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March 27th.....EASTER!

A letter from our Senior Pastor

If you know the difference between a "wooly booger" and a streamer or have an opinion about using a wet or dry, a nymph or a parachute, then in all likelihood you are a real fisherman. In contrast to that, I am a self-designated functional fly fisherman. By that I mean that almost all of the fly fishing that I do, happens while I am backpacking and I am literally trying to feed myself my next meal. My fly fishing interest began several years ago when my son and I took an introductory fly fishing class. We got really excited about our newly acquired skill, but first had to get outfitted for this new hobby. At the counter of a fishing shop, a clerk began asking questions, but was using a language I could not understand. I immediately realized that becoming a "real" fly fisherman was going to require a lot of time and thousands of dollars. I opted to start slowly and decided to gradually work my way into my new sport. Not the decision that the clerk at the fly shop was hoping for that day! He was hoping I'd be 'hooked' and ready to put my money into it as well. Like the store clerk that day, I am hoping and praying for us to get 'hooked'.

As we start the New Year, we will be studying several key passages of Scripture that teach us about the basic tenets of our Christian faith. My hope in this series is to stir a new excitement and call us to a deeper commitment to our own personal faith in Jesus Christ. Over the course of this series we will seek to literally get ourselves 'hooked' more deeply in a concerted effort to lessen any chance of any believer ever getting away from the true faith.

There is probably no more appropriate way for us to begin the New Year, than setting aside time each day to read, study and pray as we truly get to know Jesus and understand who He really is to each of us. I challenge you to make this study a personal priority. Spend time daily with Jesus. Read in His Word, pray for His will and share a witness. Let's make 2016 a year we 'get hooked'.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Daniel Lambert". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page.

Continuing Opportunity

Let me be totally honest with you; there are weeks that I have a difficult time remembering what the weekend service was about. And if that was not frustrating enough, sometimes it happens by 10pm the same night! At some level *we all* face this challenge.

Consider joining me and doing something about it!

Easthaven will be sending out a **TEXT MESSAGE** reminder Monday-Saturday that has a reminder or point of action from the weekend's message. To sign up simply text the following information

Text to: 94253
In the Message write: ebc

You will receive **no** other solicitation
You can opt out at any time
Contact Darren in the church office for more information.

Week One



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK ONE - DAY ONE

Read: Ephesians 2:8-9

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Digging Deeper: Grace is getting something we do not deserve. What we deserve as a result of sin is separation from God and an eternity in Hell. But God has provided each person the opportunity to be saved from Hell and spend eternity with God. This is through faith, believing and receiving God's free gift.

Have you received this free gift? Write down how you received the gift of eternal life and some ways your life has been changed.

If you haven't received this free gift you can by faith, right now. In the book of Romans it says "...The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. This is the message of faith that we proclaim: If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation." Romans 10:8b-10, HCSB

WEEK ONE - DAY TWO

Read: Romans 8:31-39

The Believer's Assurance

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He did not even spare His own Son, but offered Him up for us all; how will He not also with Him grant us everything? ³³ Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the One who justifies. ³⁴ Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the One who died, but even more, has been raised; He also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: Because of You we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us.

³⁸ For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, ³⁹ height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Think: As a result of belief in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life by faith, what did you actually have to do to obtain this salvation? Confession, faith, prayer?

If you believed by faith what can separate you from God and His love for you? Read Romans 8:31-39 again. What can separate you from God? Why?

WEEK ONE - DAY THREE

Read: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5

“Who can bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the One who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the One who died, but even more, has been raised; He also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.”

Think: Justification means that “God pardons and accepts believing sinners” p. 643, **Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology** - Elwell

God has forgiven all believers and has pardoned or forgiven the debt of sin through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Since your sin debt is forgiven, then how should you live your life now that you are free from the penalty of sin?

WEEK ONE - DAY FOUR

Read: Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

God calls all believers to do this one thing, which allows us to participate in sharing His love and forgiveness with others. He empowers us with His Holy Spirit to be His witness.

Think:

Are you recognizing the opportunities God places in your life to be His witness?

What is preventing you from talking to others about Jesus?

What do you need to change in your life to freely show others what God has freely given you?

WEEK ONE - DAY FIVE

Read: 1Thessalonians 1:5

“For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words, but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you.”

Dig Deeper:

Are you praying for lost people that you know and meet? Make a list of them and pray for them. Someone prayed for you.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

How often are you willing to commit to pray for them?

