade. You earned enough to buy, fancy attire, hire a luxury car service, and enjoy a lavish meal. You've stopped at nothing to make this evening exquisitely memorable. But...the person you expected to share it with suddenly declined your gracious invitation. No amount of pleading or begging is changing their mind.

Heartbroken, you decide not to waste this night and start calling everyone you know, even co-workers from earlier jobs. To no avail you are left dateless. As you ride to the event alone you spot someone walking down the street and quickly ask the driver to pull over. After explaining in detail the amount of preparation, being dumped, and how amazing this event will be; the stranger agrees to join you. At the end of the night you realized what a complete joy it was to be with someone who accepted you, was not complaining, or judging every detail of the performance. You've made a new friend.

Could you imagine being invited by Jesus to enter into eternity but turning down His offer? It sounds like sheer madness but we do this every day. We make excuses saying we are too busy for God. When we finally 'make time' for God we feel He is honored when we are praying and asking for His guidance, but our arrogance will leave us without an answer. We feel rejected because we thought God should want to have us close to Him. AND HE DOES. The first thing we must do is humble ourselves by repenting. Our sense of entitlement will have us locked out of eternity if we do not want God.

Luke 14:10 Jesus continues to teach us how to humble ourselves before Him as well as with people. He wants all of us to love each other. We don't need to take places of honor because we feel we are more important than anyone else, nor should we withhold our presence from celebrations because of excuses. Jesus teaches that like Him we are emotionally balanced. Luke chapter 14 continues to show how the religious leaders behaved and their misunderstanding of the Laws. The rage these leaders felt by having their sin pointed out pushed them to revenge. As believers we sometimes have our sin nature put on display and everyone sees our true character. The Pharisees were so caught up in their 'logic' they failed to see the compassion in the Law; they missed love. Luke 14:5-6 When Jesus asked if they would allow their son or an ox, to drown or perhaps die from injury after falling into a well because it was the Sabbath, they could not respond. We prove how unenlightened we are by dismissing feelings, danger, or what is happening. Envy, excuses, and arrogance will have us sitting on the sidelines because we fouled out.

Luke 14:7-10 and Luke 14:18 Luke 14:24

Jesus warned against the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy in Luke 12:1. Jesus teaches us that if we love Him, love ourselves, we will naturally love others. This love will have us present, not making excuses, or laying blame because of our overly sensitive egos. The chaos and stress of life is something the enemy trains us to constantly think about not God's goodness and grace. Nothing will be covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be made known. We can cover up how we feel only for so long before our truth will rise. When our emotions are running high or we think we 'know better' we can do real damage to our relationship with Christ. Jesus is the calm in our mental, physical, and spiritual storms, let's trust the Creator with our entire being.

The Master has prepared a Great Feast for us, will we be there or are we busy coming up with more excuses to sidestep being obedient followers of Christ?

Journal Prompts: Chapter 14

1. Have you had to humble yourself to repair a relationship?
2. How do you deny yourself and walk in the light of Christ?
3. What do others say about your character?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 14:1-6 Jesus heals on the Sabbath and asks the religious teachers if they would allow their son or their livestock to drown in a well because it was the Sabbath.
2. Luke 14:7-14 Jesus taught the importance of remaining humble even when choosing a seat. He continued to teach that we should not always do for those that can repay us.
3. Luke 14:15-24 There is plenty of room in Heaven but the choice is ours. We have all been invited but few of us will actually desire to do what is necessary to receive everlasting life.
4. Luke 14:18-20 The excuses mentioned in these verses all have one thing in common; God created them. The field needs to be tended to and was created on the third day Genesis 1:10. The yoke of oxen that needed to be checked out was created on the sixth day Genesis 1:25. And finally, the wife that man desired was created for him on the sixth day Genesis 1:26. Our homes, possessions, and families take priority over God, but God made us His priority when He created them.
5. Luke 14:25-33 Jesus teaches about the cost of being a disciple.

Luke Chapter Fifteen

Day 15

Lost in the World, Found in Christ

- **Day 15 Luke Chapter 15**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 15:1-32**
- **Focus Scripture:** Luke 15:6 And when he returns home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost!'
- Ezekiel 34:4-5 "You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.⁵ So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals.

***Definitions for Reference**

criticism- the expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes.

self-righteousness- convinced of one's own righteousness especially in contrast with the actions and beliefs of others: narrow-mindedly moralistic: having or showing the attitude of someone who strongly believes in the rightness of his or her own actions or opinions

receive- be given, presented with, consent to formally hear: suffer, experience, or be subject to:

visited by: admit as a member: provide space or accommodations for.

Luke chapter 15 presents three different parables all about the lost being found: the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7), the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), and the parable of the lost or prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The sheep wandered off becoming separated from the rest. The owner misplaced the coin, and the son caused himself to become lost. Everything that was lost was found. However, in the case of the Prodigal son he chose to become lost. The son eventually acknowledged his sin, repented and restored to his family.