Week Two

Group Memory Challenge

Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life.
Romans 6:4



WEEK TWO - DAY ONE

Read: Matthew 28:19-20

List the commands/promises in this passage:

-
-
-
-
-

How does baptism fit into this discussion about the Great Commission?

Why does making disciples include baptizing them “in the name...**of the Son**” along with the Father and the Holy Spirit?
(See verse 18)

THINK: What in this passage tells us that baptism is an important step in the life of a follower of Christ?

WEEK TWO - DAY TWO

Read: Romans 6:1-11

There are a lot of big concepts in this passage. Don't overthink it today. Let's stay focused on the symbolism in this scripture. List below on the left all of the phrases in which baptism displays our death with Christ, along with the phrases in which baptism displays our new life in Christ.

Dead

Alive

REFLECT: Look back on your life as a Christian. In what way(s) has Christ brought you out of death and into life?

WEEK TWO - DAY THREE

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:14-17

How

How had baptism become a point of division among believers?

Compare

Compare Paul's priority regarding evangelism vs baptism.

What

What did Paul do in order to avoid the dilution of the message of the cross? (v 17)

THINK: It is not baptism that saves us, but the message of the cross of Christ. Based on this passage, why did Paul feel that this was the case?

WEEK TWO - DAY FOUR

Read: Acts 2:37-39, 41

“What must we do?” This was the question that came to Peter after he explained that Jesus (whom they had crucified) is the Lord and the Messiah. The Messiah was their hope for salvation, and he had been crucified. Take a few minutes to read and think on this passage.

They asked, “What must we do?” What was Peter’s response?

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Why would baptism be such an important step for these people? Take a few minutes to think that through, and list your thoughts below.

Consider: In what way(s) is baptism important for us today?

WEEK TWO - DAY FIVE

Read: Acts 2:39, 41 again

What does this passage ask us to BELIEVE about:

The Message of the cross of Christ...

Repentance...

Baptism...

Next step:

Are you a Christian who has not yet been baptized? Consider making a call to the church to discuss plans for making that happen.

Week Three



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK THREE - DAY ONE

Read: Acts 4:32-35, Acts 2:44-47

Put yourself in the shoes of one of the members of this church. What would it have been like to personally witness the devotion to one another that you just read about in these passages?

How do you think the message of the Gospel impacted the believers' ability or willingness to "have everything in common?"

In what ways do you think that their willingness to "have everything in common" impacted the presentation of the Gospel to those around them?

THINK: What would our lives look like, as individuals and as a church, if we cared less about our "stuff" and more about one another?

WEEK THREE - DAY TWO

Read: Ephesians 4:1-16

List the words and/or phrases that speak of unity. Jot down a couple of your thoughts about each one.

What

Based on what you've read in this passage, what is the end result of unity in the church family?

PRAY: Take a moment to stop and pray, asking God to help you to understand what you personally can do to foster an environment of unity.

WEEK THREE - DAY THREE

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:10

Take a few minutes to list a few ministries at our church on the left below. On the right, write down the effects that a lack of unity can create in that ministry

Ministries

Effects of a lack of unity

Ministries	Effects of a lack of unity

Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable – if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise – dwell on these things.

Philippians 4:8

THINK: How can this passage help us to avoid divisiveness and create unity? Take a few minutes to search scripture for any other passages that can help us to focus on the things that matter, and avoid needless conflict.

WEEK THREE - DAY FOUR

Read: 1 Peter 4:7-11

Take time today to meditate a bit about our responsibility to care for one another. Spend a few minutes with each of the following and list one or two ways you can actually DO them in the next few days.

Love one another

Be hospitable

**Speak as God
would speak**

Serve one another

How will you put them into motion this week?

WEEK THREE - DAY FIVE

Read: Acts 4:32-35, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Peter 4:7-11

What do these passages ask me to BELIEVE about:

Loving my fellow believers?

Serving my fellow believers?

Unity among believers?

Think: Allow God to strengthen your commitment to these things.

Week Four



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK FOUR - DAY ONE

Read: John 14:23-26

Who

Sample: Who would be sending the Holy Spirit?

What

Sample: What roles does the Holy Spirit fill?

When

Sample: When would the Holy Spirit be sent to them?

THINK: The disciples are beginning to understand that Christ will not be with them much longer. Think about it from their perspective. How would it have felt for them to hear the words, “we will come to him and make our home with him” from Jesus? What comfort does it bring for YOU to hear those words?

WEEK FOUR - DAY TWO

Read: 1 Peter 1:13-16

BE HOLY:

Why is it so difficult to “be holy”?

What part does the Holy Spirit play in our journey to becoming more holy?