(For an additional discussion of the Prodigal Son go to www.ourgivenpurpose.com to read Prospect of Recovery)

If religious leaders never minister to those wallowing in the filth of their sin how will they become clean? The Pharisees were setting a poor example of how teachers of the Law were to behave; they did not associate with certain people out of fear of becoming unclean. (Leviticus 5:3-6; Leviticus 14:1-57) We, as disciples of Christ, can get our hands dirty because we have a clear understanding of the laws. Touching or coming in contact with a sinful person will not make us a sinner unless we take part in their sins. We can lead lives of holiness and be helpful in growing God's kingdom.

Jesus is a stark contrast to the Pharisees and other religious leaders because of His actions. He receives sinners, He invites them to listen to His words, and He teaches them. Be careful Believers to not to become like the Pharisees, judging others because they are not as educated or their moral standards do not match our own. We can become "snobbish" by thinking we 'know it all' and certain teachings are too remedial for us. We are given opportunities and responsibilities to learn more about the people we surround ourselves with as well as spread the Good News of God's kingdom. The Pharisees arrogantly chose what commands they should follow and how. They were not concerned with the lost nor were they going to exert effort to look for them. How do we find the lost?... By sharing our stories of redemption, leading others to the solid teaching of God's Word, and not withholding tools. We may not know the exact spiritual makeup of our neighbors but God does.

Journal Prompts:Chapter 15

1. Have you every rejoiced at finding something you had lost?
2. Who are the spiritual leaders in your life?
3. Do you feel whole and worthy of good things?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 15:1-7 The parable of the lost sheep. Jesus teaches the Pharisees that it is the lost that need someone to seek after them. The ones who are performing well and being obedient are not lost.
2. Luke 15:8-10 Palestinian women received ten silver coins as a wedding gift. Besides their monetary value these coins held sentimental value like that of a wedding ring and to lose one would be extremely distressing. Just as a woman would rejoice over finding a lost coin or ring so the angels would rejoice over a repentant sinner. Each individual is precious to God.(ESV Bible History Note)
3. Luke 15:11-32 The parable of the lost son. The father waited for his son to return after squandering his inheritance. The father accepted the son back into his home with open arms because the son repented. The son realized his wrong and how he had

Luke Chapter Sixteen

Day 16

Hashtag Liar Hashtag Lazy

- **Day 16 Luke Chapter 16**
- **Bible Reading Luke 16:1-31**
- **Focus Scripture Luke 16:11 "If then you have not been faithful with unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?"**

Have you ever been shocked when someone told you about their profession? I experienced this not too long ago. I was invited to enjoy dinner at a new bistro. The owner proclaimed he's a "chef" yet, I was certain the chopped salad and roasted chicken came from a different local restaurant. However, he touted how hard he'd worked preparing the entrée I was fortunate enough to partake of. We will try our best to sell someone a lie, won't we? Our egos are not able to handle rejection. While some of the patrons gave him credit for his artistry (plating presentation and overall service) they did not have a clue of what laid beyond. We could have experienced these same culinary delights at a smaller price point. The other establishment offered generous portions and a broader range of options. But the question...why steal? Why did this "chef" need to take credit for something he did not produce? The answer: fear; laziness, and doubt. Fear of not being talented enough; laziness because he didn't want to exert effort, and doubt of the purpose God blessed him with.

Luke 16:1-13 The parable of the dishonest manager is a very interesting teaching. On the one hand, the manager tries to recoup some of the money for his master by discounting the debts owed, on the other, he is continuing to sin by short-changing his master. He was not completely doing his job. The irony was, this master was happy with the financial gain and the manager's resourcefulness. Why??? Why would one be happy with less than the amount owed?... The enemy likes to steal and the enemy likes to settle. If he can get you to sin, what would he care how much it cost? The religious teachers were leading people astray. Jesus taught about the cost of following Him. Luke 14:29 Talks about finishing what we start, the manager did not finish, he took a shortcut. When we try to please man we forget our morals and what it is we should do out of love. Luke 16:15 Love has us going the extra mile (Matthew 5:41). We don't book four-star accommodations and expect two-star amenities. If you take less because it is for someone else what does that say about your character? Would you hire this man if he asked to manage your household? Probably not.

Unfortunately, this is what happens in today's society. We are thieves with more resources at our fingertips. By simply copy and pasting content on our social media pages we can have lifestyles that anyone would envy. We can pretend; as long as no one looks behind the curtain. With the internet, privacy is an artificial cloak. We can keep up "control", even if we are settling for less every day because our spiritual lives are non-existent and we are lost. Greed is a double edged sword.

Luke 16:10 "The one who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much."
Intellectual property and anything produced from someone else is stealing if you do not give them credit. This world of online personas has us compromising at every angle. I have seen countless images stolen, identities faked, and petty arguments arise, all because someone didn't have the courage to stand in their truth. They were not happy with who they were so they wanted to become someone else. Don't let Satan take your identity. Do not despise your small beginnings and do not compromise your morals to please people. People may shoot down your dreams and kill your body but God is the only one Who has the power to judge and find our eternal destinies. Embrace who you are and develop your talents. Praise others and ask questions if needed; everyone starts somewhere. Those who know who they are in Christ will have no problem sharing their abilities. Christ followers know that everything belongs to God. God gave you a passion, trust Him to help you grow it.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 16

1. Are you the same person online as you are offline?
2. Does your wealth make you abandon true spirituality?
3. How do you stand in your truth so that you can repent of your sins?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 16:1-13 We cannot serve God and wealth. The parable of the shrewd manager.
2. Luke 16:14-18 Jesus continues to teach as the Pharisees listen on. Because they were so focused on money they could not see what laid beyond. These religious teachers served their wallets and wanted man to envy them. Jesus taught that they were indeed living sinful lives and were false teachers of the truth.
3. Luke 16:19-31 Jesus tells about the rich man and the beggar. Even when the teaching comes from Jesus the people still won't listen.