Why do we sometimes continue to fall prey to the desires we had when we lived without the knowledge of Christ? Where can we find help in overcoming that?

THINK: Consider the phrase “with your minds ready for action” (v13). The battle for holiness starts first in our mind. How can you set your mind ready for action?

WEEK FOUR - DAY THREE

Read: Romans 12:1-2

Yesterday we talked about preparing our minds in order to find our way to holiness. Today's passage instructs us to present ourselves to God as sacrifices, mind and body. Take a few minutes to stop and think about what that involves, then journal your thoughts below:

Our conformity to the world and to our past is an enemy to the renewal that we desire. List three things that you can do **today** to resist the tendency to fall back into the old traps that keep us from being the godly men and women that we want to be.

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-
-

COMMIT: Decide today to present yourself completely to God, and then turn that commitment into action.

WEEK FOUR - DAY FOUR

Read: John 16:13, Galatians 5:16-18, Ezekiel 36:26-27

Based on what you've learned so far and read in today's passages, list each of the things that the Holy Spirit does in our lives when we "walk by the Spirit"

-
-
-
-
-

How does understanding the Holy Spirit's role in our lives help us on our journey to be holy, as God is holy?

What in your past, must you **leave in the past** in order to become the person that God calls you to be?

Take time to walk away from the clutter in your day, slow down and think for a few minutes about what your day should look like when you are "Walking by the Spirit". Now commit to making that happen and ask God for the help of the Holy Spirit in doing so.

Week Five



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK FIVE - DAY ONE

Read: 2 Timothy 4:1-5

What is Paul *charging* Timothy to do?

Why is there an urgency to *proclaim the message* (both in this passage and today)?

Paul is referring to a future time. In that era, will there be a great lack of teachers? Will church buildings and pews be empty?

THINK ON IT:

An "evangelist" is someone with a vocational calling, from God, to announce the good news of the Gospel.

Does Paul's charge to Timothy apply to believers today - Why/Why not?

WEEK FIVE - DAY TWO

Read: 2 Timothy 4:1-5

What is to be our mindset / demeanor when we *proclaim the message*?

What other possible motives could there be?

Why will they *not tolerate sound doctrine*, **but** still *multiply teachers* and listen to teaching?

How should we respond to those who *turn away from hearing the truth*?

PONDER THIS:

“Someday” people intentionally turn away from what they know to be truth and instead, choose teachers that teach myth. Summarize how we are to fight against this mind set.

WEEK FIVE - DAY THREE

Read: Acts 4:19-20 & 29

Context: In Acts 3 & 4, Peter & John have been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are called before the religious leaders. In 4:12 they boldly proclaim that Jesus is the only hope/way of Salvation. These leaders have just *ordered them not to preach or teach at all in the name of Jesus.*

When there is conflict between our heavenly authority and our earthly authority, who are we to obey?

Peter & John spoke about what they had *seen and heard.* Can we effectively *preach or teach ... in the name of Jesus,* if we don't know him?

Do you think it was difficult for Peter & John to disobey these leaders? What does 4:29 reveal about their fears?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

In the face of extreme opposition, they were *unable to stop speaking* about Christ. Do we face this level of opposition? What inhibits us from sharing the gospel on a personal level?

WEEK FIVE - DAY FOUR

Read: Romans 1:16

Paul was *eager to preach the good news* because he understood that it was *God's power for salvation to everyone who believes*. How does our understanding of the gospel affect our witnessing efforts?

Read: Matthew 5:14-16 (Jesus is speaking to his disciples)

What is the obvious function of a lamp? Is there any logical reason to light the lamp and then hide the lamp?

Notice Jesus says, “**YOU** are the light of the world ... let your light shine (or your light must shine). If you are a disciple of Christ, you are light. It is what you are. It is what you have become. ? Is there any logical reason to hide your light?

The city provides light for its local citizens. The lamp provides light for that specific house. Who is our light for? Who should hear our good news?

TAKE IT HOME:

Proclaiming the message is not an “activity” believers participate in; it is who we are. The flame of a candle doesn't occasionally dabble in spreading light; it is light. If we are not regularly sharing the truth of the gospel, the obvious question is “why not”? Where can we *let our light shine*?

WEEK FIVE - DAY FIVE

Read: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Paul was willing to make sacrifices, *because of the gospel*. List some of them below.

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Paul says, “*I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some.*” Based on this statement, do you think there is anything he was not willing to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel?

What are you willing to sacrifice for the gospel?

What are you not willing to sacrifice for the gospel?

SUMMARY:

Be the gospel witness you have been called to be, because the time is short and opportunities are fleeting. It requires boldness and sacrifice, but worth every effort. Let’s be a light to our house and our city!

Week Six



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK SIX - DAY ONE

Read: Acts 1:8

Context: Jesus has been crucified and has risen. He has been with his disciples for 40 days. They are on the Mount of Olives and Jesus is about to ascend into heaven. They know that Messiah will one day set up his earthly kingdom. They want to know when (vs 6).

Summarize Jesus' answer to their question in vs 7 into your own words.

What are the two action verbs that Jesus said they *will* do?

According to Jesus' parting words; what would they *receive* and what would they become?

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring the power before they became his witnesses. Elaborate on the significance of this order of events.

THINK:

Are modern day disciples dependent on that same power? If so, how do we receive this power?

Is it possible to accomplish the task assigned in Acts 1:8?

WEEK SIX - DAY TWO

Read: Acts 1:8

Jesus told these *men of Galilee* specifically where they were to be witnesses of Him. What do you believe was the significance of those locations?

1. Jerusalem:
2. Judea:
3. Samaria:
4. The ends of the earth:

Where are we supposed to be a witness of Jesus Christ?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

CONSIDER:

Where is it most difficult for you to be a powerful witness?

Why are some areas more difficult than others?

Is it possible to accomplish a task of this magnitude?

Is it possible to truly be a witness to the ends of the world?

WEEK SIX - DAY THREE

Read: Matthew 24:14

Context: Two days prior to Jesus being *handed over to be crucified*, Jesus is sitting with his disciples *on the Mount of Olives*. They ask Jesus, “...*what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*” They wanted to know when (vs 3).

Summarize Jesus’ answer to their question from vs 14.

Where will the *good news* be proclaimed?

The good news will be proclaimed as *a testimony* to... who?

What will happen after *all the world* and *all nations* have heard the *good news of the kingdom*?

WORK IT OUT:

On Monday and Tuesday we asked if it were possible to truly reach the ends of the world with the message of Jesus Christ. Combine Acts 1:8 and Matthew 24:14 and fully answer that question.

WEEK SIX - DAY FOUR

Read: Revelation 7:9-10

Context: The *end of the age* has come and gone. John is looking into the future and telling us what was shown to him.

What are the two ways John explains the number of people that he sees?

Where were these people originally from?

Where are they standing when John sees them in the future?

Why are they there? How did they get there? How do they have the right to *stand before the throne and before the Lamb*?

MULL IT OVER:

How would this scene look and sound if you were the only witness?

WEEK SIX - DAY FIVE

Read: Matthew 24:14 and Acts 1:8 and Revelation 7:9-10

Prior to His crucifixion, in Matthew 24:14, Jesus predicted that the *good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world*. Was He correct? Is this a true statement? How do you know?

After His crucifixion, in Acts 1:8, Jesus explains that receiving the Holy Spirit causes us to become His witnesses. He instructs His followers to witness of Him to *the ends of the earth*. Is this task possible? Will it be accomplished? How do you know?

In Revelation 7:9-10, John is looking at a scene from the future. Obviously, Jesus' prediction was correct. Obviously, the power of the Holy Spirit was sufficient. How does this affect your view of our task?

CHALLENGE:

Are we being the witness we are called to be?

Are you taking the gospel to all the areas you are responsible for?

Are you doing your part, to add to that number?

When the multitudes gather before the throne, will your voice be among the choir?

Week Seven



WEEK SEVEN - DAY ONE

Read: 1 Peter 3:13-17

What are two things that God's people are called to do?

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What are some practical examples of how we can carry out these orders?

When those, who are *deeply committed* choose to *honor the Messiah* and defend the reason for their hope; what are the potential consequences? (vs 13 & 17)

Are you willing to stay committed to what is good? Do you think we, as a church, are prepared to stay committed to what is good?

THINK:

How do you live a Christian life?

Are you committed?

How will you fight against those who denounce your Christian life?

WEEK SEVEN - DAY TWO

Read: 1 Peter 3:13-17

When we read advisories, such as *harm* and *suffer*, what is our natural response?

Is fear a logical reaction to pending suffering?

How does this passage instruct us to respond when faced with suffering *for righteousness* and *doing good*?

What is to be our demeanor; our attitude, when we *give a defense... for the hope that is in you*? Why?

THINK:

How does the lost world respond to suffering?

Should our response be noticeably different?

What does our response to affliction say about us?

WEEK SEVEN - DAY THREE

Read: 1 Peter 3:13-17

Who will suffer; those who do good or those who do evil?