Luke Chapter Seventeen

Day 17

Included with Purchase

- **Day 17 Luke Chapter 17**
- **Bible Reading Luke 17:1-37**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 17:6 "And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and be planted in the sea; and it would obey you."**

God's great and wondrous gifts came alive through our athletic, academic, creative, or musical talents, these passions are our purpose to pursue. With the many innate abilities God gives us, we could have a hard time focusing on just one.

I recently read an article about mustard seeds; it was the personification of living and growing in Christ. What was so interesting was learning how to plant mustard seeds. For optimal results, seeds are placed one-fourth of an inch down in the soil and be spaced three inches apart, with a foot of spacing between rows. WHEW! So much for just scattering seeds! Planting in this fashion is meticulous and organized. A gardener would know exactly where to weed and how much water to give each section. I believe faith is like this. The Holy Spirit planting purpose (belief) in us and we trusting God to produce something tangible (faith). Co-operating (gardening) with the Holy Spirit to know what to give extra attention (water, nurture) and what we need to get rid off (weed out), brings us into the process.

With the power of the Holy Spirit as our guide, we can overcome the obstacles that prevent us from living God's word. Seeking forgiveness and accepting others apologies is what we must do to keep growing. If we think we've been treated unfairly it will cause us to stumble but, we can turn to scripture and ask ourselves: am I being spiritually proud?{Luke 17:7-10} What should I learn from this? Am I expecting a reward for doing my job?

It would be insincere to pray for forgiveness from God if we haven't forgiven our neighbor. God wants us to use the forgiveness He gives us. When we are forgiven and feel it, we move freely and can do great things. When we hold on to what someone has unintentionally done to hurt our prideful feelings, it fester and creates bitterness. Hurt hearts leads to hurting hearts. If we have not closed the wounds from previous encounters we will always be defensive and unable to forgive, even ourselves.

The enemy does not forgive, he seeks to destroy relationships that could foster more growth and be fruitful in God's kingdom. Whose garden are you working in? Do you notice the bondage your unforgiving attitude has on the people around you? Let's not settle for what Satan wants us to have but on the glory that God's kingdom gives. God will take your mustard seed faith, grow it, and allow you to plant more seeds. Grow His kingdom, not your rubbish.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 17

1. Who have you neglected to forgive?
2. Where is your mustard seed planted?
3. Do you feel entitled to God's blessings for being obedient?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 17:1-10 Jesus teaches about forgiveness and faith. To allow Him to help us grow in Him through our tiny faith. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are powerful and are able to overcome many challenges that our minds may place as roadblocks. Our faith will give us clarity and how to do things effectively.
2. Luke 17:11-19 Jesus heals ten men of leprosy. Jesus teaches us about gratitude, although saying thank you to answered prayers is not necessary we are able to enjoy the added grace of his mercy because it increases our faith in Christ. Only one man returned to give praise and thanks for his healing, even though nine others had as well. Jesus pointed this out which should remind us to be grateful for everything we have been given and the promise of blessings to come. ***For an additional resource visit www.ourgivenpurpose.com to read APPRECIATION discussing Luke 17:11-19
3. Luke 17:20-37 Jesus teaches about the coming kingdom of God. He warns us not to be fooled by false teachers and that His second coming will be seen by all. Jesus references the day of Noah and the flood and the destruction of Sodom. These were both catastrophic events. If we look for signs we are to reference Luke 17:37; while one vulture may not be significant, several vultures would signify a dead body. When several things are happening all at once we can know the second coming is near. Our duty is to be prepared.

Luke Chapter Eighteen

Day 18

Who Are You With?

- **Day 18 Luke Chapter 18**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 18:1-43**
- **Focus Scripture Luke 18:8 "I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"**
- **Luke 18:35-43; Luke 5:17-26; Mark 10:46-52; Mark 2:1-12**

Luke 18:35-43 retells the facts of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus. He probably frequented the same area every day to ask people to, "spare him some change." In our world of electronic money, this seems like an odd question. No one really carries cash in our society, but in this ancient civilization, they did. Bartimaeus' appearance likely left something to be desired; he may have smelled bad and wore tattered clothing. His constant begging irritated those that had to pass by him on their way to shop, work, or home. He was as a public nuisance. However, Bartimaeus knew Jesus the Son of David was passing by. And he called out to Him. Begging...not for money or food, but mercy. But, who was he with???

Bartimaeus, had people telling him to quiet down.

Luke 5:17-26 retells the facts of another healing involving a paralytic. This man lived on a mat or stretcher which could be carried by able bodies. He needed to have someone help him bathe, go to the bathroom, and get dressed. (Doing these things for someone else every day is exhausting work and sometimes embarrassing for the injured.) His caregivers, upon hearing Jesus was near decided to take this man to the only one that could change his situation. These caregivers went the extra mile by, not only getting him there but cutting out the roof to lower him inside where Jesus would 'see' him. I can imagine the paralytic looking around the crowded room as he came down from the rooftop while others looked at him in disbelief. These believers risked injury and humiliations if their efforts were not recognized by Jesus. Their belief was so strong that they determined to get the paralytic the help he needed. Who was he with???

The paralytic had faith-filled friends that wanted his complete healing and restoration.

Luke 18:9-14 In the facts of the Pharisees versus the tax collector we see the same types of differences. The Pharisees' posture spoke volumes; they were saying: "it's not me so, I don't care if you need help. It's not me so, I will pray to God, that all may hear that I'm not like you." In contrast, the tax collector didn't feel worthy enough to raise his eyes to heaven. He stood off at a distance and prayed with reverence to the all mighty God. Repenting of sins, praying, and asking for forgiveness. The tax collector's posture before God was like that of those who lowered the paralytic down from the roof. They were humbling themselves by bringing the paralytic to Jesus instead of requesting HE come to them. The 'neighbors' that told the blind beggar to be quiet weren't concerned with his well-being or even the healing that was possible. They were happy to not have his problems and did were not part of the solution.

In life we will have those who truly want the best for us and even take us to Christ. We also have those who will silence us if we need answers or are in need of Christ's mercy. Who we surround ourselves with will decide how determined we are in seeking God for ourselves. Bartimaeus yelled out. The paralytic, was carried. Bartimaeus pleaded for mercy. Jesus heard his cry. The paralytic was lowered in front of Jesus. Jesus saw the faith of the paralytic and his friends. The people surrounding Bartimaeus silenced him. The people surrounding the paralytic received a blessing. No matter who you are with, you will still have to answer for you. How difficult are you making your life by the company you keep?

Journal Prompts: Chapter 18

1. What are you indifferent to?
2. What sacrifices do you make in order to spend time with God? (Sacrifice is to give something valuable to God.)
3. What possessions are you willing to give up or lend to someone in need?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 18:1-8 Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow.
2. For Additional Reading visit www.ourgivenpurpose.com to view Indifferent to Persistence
3. Luke 18:9-14 Jesus tells the parable of the two men who prayed.
4. Luke 18:15-17 Jesus blesses the little children. The disciples pushed them away but Jesus welcomed them.
5. Luke 18:18-30 Jesus speaks to the rich young man. This man was willing to follow all the commands except letting go of his possessions. This man was a slave to his wealth which did not enable him to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. The disciples questioned Jesus as well wondering if their sacrifices were good. The disciples had given up their homes, families, and careers to follow Him. Jesus taught that all of this would be returned to them abundantly in eternity. The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.
6. Luke 18:31-34 Jesus predicts His death a third time, and the twelve disciples did not understand.
7. Luke 18:35-43 Jesus heals the blind beggar. Today we may need to do more in order to assist someone in need. We may need to take extra time to go to the bank or even ask what could we do to help. Depending on how large your city is the homeless and hopeless may blend in with everyone else. Don't pass them by or wish they were quiet, ask how you can help.

Our faith given to us by God can be used to save us from death through the salvation. He freely gives to those who repent.

Luke Chapter Nineteen

Day 19

Candy Coated Cash

- **Day 19 Luke Chapter 19**
- **Luke 19:1-48**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."**

Luke chapter 19 deals with the haves, the have-nots, and the somewhere in the middles. Our opportunity to support ourselves financially comes from God; if we are willing to use what we have and grow what we earn. Jesus taught this through the parable of the ten servants. In Luke 19:11-27 (Matthew 25:14-30) we learn that the more we produce, the more will be given to us. Through our wealth building, strategic investing, and philanthropy we are sowing trust. Zacchaeus was a tax collector and took more from people than owed. He built his empire out of the purses of the uninformed. But God! Zaccheus desired Jesus so much that he climbed a tree to catch a glimpse of Him. Jesus accepted his sin and turned it into redemption. Zaccheus went beyond what he could have done in restoring the stolen wealth from the labor of others. Zaccheus proclaimed to Jesus, "if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." (Luke 19:8) WOW! That is an example of turning away from sin and towards God, and placing faith where it should.

Luke 19:28-40 Jesus our Lord and Savior, Provider, Prince of Peace, and Lord of Lords, rode through the streets of Jerusalem on a colt. Jesus embodies for us what it means to have a wealthy Spirit and not wealth in materials. He was nearing the time of His death for our sins and He rode on the back of a donkey. How much more humble should we be? Jesus teaches in this one chapter how we can live a life redeemed by Him and be richer than we could ever imagine. His provisions are more than enough.

But when we get greedy...