Which suffering is most desirable? Why?

Fear is a natural response toward suffering, but it is not to rule us. Who should be the *Lord in your hearts*?

How should this submission affect our actions?

SUMMARIZE:

We will suffer in this life. We will either suffer (spiritually) for doing evil, or suffer (physically) for doing good. God's people are not to fear what the lost world fears. We are called to stand fast with a ready response, coupled with gentleness and respect. When we live this out, we honor the Messiah and display our submission to him as the Lord of our hearts.

WEEK SEVEN - DAY FOUR

Read: Acts 21:40 - 22:16

Was Saul aware of the suffering the early church endured?
Why was his view of their suffering unique?

Was the Saul's persecution of the early church legal?

When Saul became Paul was he aware of the dangers he would encounter as he became *a witness for Him to all people*?

What changed Saul the Persecutor, into Paul the Apostle?

MEDITATE:

Who was the Lord of Paul's heart?

Did that affect his boldness?

Compare your boldness to Paul's. Explain any differences...

WEEK SEVEN - DAY FIVE

Read: Matthew 10:16-20

When facing the wolves, how can we be as discrete/cautious as serpents and as harmless as doves? (Literally/Practically)

According to vs 18, why will God allow us to be “put on trial”?

Worry seems logical in this situation. Why are we able to be free from worry? Who bears the burden of supplying our answers when we’re “on trial”?

Who are “our” Sanhedrin, governors and king?

CONSIDER THIS:

As our world seems to spiral away from godliness, suffering for Christ is not new, but is to be expected. This week’s verses equip us with a biblical response for what lies ahead.

Are you aware or fearful?

Will your response be seasoned with gentleness and respect?

The promise of harm does not excuse us from living surrendered lives for our Messiah.

Week Eight



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK 8 - DAY ONE

Read: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Paul mentions Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra -- three cities in the Roman province of Galatia that he visited during his 1st and 2nd missionary journeys. It may be helpful to go back and read Acts 13:13—14:23, and 16:1-6 to understand what Paul is referring to in this letter to Timothy.

Our emphasis this week is on “Discipleship.” Can you identify the three “sources” of Timothy’s spiritual maturity and discipleship found in these verses?

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There are no better foundations for growth in Christ than dependence on the Scriptures and having a mature Christian mentor who can guide and encourage you.

1. We all need a “Paul” in our lives. Who fills that spot in your life?
2. We all need a “Timothy” as well. Therefore, if appropriate, who are you currently mentoring?

THINK: In verse 15, Paul says the Scriptures are able to do something important for us. Write out what that is below, and then ponder what exactly it means. Write your thoughts below as well.

WEEK 8 - DAY TWO

Read: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Paul says “all Scripture is God-breathed,” or inspired. What does that mean and how is the inspiration of Scripture different from an “inspired” speech or writing?

How is Scripture useful in the following ways? (Try to give personal examples.)

Teaching:

Rebuking:

Correcting:

Training:

THINK: As you meditate on these two verses today, think about what Paul is telling us regarding the purpose of Scripture. How does Scripture *equip us for every good work*?

WEEK 8 - DAY THREE

Read: Psalm 119:1-16

Psalm 119 is the longest of the psalms and is a celebration of God's law. The value of God's law was stated clearly in 119:105 – "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." By reading the first sixteen verses of this psalm we can see what our attitude should be toward God's Word and its place in our lives.

1. *Read Psalm 119:1-16.* List all the words and phrases used to identify the law of God?
2. What are we to do regarding the law of God?
3. What will be the results in our lives if we do these things?
4. Verse 11 gives one reason for memorizing Scripture. What is the stated reason here and what other reasons come to mind?

WEEK 8 - DAY FOUR

One tool you can use to develop your Bible study skills is often called the *Inductive Bible Study* method. You start with the words in the biblical text and then draw conclusions about meaning and application. The process starts with asking six investigative questions about the verse or passage you are studying: **Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How?** You may not be able to answer all of these with every verse and passage, but it is a good place to start. Once the truth has been found, meaning and application come next.

Step 1: Prepare: Quiet your heart and pray that God will open your eyes and mind to the truth He will reveal to you in His Word.

Step 2: Observation: What does the text say? Seek to understand the “context” of the verse or passage before jumping to any preconceived ideas or conclusions. Try to answer the six questions listed above:

- a. Who wrote the passage? And who are the characters involved?
- b. What is happening or what is being said?
- c. Where did this occur?
- d. When did it occur?
- e. Why did it occur?
- f. How did it occur?