Luke 19:45-48 We turn places of worship into storefronts, we hide what has been given to us through His grace because we are lazy or make excuses, we take our talents for granted and we become thieves. Jesus cleared the Temple again. He was furious at the religious teachers partnering with the business leaders, politicians, and lawyers of the day. The Temple was a sacred place, the Religious teachers were hindering true worship by not focusing on Scripture or God. They continued to rob people and treat them unfairly on what was considered Holy Ground. If people acted like this in the church what would be the expectation when they were away? Jesus tossing over the money changers tables and driving out those that were selling animals for sacrifices was a clear answer of what they should not be doing.

Jesus is the Sabbath. He is our rest. His Word is what we meditate on, and we are to draw nearer to Him. Jesus is our refreshment in times of thirst and our spiritual food to replenish our starving souls.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 19

1. Have you forgiven a debt owed or returned the favor to someone who went above and beyond for you?
2. Have you hidden any talents out of fear?
3. Are you damaging God's business by not sharing His Word with others?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus, a wealthy and despised tax collector sought Jesus. He only wanted to see Him but Jesus offered even more. Jesus offers us more when we truly desire fellowship with Him.
2. Luke 19:11-27 This parable teaches us what we need to do while we wait for His return. This is a Biblical translation of Upper, Middle, and Lower class society today. If done in fairness we can all have what we need for this world. Jesus returns 100% back to us with authority to manage more. If we mismanage what little we may have we can not expect to be granted larger sums.
3. Luke 19:28-44 Jesus rode through Jerusalem on a colt. He was glorified and the people cried out "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord, Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 3a. Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem.
4. Luke 19:45-48 Jesus clears the Temple. The amount of negligence to the worshippers was so infuriating that Jesus made a physical change to it. As believers we are to tithe 10% of what we earn. Whether it's our money or we give our time the more we put into growing God's Kingdom and supporting each other the more likely we will not become self-centered or spiritual prideful. God desires all of us to work together in harmony.

Luke Chapter Twenty

Day 20

Deeply Rooted DNA

- **Day 20 Luke Chapter 20**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 20:1-47**
- **Focus Scriptures: Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female. He created them.**
- **Luke 20:25 And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."**

It's so amazing when we run into someone who looks like us. Perhaps it's their hair, the way they walk, or their facial expressions seem to mirror our own. I enjoy going through photos of celebrity look-a-likes or body doubles; I always have a hard time figuring out who is the 'original'. I vaguely recall a Game Show that had contestants attempt to guess who was the real celebrity. It was uncanny how closely these "unrelated" people resembled each other. Why?... Because we all bear the image of God.

You're so: beautiful, handsome, intelligent, courageous, ingenious, talented, humble, adventurous, strong. You look like a movie star! Is there anything you can't do? Compliments. They feed our ego and disarm us, we take off a few layers when strangers give us praise. (Ephesians 6:11) Our flesh is fed and we feel good about ourselves. Jesus teaches us a valuable lesson about ego. Pay attention to your mood the next time a stranger or even a friend showers you with compliments; if your mind is awaiting instruction or goes blank, you are disarmed.

Luke 20:21 Jesus was prepared for these spies. Their way of gaining ground with Him is something we all do. We want to break the ice through compliments, make the other person relax, and have their ego at our command. However, in this instance, the spies were attempting to provoke Jesus to blaspheme, to ensnare Him in front of His followers. Compliments aside Jesus, knew what they were up to. Luke 20:24 Jesus asked those that were trying to trap Him, whose image was on the denarius. The duality and depth of this question lead to a more profound understanding. If Caesar's image was on the money then it belonged to him and the people were to give the government what it was due through taxes. As believers, we accept that God created everything and us as humans are made in His image. Genesis 1:27 We belong to God and are to give Him what He is due; which is reverence, devotion, worship, adoration, and obedient living. Jesus left the spies confused because they could not argue with His point. Even though they failed to see the heart of His answer, we as His disciples understand the truth Jesus left for us.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 20

1. Where does your mind go when you give or receive compliments? Is there an ulterior motive? (Or the opposite; do you seek compliments by being self-deprecating so that others will pity you? If so, is there an ulterior motive?)
2. Who do you believe Jesus to be?
3. Who are the religious leaders in your life?

A Few Points:

1. Luke 20:1-8 The religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority. The chief priests and the elders are confronting Jesus asking, by whose authority was He doing these things. (Luke 19:45-48) Clearing the temple of the merchandise was financially devastating to the Roman government. If the people continued to follow Jesus' ways the Roman government would suffer a loss and would take more control over the Jews. The religious teachers wanted to hang on to what little power they had left. Jesus posed a threat to them.
2. Luke 20:9-19 Jesus tells the parable of the wicked vine-growers. God planted the vineyard for us as humans to care for. He created everything for us before He created us. We can live, being fully provided for because of God's forethought and foreknowledge of what we would need to survive in this atmosphere. The prophets and priests were sent to turn people away from their sin and to repentance. They were cast out and treated shamefully. God's Son Jesus was sent to again call the children of Israel into repentance but while some accepted Him the leaders did not. This caused conflict within the hearts of man and confusion as to what should be done. Jesus came as our salvation to die for our sins. The religious leaders did not recognize this truth. We are to recognize the redeeming bloodshed on the cross for our sins. Repent and turn toward God.
3. Luke 20:20-26 The religious leaders question Jesus about paying taxes.
4. Luke 20:27-40 Religious leaders question Jesus about the resurrection. Some of the leaders did not believe in being resurrected. They asked a question meant to trap Jesus again but were left wringing their hands and defeated. Jesus proclaimed that God is a living God.
5. Luke 20:41-44 The religious leaders cannot answer Jesus' question. The Pharisees and Sadducees were completely stumped by Jesus' reasoning and could not rebuke any of what He said because it was true. King David knew that the Son of Man would be both divine and human. This understanding was lost on these religious leaders.
6. Luke 20:45-47 Jesus warns against the religious leaders. These leaders who valued their position took advantage of the poor and even cheated people in order to get ahead. The arrogant people who appear Holy but inside they are selfish and keep their resources to themselves. Jesus revealed the religious leader's hearts and for the moment the people were unhappy with their leaders