Please note: Sometimes you may need a good study Bible and/or a reliable commentary to find the answers to all of these questions.

Step 3: Interpretation:

What does it mean? Focus on trying to understand the original meaning by the original author to the original audience. What did it mean *to them*?

Step 4: Application:

How does it apply to you and me today? This is where you allow God’s Spirit to draw personal application from the text to your own life. Ask yourself: *How do I apply this to my life? How does this affect me, today?*

NOW YOUR TURN: For today, on page 63, try to go back and answer the six Observation questions about Psalm 119:1-16? (Who, what, where, when, why, how?)

- WHO
- WHAT
- WHERE
- WHEN
- WHY
- HOW

WEEK 8 - DAY FIVE

APPLICATION

Read: Psalm 119: 105-112

After reading this passage, try filling out the Inductive Bible Study grid below.

OBSERVE

What does it say?
How do I apply it?
(who, what, where, when why, how)

INTERPRET

What does it mean?

The crucial question you have to ask yourself when reading your Bible is this: **So What?** In other words... *What practical difference will I allow it to make in my life?* Can you answer that question based on this passage or any of the passages studied this week?

PRAYER REQUEST:

Week Nine



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK 9 - DAY ONE

Read: Ephesians 6:10-20 (the “The Armor of God” passage)

The Apostle Paul teaches that believers must “put on” the armor of God in order to stand against the devil’s schemes. There are five *defensive* weapons identified. List them:

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____

Now list the two *offensive* weapons we are to use (from the above passage):

- (6) _____
- (7) _____

In this spiritual war, Paul emphasizes the importance of total prayer. Pray in every way, on all occasions and at all times. Christians are to be fully alert to the state of the battle, in constant communication with their commanding Lord and actively supporting their fellow soldiers.

- (A) What does it mean to “pray in the Spirit” in 6:18?
- (B) Note that Paul was asking for prayer so that he would continue to fearlessly share the gospel. Do you have difficulty asking others to pray for you? Why/why not?
- (C) Have you ever asked God for that same lack of fear in sharing the gospel? What might happen if you did?

WEEK 9 - DAY TWO

Read: Matthew 6:5-18

In verses 5-8, notice that Jesus assumes his followers would pray (“...when you pray”). Focus on what Christ is teaching regarding the motive behind *where* and *what* you pray.

WHERE: PUBLIC vs. PRIVATE

Why is it so difficult to pray in public?

Why did Jesus warn us to *not* be like the “hypocrites” in our prayers?

What does it mean that they have “received their reward in full?”

WHAT You Pray

Why do you suppose Jesus was against babbling and shallow repetition of prayer?

How does knowing that God *already knows what you need* affect your prayers?

Does it excuse you from praying anyway? Why or why not?

THINK:

If you truly want fellowship with God, you need to pray in private where you can pour out your heart to God and listen for His response. Think about your own prayer life: Do you have a place where you go to be alone with the Lord? If so, describe it below. If not, what steps can you take to create a private place where you and God can meet?

WEEK 9 – DAY THREE

Read: Matthew 6:9-14

This prayer is often called the Lord’s Prayer, because Jesus gave it to his disciples to pray, as well as, to be a pattern for their prayers. He did not give it as an incantation to be recited over and over again – that would render it as ineffective as the “babblings” of the pagans (verse 6:7). Also notice that the first person plural pronouns indicate that it could be prayed corporately (as a group).

Take each verse (6:9-13) individually and meditate on its meaning and purpose. When finished, re-write each verse in your own words.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

WEEK 9 - DAY FOUR

Read: Mathew 6:16-18

Fasting:

People *fast* (go without food) so that they can spend more time in prayer, to teach self-discipline, to remind God's people that they can live with a lot less and to appreciate what God has given us. This spiritual discipline is both noble and difficult.

Fasting is a spiritual discipline, like prayer and giving. All three remind us of our primary relationship with God. All three require us to give up something in order to gain something even better.

Consider this:

Develop the spiritual discipline of fasting. Perhaps you can even start today. The first time you voluntarily give up the pleasure of food, it may hurt. Therefore, start small – such as with a one-meal fast -- and perhaps later you can work up to more. (We suggest that you remain medically safe as you practice this discipline. Talk to a physician first, if necessary).

During your fast, pray often. Open yourself to God. Try not to let others know you are fasting, if possible, and do not make a big deal about it. Keep it between you and God.

- Just pray and tell God how much you want His love and guidance.
- Read from the Bible, in Proverbs or Psalms are good.
- When it gets difficult, remind yourself that growing closer to God is hard work.