Luke Chapter Twenty-One

Day 21

God's Watchful Eye

- **Day 21 Luke Chapter 21**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 21:1-38**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 21:1-2 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins.**

You never know who is watching you at any given moment. Some years ago I noticed a little boy sitting by himself while all the other children were playing and having a great time. He didn't look physically hurt so I asked if I could sit with him. He shrugged his shoulders. I told him my name. He shrugged his shoulders. I asked him his name. He shrugged his shoulders. So I told him I would call him Hero. To which he gave me the most incredulous look. He asked why would I call him that or think that was his name. I explained at that moment he was my hero because he allowed me to relax and enjoy his company. To which he replied...you're welcome. We sat for a few more minutes in a comfortable silence watching the other kids. Of course, as though watching a movie the basketball gently bounces in our direction. Two students came bounding towards us attempting to push the ball back into play. Suddenly Hero stands up, grabs the ball, and proceeds to the court making a basket. He stayed on the court. Smiling to myself I started to leave as a teacher approached me. Hero was a new student and she had tried everything to break his shell. He communicated with her and was extremely intelligent, but he did not want to make new friends. She had watched the entire time, unbeknownst to me. The boost in confidence was enough to get him to join the game. Time is a sacrifice and we can make huge impacts when we pay attention.

Christ revealed that He watches us. CLOSELY. Christ also reveals that He speaks well about our sacrifices to Him. Luke 21:3-4 He knows everything about us down to the number of hairs we have on our heads. God is omnipresent. However, Satan does his best to dissuade us from the truth. He is NOT omnipresent so he uses our weaknesses against us by creating doubt and other tactics to infiltrate our minds. Where the mind goes the heart will follow. If we continue to believe that our sins or evil deeds do not need repentance, Satan has won and is lording over us. God-Sees-All! Do not allow the enemy to have us believe otherwise.

Christ knew the financial status of each person casting their coins into the treasury. God knows our circumstances, He knows what we can afford and what we sacrifice. What we give is not only measured by our financial standings but also in what we do, and how we do it. When we sacrifice our time or give of our talents we should do so without anticipating gain. Our mindsets have us trained to receive a monetary reward when we do tasks. We are capable of being a blessing and have God use us, why should we expect anything in return?

Let love be our guide. Not seeking to elevate ourselves or have someone regard us as a personal savior. The love that is sacrificial, not expecting a return. The peering eyes of our neighbors and loved ones watch our actions. What are you seen doing? Jesus gave His life for us. We are to return our lives to Him.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 21

1. How do you use the resources God blesses you with to help others?
 2. Do you sacrifice or do you only give the bare minimum?
 3. Are you remaining watchful and on guard for Christ's return?
- A Few Points:
 1. Luke 21:1-4 A widow gives all she has.
 2. Luke 21:5-24 Jesus tells about His future. Speaking to the disciples Jesus tells of the things to come and things we can expect as well. Our family, friends, and neighbors will betray us; but following God's commands, we have eternal life.
 3. Luke 21:25-33 God's Word is everlasting it will endure forever. Jesus will return.
 4. Luke 21:34-38 We are to stay watchful, to keep alert. People were coming to listen to the Word of God.

Luke Chapter Twenty-Two

Day 22

A Demon Passing Through

- **Day 22 Chapter 22**
- **Bible Reading Luke 22:1-71**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 22:6 So he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the crowd.**

Betrayal. Opportunity. Confusion. Chaos. Entrapment. Liars. Thieves. Being lied to hurts. It hurts more when we know its coming. When we have loved someone with all our heart, given to them whatever they asked, yet it wasn't enough. We weren't enough in that particular season of their lives. Being betrayed is not something one can get over easily. We hang on to the bitter memories if we still have to interact with them. With God, we can move beyond our hurts and to forgiveness.

Believers in Christ acknowledge a spiritual realm. We can not see spirits but we can see their works. This is one reason we must forgive. At any given time an evil spirit may influence the outcome of an event. It could be a celebration, a new job, an opportunity to serve, or the dawn of a new day. Fighting with these evil entities is not something we can do on our own. Christ left us with the Holy Spirit to battle these evil forces. We have learned that Christ cast out demons. We do not know how many demons may dwell within any one person. What we can do is be ready to face them. Praying, reading God's Word for clarity and understanding is how we arm ourselves.

John 12:6 and John 6:70 Jesus knew who Judas Iscariot was when he chose him. Judas Iscariot was given opportunities to change his heart but his greedy character made him a target. Luke 11:24-26 Judas Iscariot was home to an unclean spirit. It may have left him for a time but circled back bringing more demons with it. He went through his time of being a disciple unfulfilled. His heart never saw what Christ was offering. Judas Iscariot rejected Christ which led to his betrayal. Christ offered salvation to Judas Iscariot, he didn't want it because it did not come in the form he thought it should have. Luke 22:3 Satan entered Judas Iscariot and used him as his vessel. John 13:27 Tells us that during the last supper Jesus told Satan to do his deeds quickly. Christ reveals that He sees all; in the spiritual realm and in the physical realm; He was God in human form. Not only was Judas Iscariot going to betray Jesus he continued to take from Him as though nothing was out of the ordinary. We have people like this today. They live with us, we work with them, they seem Holy and live upright. These unfortunate souls do not believe in Christ and what His death on the cross means for us now. They lead oppressed lives because fear shackles them. Their joy is found in material objects and they always want to acquire newer, better, and more. They look for ways to shame Christians by holding on to our past sins and praying against us. But just as Jesus teaches us do not allow the enemy to take over. Christ followers are vulnerable to the attacks of Satan as well. Luke 22:31-32. With God we are stronger; we can call on His strength to help us through. Brothers and Sisters in Christ keep walking with our Lord and Savior. Be of good courage.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 22

(Life Application Study Bible NASB study questions. pg 1711)

1. Are we true disciples and followers of Christ, or uncommitted pretenders?
2. Will, we accept Jesus' free gift, or, like Judas, betray Him?
3. Why would we want to betray Jesus?

A Few Points

1. Luke 22:1-6 The Passover feast is being prepared and people from all over have journeyed to Jerusalem to celebrate and also see Jesus who has spread in fame. The chief priests and scribes are conspiring to kill Jesus and not do it publicly. Judas Iscariot offers a solution and receives a payment for his deed.
2. Luke 22:7-13 Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Last Supper. He instructs them on what to say and gives an answer to a question He knew would be asked.
3. Luke 22:14-30 Jesus reveals that He knew all of His disciples would betray and leave Him in His hour of need. John 13:27 Also reveals that He watched Satan enter into Judas Iscariot telling us He had the power to see both the physical and the spiritual realm at the same time. The disciples had not settled the argument: who was the greatest among them. They did not understand how gravely important the future was.
4. Luke 22:31-38 Simon Peter denies that He would deny Jesus...ever. Jesus told Peter to be prepared because Satan would attack him. He reassured that Peter would be restored after this testing even though he would fail to stand up for Jesus.
5. Luke 22:39-46 Jesus prays in agony in the Garden in Mount Olivet. The disciples were to keep watch but continually fell asleep.
6. Luke 22:47-53 Jesus is betrayed and arrested.
7. Luke 22:54-65 Peter denies Jesus 3 times.
8. Luke 22:66-71 Jesus is the Son of God.

Luke Chapter Twenty-Three

Day 23

Split By The Blood

- **Day 23 Chapter 23**
- **Bible Reading: Luke 23:1-56**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 23:42 And he was saying, "Jesus remember me when You come into Your Kingdom!"**

Doing things out of love for someone who has betrayed us is hard. My first thought about what God's sacrificial love looked like on the cross, is giving up a vital organ for someone else. We don't know if we will need the other kidney later in life. Going through a surgical procedure to save a person's life is one of the most selfless acts a person can do. God performed surgery on Jesus. He removed Him from Himself to give us life. We have His life-saving blood as atonement for our sins. Through Christ, we can live freely knowing we will spend eternity with Him completely healed of all the mental and physical infirmities we had on earth. Our master Physician gives us life.

Luke 23:39-43 Jesus hung to die between two criminals. One criminal feared Christ and recognized Him as the almighty God; he sought forgiveness for his sins by acknowledging that he deserved to die. The other wanted to save himself, he was not remorseful. This paints the picture of the world. Christ is the dividing cause. Some people are sorrowful, repent of sins past, seek God's guidance, and plead to Him to save a place in His eternity. On the other side, some will not seek God to save their souls but want Him to save their lives. {Luke 9:24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.}

These people have sinned and want to be rescued without being punished or repenting. They are woefully unaware of eternity and the atoning blood of Jesus.

{Luke 23:34 Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.} Jesus was tortured, bleeding, dying on the cross and He prayed for these sinners. The people did not understand what was happening. Jesus prayed for those with hardened hearts...he prayed for us.

We can go through this life crying out to Jesus to save us in this world, or we can pray for our souls to find rest with Him in eternity. We are criminals. Our behavior is punishable. Jesus paid the greatest price. We are bonded out of prison awaiting His judgment. What will we do while we are free??... Will we commit more crimes or will we display our best behavior?

Journal Prompts: Chapter 23

1. Do you notice what you have in common with someone or the differences?
2. Have you befriended an enemy to bring someone down?
3. Which side of the cross are your criminal acts? Are you repenting or are you angry?