This kind of spiritual discipline may, in fact, be a key to the renewal of the church today.

To Busy?

What sacrifice would you be willing to make to consistently spend more time alone with the Lord?

WEEK 9 - DAY FIVE

“You won’t learn to pray merely by reading about prayer.”

Here is a guide to becoming a powerful prayer warrior from the book, *How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life*, by Dr. Gregory Frizzell.

Four Foundations for a Powerful Prayer Life

- (1) View your daily prayer time as a relationship with God and not as a duty or discipline. (Read Luke 10:38-42. Why did Jesus compliment Mary?)
- (2) You must make an absolute commitment to consistently spend significant time alone with God in uninterrupted prayer.
 - No believer can develop a truly powerful, biblical prayer life without regularly spending time alone with God.
- (3) The regular reading of significant amounts of Scripture is absolutely essential to your prayer life.
- (4) A powerful prayer life requires the ‘balanced practice’ of five (5) types of prayer. *Some days you can do all five; other days you can focus on just one or two.*
 - a. **Praise, thanksgiving and worship**
 - Praise God for who He is, what He has done, for His love, etc...
 - Thank Him for the difficult things as well (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

(Continued on next page)

b. Confession and Repentance

- This is the time God will search your heart and cleanse you from any sin that would hinder your prayers (Psalms 139:23-24 and 66:18).

c. Petition and Supplication

- Bringing your needs and wants to God; but we must learn to pray petitions that are biblically based and centered on God's Will.

d. Intercession

- Pray not just for people who are lost or backslidden, but also for those in significant service for God (missionaries, pastors, evangelists, teachers), and Government. Also pray for revival.

e. Meditation (listening prayer and reflection)

- When we pray we talk to God; when we meditate He talks to us.
- How can you have a balanced relationship with God if you do all the talking? Spend time in silence just *listening* and concentrating on God.

Try it today. There is no way you can experience the five basic prayer types if you only pray four or five minutes a day!

SERMON NOTES:

PRAYER REQUEST:

Week Ten



SMALL GROUP
ministry

WEEK 10 - DAY ONE

Read: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

Background: In 2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9, the Apostle Paul wrote quite a bit on the topic of **financial stewardship** and **giving**. Paul was organizing a collection of funds that he wanted to give to the poor back in the Jerusalem church, and the Corinthians began collecting money for that need about a year earlier (see 1 Cor. 16:1-4 and 2 Cor. 8:10). It appears that some people suggested that Paul invented the collection in order to keep the money for himself. He was forced to defend his ministry, and his integrity, while urging them to give generously and to follow through on their previous commitment.

Importance for today: God's people should support God's work. Essentially, believers should take the lead in helping the needy, feeding the hungry, and ministering to the sick. We should give generously to support our church and God's work all over the world. Like the Corinthians, we should follow through on our financial commitments, and our giving should be generous, sacrificial, according to a plan, and based on need.

1. In verses 1-5 of today's passage, why does Paul specifically compliment the Macedonian churches (Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea)?
2. From 8:7, what is it that Paul wanted the Corinthian church to excel in? (And what does that mean?)
3. Reevaluate your giving. Is it the bare minimum, or is it the best of your ability? (If the former, what prevents you from giving more?)

WEEK 10 - DAY TWO

Read: Malachi 3:7-12

Just like you did in Week 8, Day 5 of this study, try filling out the Inductive Bible Study grid below based on this passage.

OBSERVE

What does it say?

(who, what, where, when, why, how)

INTERPRET

What does it mean?

APPLICATION

Focus on verse 10. *What practical difference will I allow it to make in my life?* Can you answer that question based on this passage?

WEEK 10 - DAY THREE

Re-Read: Malachi 3:7-12

We're going to spend two days on this important passage.

1. Who is doing the “talking” in this passage?
2. Read Leviticus 27:30-32, Numbers 18:21-29, and Hebrews 7:4-6 (based on Genesis 13:18-20). According to these passages, what exactly is a *tithe*?

3. Does God need your money? (circle) YES or NO

If No, then *why* tithe in the first place? What is the purpose?

4. Look closely at Malachi 3:8. If God already owns everything (see also Psalm 50:10 and 1 Chronicles 29:11), then how is not tithing “robbing” God?

5. What are some common excuses for not tithing?

THINK: What is the amazing promise that God gives us in Malachi 3:10? How should that change us?