A Few Points:

Luke chapter 23 Luke 23 is filled with details and scriptures to meditate on as is the entire Bible. This chapter takes us through Jesus' trial, persecution, and death. Everything in Luke, as well as the Synoptic Gospels, add details to how this happened and how we are able to continue to have a life. The disciples were chosen as witnesses to testify about Jesus and spread the news of His coming Kingdom. All that followed Him faithfully in those days left a footprint and deeper understanding of who God is because of Christ. We are still power-hungry, wanting to have prestige and honor among our peers, and have comforts without sacrificing. We choose where we're planted and how deep our roots go, we are a blessing to someone seeking shelter or in need of accommodations for ourselves. Repenting of our sins and focusing on forgiveness we can lead better lives. Reading God's Word and spending more time with Him will make us more like Him. Throughout these Gospels one thing stood out. Balance. We are to balance our priorities, businesses, families, mental, physical, and spiritual health. Having enough to sustain ourselves without acquiring so much we build places to store it. We are to put God first. Taking care of the helpless, giving of our time and expertise. We are to be profitable but not be consumed with greed. How we handle the blessings God gives us will balance our mental, physical, and spiritual health.

Luke Chapter Twenty-Four

Day 24

Remember His Words

- **Day 24 Chapter 24**
- **Bible Reading Luke 24:1-53**
- **Focus Scripture: Luke 24:8 And they remembered His Words,**

Communication is verbal and nonverbal. We remember how we feel when words are spoken. This year I adopted a strategy; at the beginning of a conversation I would think, "what can I learn?" That simple question helped me close my mouth. I became a better listener. While I have not perfected this I am grateful it is becoming a habit. I am able to recall more information and engage with others. Through Christ, I am developing a greater understanding of my tongue being a weapon. How I wield it shows my maturity in Spirit and cooperation with the Holy Spirit God left with me. I remember God's Words.

Grief is a difficult emotion. It comes in waves. We celebrate the good memories and miss our loved ones terribly at the same time. Once acceptance hits, our grieving becomes something we talk about openly. We are able to announce that we miss their presence, the way they laughed, and how they made us feel. We move on with our lives constantly grappling with the void they left. We find comfort in our routines. Luke 24:1-7 The women came to anoint the body of Christ. They had prepared spices. I can imagine them going through this Jewish custom each with their own memory of Christ's miracles, teachings, power, and authority. They remembered Christ. The shock and dismay at seeing the two men in dazzling clothes(angels) tore them from their numbness. In a few short moments, all of what Christ had said to them hit like a wave of truth. Christ is alive!

Luke 24:13-49 Christ's appearances after His resurrection deepened the faith of the believers that had abandoned Him. Jesus forgave and brought to life a new understanding of how we are to live knowing that we will meet Him in glory. In the meantime, His Word is here for us to study, learn, and live by. No matter our circumstances we can live with a freed mindset. Christ left His followers with a magnificent image. He ascended into Heaven after coming down to earth in human form, growing as we do, being tempted by Satan, spreading the Good News of His Kingdom, giving life to the lifeless, healing infirmities, causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, being beaten, crucified, and rejected. His love for us is so profound that He gave us something else to consider...hope for our future. His disciples were allowed to see Him be carried up into Heaven. Our lives here on earth are not awesome all the time; Christ left the example of overcoming all, with God as our focus we can look towards Heaven. Remember His Words.

Journal Prompts: Chapter 24

1. Is what you're doing now bringing you closer to God?
2. How has the Gospel of Luke changed your perspective?
3. Have you completely accepted Christ into your life?

A Few Points:

Luke 24 tells us Jesus appeared to the disciples walking away from the 'congregation'. Don't walk away from fellowship with other believers. Jesus taught us to be aware of demons taking over our bodies. Pay attention to the need, greed, and selfish ambitions that creep into our thoughts, these are warning signs. Remember to arm yourself with God's Word. We are all members of a larger body. What we do individual is magnified when we do it together. Jesus showed Himself to His followers allowing them to touch Him. Jesus walked through locked doors, ate, and drank before ascending into Heaven. He left His followers with hope. We are to live our lives as Christ did. Forgiving each other so we can seek forgiveness. We can thrive with God by exercising our right to be called His children.

A Note of Gratitude

Dear Readers,

I am beyond grateful for all of you. Your willingness to embrace what God gave me to produce is so appreciated. I have struggled in the past with being productive and effective, I wasted my time and I'm ashamed. Ashamed because my life has a purpose and I did not recognize the power that is within me. With God, I am able to see past my weaknesses and receive His strength. The website ourgivenpurpose.com began as a way of sharing faith-based teachings and devotionals, chronicling my spiritual journey. I did not know what I was doing when I started but, I trusted God to show me. Once I became comfortable writing (out-loud) and taking criticism; God pushed me into doing this devotional. This meant I would have to study, write at a measured pace, and pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit even more. This work has given me new hope and encouragement that with God I am complete. I use His wisdom to break down the Word and apply it to life today. God's Word is everlasting. Thank you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, in Christ for praying, commenting, texting, and trusting me with your failures and successes. Your testimonies of redemption were nothing short of amazing. Our God is awesome! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Torrie

F.A.M.I.L.Y (Forget About Me I Love You) Thank you, editors. I am grateful.