WEEK 10 - DAY FOUR

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

1. Memorize verse 6.

Then, in your own words, explain the *Principle of Sowing and Reaping* below:

2. This piece of agricultural wisdom contains a profound truth (see Proverbs 11:24-26 and Proverbs 22:8-9). Those who sow *sparingly* –refusing to trust God for their future financial security – will inevitable lose out on God’s rich blessings. How does 2 Cor. 9:6 apply to your giving and tithing?
3. There are two main issues involved in giving that are in today’s passage: *Planning and Attitude*.

Planning: (Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 based on how well you plan to give.)

Low 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 High

List one practical step that you can take this week to improve in this area?

Attitude: (Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 based on your attitude toward giving.)

Low 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 High

List one practical step that you can take this week to develop a generous spirit?

THINK: It has been said that *WORRY* is the biggest obstacle people have to overcome in order to give. Do you agree or disagree and why? Can you identify one verse that may help you overcome worry?

WEEK 10 - DAY FIVE

Read: Matthew 6:1-4

Note the first few words of verses 2 and 3. Write them here...

What does Jesus assume his followers would do based on this passage?

Who are the “needy” in your life?

APPLICATION:

(A) Based on the lessons this week, list two ways you can improve in the spiritual discipline of Giving?

(B) As a believer, your wealth and possessions are not yours to keep. They belong to God. Therefore, as a symbolic act of sacrifice, take a moment and place your wallet, watch, and calendar on top of your Bible. Then spend time in prayer, releasing all three to God, and listen carefully to what He might be saying to you regarding these resources. (It may help to meditate on Psalm 139:23-24, while you do this exercise.)

SERMON NOTES:

Week Eleven



WEEK ELEVEN - DAY ONE

Read: 1Peter 1:3-9

“Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being protected by God’s power, through faith, for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to struggle in various trials so that the genuineness of your faith - more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire - may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. You love Him, though you have not seen Him. And though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

“The mercy of God is seen in the death of Jesus Christ...making possible the forgiveness of sins.” p. 761, **Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology** – Elwell

God has provided the way for us to be forgiven and His children, but that is only the beginning. We are called to live our lives as His children and be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. This should be the goal for every believer, to be more like Jesus. By His grace and mercy, God gives us the perspective of life with Him in eternity. Our focus is not today or tomorrow, but the horizon.

Pray today that God will give you the perspective you need to live for things that are eternal.

WEEK ELEVEN - DAY TWO

Read: Hebrews 12:1-2

”Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God’s throne.”

What “ensnares” or distracts you from being more like Jesus?

What happens when you stumble and sin? Do you practice what Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, called “spiritual breathing?” That is, confess your sins as soon as possible and get up and walk with Jesus, keeping Him Lord of your life. The life in Christ is a daily walk away from our selfish desires and towards a life that honors God. We must keep our eyes on Him and take our eyes off of the world and its distractions.

Ask God today to show you what distracts you from His best for you.

WEEK ELEVEN - DAY THREE

Read: Matthew 13:20-22

“And the one sown on rocky ground - this is one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. Yet he has no root in himself, but is short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes, because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now the one sown among the thorns - this is one who hears the word, but the worries of this age and the seduction of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

“True biblical faith is more than an initial response. It must be followed by a process of discipleship.” Free Bible Commentary, Dr. Bob Utley

Are you being disciplined? How?

Church attendance, Quiet time, Sunday Bible Study, Small Group, Wednesday NightLife?

Are you too busy? Then you should look for the activities that keep you from fellowship and discipleship.

Prioritize what is important and worship God with your life, your whole life. Prayer, Scripture reading, fellowship, being a witness...

Reflect: Look up Matthew 6:33, what are you seeking first in your life?

WEEK ELEVEN - DAY FOUR

Read: Matthew 13:31-32

“He presented another parable to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It’s the smallest of all the seeds, but when grown, it’s taller than the vegetables and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches.”

What is nesting in your branches?

Spiritual or worldly things/desires?

We will all give an account for our lives as believers. When you stand before God will he say, “Well done, I gave you one thing to do, and you were faithful and obedient.”?

Read: Matthew 25:14-29

Think: God has given you a spiritual gift (talent) to serve and worship Him, are you using it wisely? How?

WEEK ELEVEN - DAY FIVE

Read: Romans 14:10-12

“But you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the tribunal of God. For it is written: As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue will give praise to God. So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

Are you running the race that God has given you to run?

Or, are you looking at others and letting others influence your steps?

Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us that we should encourage each other and assemble together.

Jesus calls us to make disciples, not to judge disciples. Get in the race, stop crawling and take the next step in your spiritual life so that you finish the race completing what God has called **you** to do.

SERMON NOTES:
