

STEPHEN J. ROBINSON

RESET

SIX DECISIONS FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

DAILY GUIDE

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"...I have come that they may have life, and that they may
have it more abundantly."

John 10:10

Reset: Six Decisions for a Better Tomorrow

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Introduction

Have you ever had a day – or even a year – you wish you could start over? Perhaps you have found yourself in a relationship where you wished you could go back and undo all of the hurt you caused and begin afresh. Have you ever wished you could undo some of your financial decisions and start over? *All of us make mistakes.* We all make some wrong turns in this journey called life – but with Jesus we can experience a *Reset*.

Jesus declared in John 10:10, “...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” That is what God wants for our lives – He wants us to experience the abundant life He created us to live! Abundant life begins when we trust the One who loves us most and knows us best. This abundant life takes form as we realize and understand He has our very best interest at heart. The moment we place our trust in Jesus is the moment we can experience a *Reset* in our lives. It is there, in that place of *trusting* Him, we begin our journey to the abundant life He has designed for us.

Over the next six weeks, we are going to study how putting our trust in Jesus reveals six decisions we can make for a better tomorrow. We will discover how we can have a reset with God, a reset in our identity, a reset in our purpose, a reset in our relationships, a reset after failure,

and a reset in our finances. God’s Word gives us clear direction in these six key areas. In order to embrace this *Reset*, we also need personal encouragement from people who are with us on this journey. The Scripture says in Proverbs 27:17 (NASB), “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” It will be important for you to commit to joining weekly with your group of friends so you can encourage one another on this journey.

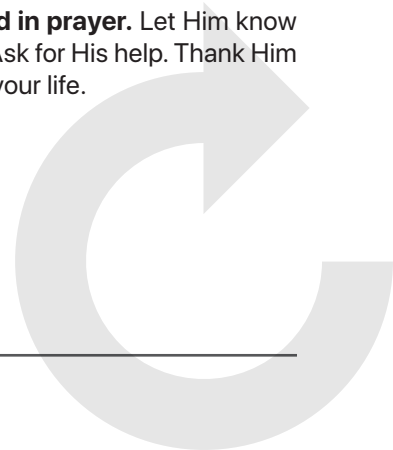
To help you in your *Reset*, we have provided daily readings related to each of the six key areas. Each day also includes a place for you to journal what God is speaking to you! The journal section is broken down into four prompts to help guide you in your time with God:

What is God saying to you? What do you feel God is saying to you through the daily devotional reading?

What does it mean to you? What do you think about what God is saying to you?

What action step do you need to take? Are there any changes you need to make?

Bring it to God in prayer. Let Him know how you feel. Ask for His help. Thank Him for working in your life.



HOW TO USE THE **RESET** DAILY GUIDE

A brief explanation of the features in this study.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: Each week, you will be given your next steps in this journey and guidance on what readings to do in your *Reset* study guide.

DAILY DEVOTIONS AND JOURNAL PAGES: A space for self reflection has been created to help lead you on your *Reset* journey. Journal pages are included, so you will have the opportunity to write down what God is saying to you! We encourage you to either print these pages to write on, or make a habit of writing them in your own personal journal!

PRAYER DIRECTION: You will find suggestions for your group prayer time each week. Praying as a group is vital to connecting with God and one another. Please make sure you have enough time dedicated to this every week. You'll also find a prayer journal outline provided. This is a great place to keep prayer reminders and to record answered prayers! You can print this page or incorporate into your own personal journal as a partner to your daily devotional pages.

DIVING DEEPER: You'll find references to additional scripture verses throughout the daily readings that relate to each topic discussed. Dive deeper into God's Word by looking up these passages. You can search for them in the traditional pages of the Bible, or search them online for quick access. There are also free Bible Apps available for download to your phone which allow you to view multiple translations, all in the palm of your hand! The scripture references found are listed in order of book, chapter, and then verse. For example, Psalm 119:105 means the book of Psalms, chapter 119, and verse 105.

GROUP RESOURCES: For additional resources to help you grow closer to God and to help others do the same, please visit ChurchoftheKing.com/smallgroups.

Week 1



RESETTING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Week 1 Lesson

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:

Each week you will receive next steps to put into practice what you are learning. These are designed to help you take the concepts we are learning deeper into your life, and help you with your personal *Reset*. This week, you're encouraged to:

Commit to Christ

Let the first step in your *Reset* journey be to make a commitment to Christ. Trust Him to lead you. Settle in your heart now to live the abundant life Jesus gave for *you*.

Gather your friends!

It is important for us to consistently connect with each other over these next six weeks, not only to learn the concepts we are being taught but also to discuss them with one another. You and your friends benefit from being together, and your input is important! Commit to one another to consistently attend. If you'd like to know how to host your own friend gathering, or if you'd like help finding a group to join, visit us at ChurchoftheKing.com/reset.

Attend church

Everything we do over these next six weeks is designed to help you experience your own personal *Reset*. The weekend services complement this study. Attending the weekend services will help reinforce what you are learning together in your group. Commit to not

missing a weekend service. You can even host an online watch party with your social media friends!

Follow the daily readings

The *Reset* study guide is designed to help you take the concepts you are learning to a deeper and more personal level. Each day you will have a short reading to guide your devotional time and help you integrate the concepts into your own life. This week, engage with the daily readings for Days 1-7 in your *Reset* guide prior to your next friend gathering.

PRAYER DIRECTION:

As a group, spend some time in prayer about this journey you are setting out on together! You may want to spend some time praying for some of your personal needs. Pray that each member of your group will have their own life-changing *Reset*. You'll find a prayer journal outline page provided to you. This is a great place to keep prayer reminders and to record answered prayers! You can print this page or incorporate this practice in your own personal journal.

DIVING DEEPER:

We encourage you to dive deeper with the additional scripture verses found throughout the daily readings. The scripture references found are listed in order of book, chapter, and then verse. For example, John 14:9 means the book of John, chapter 14, and verse 9.

Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

John 10:7-10

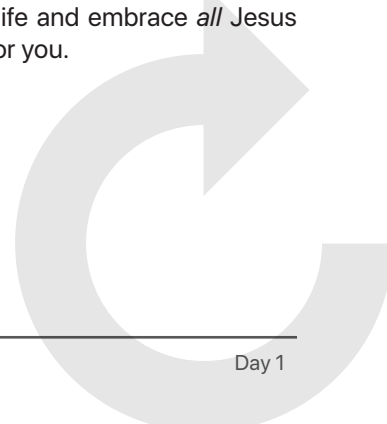
Everyone seems to be searching for meaning and purpose these days. We chase after whatever it is we think will bring fulfillment. We want our life to count – *to mean something*. The problem most people run into is they seek purpose and meaning in things that won't last, such as possessions and experiences.

Jesus came to provide us the way to live an abundant life *now*. The way that the world pushes us to search for fulfillment is compared to a thief that kills and destroys. The things we tend to pursue often don't last or bring true purpose and meaning to our lives. Instead, they prove to just be empty promises that leave us hungry and searching. In contrast, Jesus came to show us true fulfillment and purpose. He gives us life, and life abundantly! Through Him alone we have access to live life in its fullness—in eternity when we reach heaven, but also here and now!

An abundant, purpose-filled life starts with a commitment to Christ. It begins

when we believe that His way of living is best. Our selfish, carnal ways of pursuing life apart from God is called sin. Sin separates us from God. The penalty for our sin is death. You see, God *is* life. When you choose to separate yourself from Him, then you're going the other direction—toward death! That's what it means. But God loves us too much to leave us there. Jesus came to bring us back to God and show us the way to live.

The life Jesus offers is for today and for all eternity. Eternal life comes through faith in Christ, not through anything we can do or earn. If you haven't had a chance to make this commitment to Christ, now is the time to start! It's simple, ask Jesus to come into your life today. He will empower you to live the abundant life He intended for you. By believing and following Jesus, we have the chance to Reset our life with God. If you have already taken this step, commit to living the abundant life and embrace *all* Jesus has provided for you.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Psalm 95:6

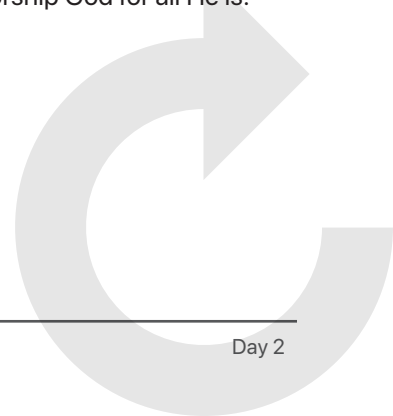
When we talk about worship, many ideas come to mind. For many, worship is the name for a special hour on Sundays reserved for a time of focusing on God. We also tend to associate worship with a style of music. Nevertheless, worship is so much more than a meeting or type of music. It is the recognition that we serve a God who is great and deserves our praise, devotion, and love. When we worship, we are coming before a God who is holy and all-powerful; yet, is also a personal and loving Father.

His holiness exposes our absurd sense of self-importance. We can slip into thinking we are the most important person in the universe. We get wrapped up in the details of our lives and begin to believe everything revolves around us. When we compare ourselves to God and really understand His holiness, we are driven to our knees in recognition that He is far beyond us, and His will is far more important than our own will.

God's power confronts our bizarre sense of self-sufficiency. We like to think we are in control of the direction and details of our lives. However, when we consider our frailty in light of the power of God, we become aware how much we depend on God for the very breath in our lungs.

God's love reveals our selfishness. We can be quick to look out for ourselves and slow to consider the needs of others. Our selfishness gets in the way of truly loving others the way God asks us to love them. When we consider that the God of the universe loves us enough to send His Son to die for all mankind, it moves us to love Him more deeply. God's love for us makes it possible for us to love others.

Worship is so much more than a meeting or style of music. True worship is an ongoing sense of who we are in light of who God is – which compels us to respond with praise, dependency, and love. Today, worship God for all He is.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

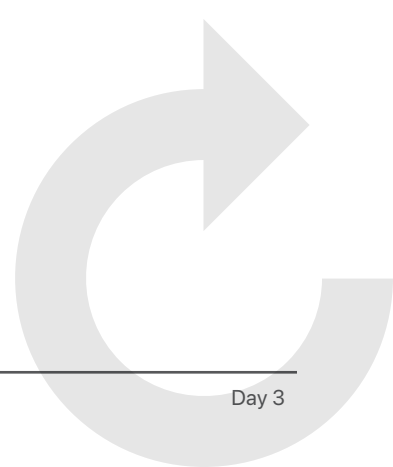
Matthew 6:33-34

Our priorities are what we choose to pursue *first*. What we pursue first shows what we value most. What we value most is what we will choose over everything else. Jesus knew this when He was speaking to the crowds about the things they worried about. He knew their focus was on what they would eat or what might happen to them in the future. As a result, those pursuits became the focus of their lives, and there was little room for God.

Jesus encouraged people to seek God's kingdom and righteousness first. Jesus is saying we are to make our time with God and our relationship with Him our highest priority. This means to value the things that are most important to Him. By doing this, we begin to share God's perspective

and understand how He works in the world. This pursuit gives us supernatural peace and allows us to stay focused and rooted in His peace rather than worrying about our future. By spending time with God we learn and understand *Who* God is and *what* His priorities are for our lives.

How much time do you spend with God compared to the time you spend worrying about the unknown? When you intend to spend time with Him, do you always seem to get distracted? Jesus encourages you to not let the things you have to do tomorrow worry you to the point where you forget what is important today. Watch what happens to the worry in your life as you make seeking Him your *first* priority.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Psalm 119:9-11

To really get to know people, we have to spend time with them. When we do, we find out their likes, dislikes, and interests. Listening to their stories tells us more about who they are. Our relationship with God works the same way! He has given us the Bible - His Word - to communicate who He is, what's on His mind, and what He expects from us.

In our passage today, David captured the life-changing role the Bible plays in our relationship with God. He began by stating his goal was to live according to God's Word. He had something to shoot for, and he really wanted to make sure it happened. As you look at your goals for life, is understanding and living according to God's Word at the top on the list?

David's desire for God drove him to live according to the Scriptures. He said, "With my *whole* heart I have sought You." David's goal was not just something he would half-heartedly attempt. He was fully committed. He decided to seek God with everything he had. Could you say the same thing about yourself when it comes to seeking God through His Word?

David's goal and desire led to David's strategy to hide God's Word in his heart. He wanted a close relationship with God so badly that he committed to memorizing His Word. But not just memorization—remember, this is not just about the brain, it's about hiding His Word in our *heart*. That means meditating on His Word. In other words, thinking about it and considering it in your own life.

There is a result that comes when we fully seek to know Him through His Word. When we seek Him in such a way, hiding His Word in our heart, we come to know the truth and draw nearer to Him. This bears repeating—the more we get to know Jesus, the closer we draw near to Him! When we know the truth, we won't be fooled into sinning against Him. His Word is a "...lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps 119:105). Meditating on His Word is much like holding your life up to the light so you can see properly. When you can see, you won't be stumbling around in the darkness. Live according to God's Word by hiding scripture in your heart daily.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

1 John 5:14

Prayer seems like a mystery to many people. Some keep prayer limited to asking God to bless their food or something they quickly say with their kids before bedtime. At times, we may think prayer doesn't work because we don't see any immediate changes as soon as we ask. We may get discouraged and feel we are just talking to the ceiling, and God doesn't really care. But maybe the problem in those moments is that we don't understand prayer's main purpose.

The purpose of prayer is not simply to make requests of God. The *purpose* of prayer is to closely align our will with God's will. You see, many of us spend all our time trying to convince God of our will instead of asking God to align our will with *His* will. In this passage, John says we can have confidence in approaching God in prayer when we ask according to His will. To do so, we have to spend time in God's Word and in prayer asking God to align our will with His. In the Garden of

Gethsemane, just before His crucifixion, Jesus asked God if there was another way to fulfill His purpose. Knowing there wasn't, He prayed for God's will to be done. Jesus submitted His will to God so He could fulfill His purpose with confidence. Stop and think about what that means. Jesus knew He could trust God fully. He understood that God is good. He understood that God is *for* us, not against us. He trusted God's will above His own. He knew that if He was in *God's* will, everything would work out as it should.

Take a moment to think about your prayer life. How often do you feel like your prayers are going nowhere? Could it be you are spending too much time trying to convince God to align with your agenda instead of trying to align yourself with His will? In your prayer time this week, ask God to reveal His will to you each day. Notice how it changes your perspective on prayer.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

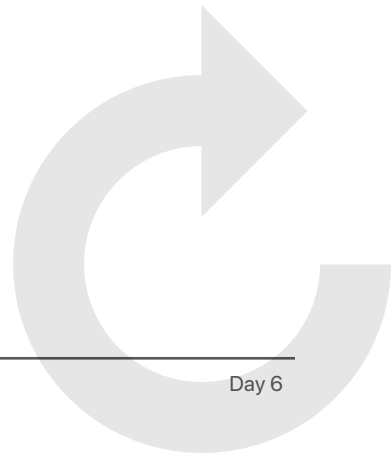
Psalms 51:10-12

How we handle our failures says a lot about who we are. There is a tendency in our culture to avoid admitting wrongdoing. However, making excuses or explaining away what we did keeps us from growing. When we admit our faults, we can begin to make things right. You see, we often refuse to admit mistakes because we fear people will think less of us. Yet, we tend to respect people who admit they are wrong and seek to make amends. Admitting when we're wrong doesn't necessarily feel good. But when we avoid it, our growth and character become stunted. When a person is humble enough to admit their wrongs, we respect them because of their character. It shows us they value the people around them. It shows they don't let pride cloud their perspective of what's right.

David, as the king of Israel, could have tried to make excuses and cover up his

sin. In fact, he started out that way until he was confronted by Nathan the prophet. After one of the biggest failures of his life, David voiced a prayer of confession and repentance to God. He didn't excuse his sin. He confessed it and pleaded with God for forgiveness. He showed his desire to be made right, asking, "Create in me a pure heart...renew a steadfast spirit within me." He wanted his relationship with God restored, asking "Do not cast me away from your presence..." And, he desired to move forward with joy and passion for God, asking "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation..."

As you look to *Reset* with God, maybe there are things in your life that need to be confessed and changed so you can move forward with joy and a willing spirit. What things in your own life do you need to confess and stop doing as you pursue your *Reset* with God?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Micah 6:8

You may be asking, "What does God want me to do in order to have a relationship with Him?" When we choose to *Reset* our relationship with God, that's a great question to ask. This question has been asked by many over the years, and in our verse for the day Micah the prophet answers that by sharing three things God requires of us:

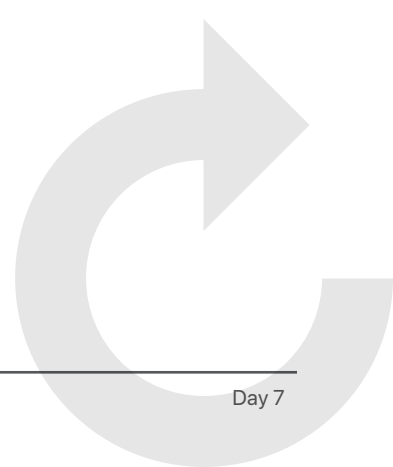
Do justly. God wants us to treat others with justice. He wants us to be people who don't just *say* we do what is right, but actually *do* it. When we act justly, we look out for those who are oppressed and stand up for them. We also make sure we are not oppressing anyone, but treat others well and without bias.

Love mercy. Mercy is having compassion on others even when we think they don't deserve it. Mercy is what you and I received from God when He sent Jesus

to die for our sins. As we love those who need help and forgive those who have wronged us, we are showing God's love and mercy.

Walk humbly with your God. God wants us to spend time with Him and know He is there for us every moment of every day. To walk with Him means we follow Him and keep His pace. We do so by obeying Him and living the way He has asked us to live. To live the way Jesus did, we must walk humbly. When we have pride in our hearts, we try to do things our own way. Pride fools us into thinking we're strong when we're weak. Humility is true strength. To be humble means we're strong enough to admit we need God.

What does this look like in your own life? In what ways can you do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Week 2



RESETTING MY IDENTITY

Week 2 Lesson

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

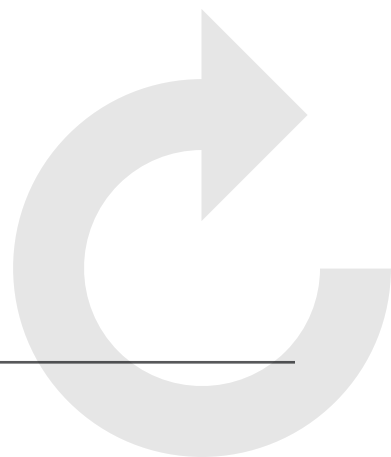
Take time to personally engage with the daily readings for Days 8-14 in this *Reset* study guide prior to the next time your group of friends meet for discussion. Journal your thoughts each day.

PRAYER DIRECTION

Take a look at the prayer journal page provided in your study book. This chart serves as a simple way to track your prayer requests and remember to pray for one another during the week. Take some time as a group to share one thing you struggle within your own identity and where you might need a *Reset* – whether that's in your work, friendships, marriage, or family. End your group by praying together. Pray for God to help you find your true identity in the love of Christ.

DIVING DEEPER

We encourage you to dive deeper with the additional scripture verses found throughout the daily readings. The scripture references found are listed in order of book, chapter, and then verse. For example, John 1:12 means the book of John, chapter 1, and verse 12.



For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

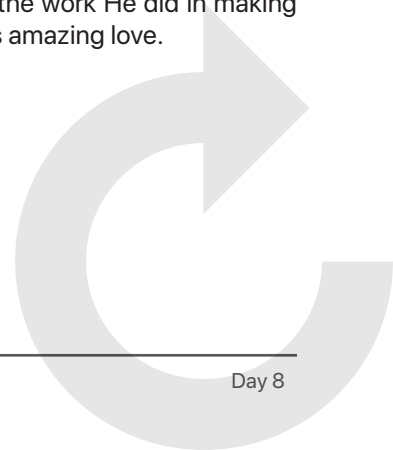
Psalm 139:13-14

If you ask most people to describe themselves, they'll tell you about their job or their hobbies. Our culture values productivity, but we often forget we're far more than the sum of our achievements. In fact, what we do could change – and often does – in each season of life. There's danger in finding our identity in what we do. If that framework changes due to a shift in circumstance, we can feel lost and in crisis, or if we fail to reach a goal we can misinterpret disappointment to mean we're a failure.

So then, who *are* you, if you're not what you do? To find out *who* we are we need to look at the One who made us. We're not here by accident, and we're not an afterthought. God created us with care, attention, and purpose! The God of the universe created us in His image (Genesis 1:27). What a powerful statement! Take a moment and ask yourself, how does this show you your identity?

First, it tells us that God knew who you were before your birth. He created our *inmost* being. God didn't just create your physical body. He also developed your personhood. He *knows* you. Second, it tells us that your identity is no mistake. God planned every detail of who you are. You are no accident. You were created with *intention*. You were made by God and designed for His purpose. Finally, you are a masterpiece. You are made in God's image – your identity stands apart from every other creation in the universe. Never doubt the love God has for you. God's love led Him to send His Son, to give His life as a ransom for yours and to restore your relationship with Him. This is through no effort of your own – He saved you not because of what you do, but simply because He loves you! What a wonderful God!

As you think about your own identity, thank God for the work He did in making you and for His amazing love.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

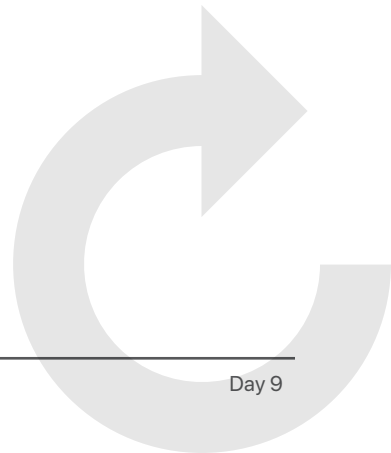
Bring it to God in prayer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

"But they made me do it!" Have you ever heard this when training a child? As adults, we understand this is an attempt to divert attention and blame away from themselves. No one actually made them do wrong. In the moment of decision, the child's misguided desire made it difficult to do the right thing – or even discern what the right thing was. In the same way, before our faith in Christ, we didn't have the ability to be righteous. Our desires were misplaced and misguided. We could only choose to live the way that seemed right to us. As we learned in week one, our efforts to live life on our own terms apart from God is called sin. Sin just pulls us further in the other direction, toward death. However, once we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we take on a new life that's free from the weight of sin! God gives us a fresh start – a *Reset*. Reconciled with God through Christ, we can walk freely with our Maker and embrace our purpose!

The old way of doing things has passed away. We are made *new* because of what Jesus did on the cross! When we are reconciled to God, our identity is no longer that of a sinner. Instead, we are called children of God! Now we can say, "God made me new!" In freedom, we can live out our new life and identity. Sure, there are still times in our lives when we fail or slip up – sometimes old habits die hard. However, the beauty is we now have the power to choose not to give over to the "old way." Instead of hiding or trying to divert attention from our wrongdoings, we can go *directly* to God in prayer, and He welcomes us with open arms! Just like a loving Father, when we stumble or fall, God picks us up, brushes the dust off of us, and helps us keep walking.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

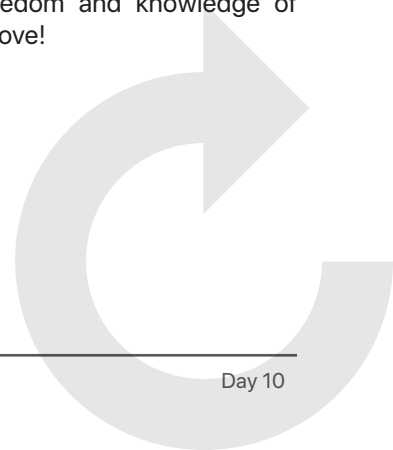
Romans 8:1-2

Have you ever worked through an issue with someone and think it's water under the bridge, only to have it brought up when another disagreement arises? Or have you forgiven someone, but then feelings rise up when you see the behavior again? Either way, it can be pretty frustrating. The first person feels like they can't ever get away from their past failure or live up to expectations. The second person feels like they're trapped in a pattern and can't help the other person out of it. Goodness, that's exhausting for both people.

Good news – *God is not like people*. His ways are not like ours (Isaiah 55:8-13). There's a common misconception that God is an angry God, waiting to punish. That couldn't be further from the truth! He is *patient* and *kind* (1 Corinthians 13:4). When we've given our hearts to Him, He is patient to endure all things with us as we grow (1 Corinthians 13:7). He isn't easily angered, and He keeps no

record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5). He doesn't chastise us for stumbling, but helps us get back up! That's called grace.

Yesterday, we described God as a loving Father. When we mess up, he picks us up and helps us keep walking. Maybe the experience you had with your earthly father looks nothing like this. Don't let that skew your perception of God. Remember, God's ways are higher than ours. He is a perfect Father, without sin. We live in a fallen world, and we are often hit by the shrapnel of other people's sin. Everyone has gone their own way (Isaiah 53:6). The truth is, Jesus came to *free* us from the *power* of that sin. Out of God's great love for us, the bridge to freedom was created through Christ Jesus. In Him, we can have a full *Reset* in our lives, and our identity. We no longer have to feel stuck in a cycle of condemnation or patterns of behavior. In Jesus, we can live in the freedom and knowledge of God's perfect love!



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

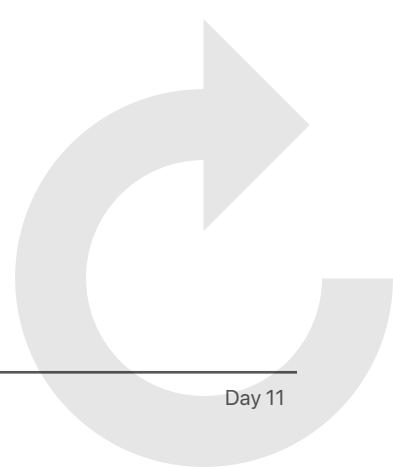
Galatians 5:16-18

Have you ever argued with yourself? That sounds strange, but we all do it. You have something you really want to do, even though you know it is not the right thing to do, and find yourself engaged in an inner conflict. If you do the right thing, then you won't experience guilt and shame. At the same time, the temptation to go the other direction is strong. Temptation is just what it's called – *tempting*.

This battle rages within us as we make decisions daily. It comes up at work when we have to choose between being a person of integrity or cutting corners and taking the easy way out. It shows up in relationships when we have the choice between considering others or just looking out for our own agenda. And

it's definitely there when no one is around and old temptations are looking you straight in the face. This conflict between living according to the Spirit or according to selfish desire shows up all throughout our lives. How we choose to live will determine whether we are embracing God's Spirit or following our flesh.

The good news is God doesn't leave us on our own in the fight. With our new identity, God gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us to *victory* in this battle. When we're led by the Spirit, He gives us the power to move away from sin and death. His very own Spirit urges us on, toward life! We have the choice to listen and the power to obey His direction. How will you choose to live today?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3:1-2

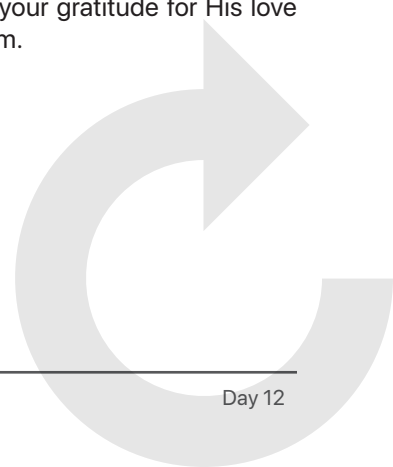
When we're born, we carry the physical DNA of our family. As we grow, we take on the characteristics and mannerisms of the ones who raise us. For some of you, this means the same family you were born into, and for others, this means your adopted family. Regardless of who your guardian was, you learned how to interact with the world through their influence.

When we accept Christ, we are adopted into God's family. We are given a new identity and are called children of God. Being children of God means God is our *Father*, and He loves us unconditionally. In His family, we begin to develop *His* characteristics and mannerisms. As adopted children, we are to reflect God our Father by learning from Him and imitating His ways. Just like a child imitates his or her parents, we are called to be and act more like our Heavenly Father everyday. This transformation happens as we spend time with God and come to know Him better. As we grow to know Him more, He shapes our character

and the way we interact with the world through His influence.

We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). We're to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave us (Ephesians 4:32). We are to bear with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgive each other; as the Lord has forgiven us, so we also must forgive (Colossians 3:13). If our enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink – Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:20-21).

When people look at your life, can they tell you are an adopted child of God? Can they see the characteristics of Christ in your life? How hard would they have to look to see His reflection? Today, as you live your life as a child of God, look for ways to show your gratitude for His love by imitating Him.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

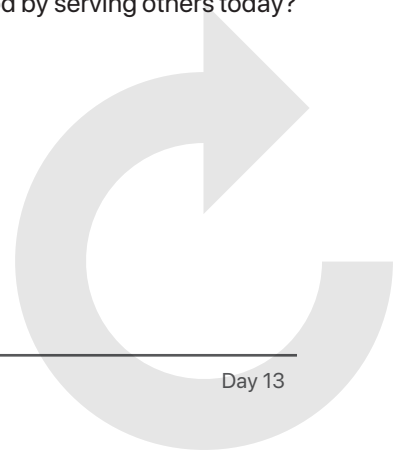
Ephesians 2:8-10

It is humbling to think of what Christ did to save us. He graciously extended salvation to us by giving His life for us – all while we were actively rebelling against Him and seeking life apart from Him. Jesus loves us so much that He chose to give us life instead of the punishment we deserve. A right relationship with God is not something we can earn. In fact, if we *were* able to earn it, pride would creep in. We would feel we are in control of our lives and therefore have no need for God, putting us right back where we started. You see, it's precisely that thought process that has gotten people into trouble since the very beginning of time.

Yet, in spite of our pride, God offers us a *free* gift that breaks the power of that cycle. He only requires us to accept our own inadequacy and to acknowledge what *Jesus* did for us on the cross. Through Christ, God makes us right with Him! Friends, that is good news! But, God didn't stop there. He could have, and that

would have been enough. But He loves us so much that He didn't stop there. God didn't offer this gift only to save us from our *future* death. He also did this because He had a plan and a purpose for us while on this earth! Take a moment and re-read today's Scripture verse. God has a *clear* design for us that He planned long before we were born. You are His unique creation, and He didn't create you just to breathe His air. He created you with talents and abilities you can use to do good and serve others.

Remember, doing good works can't earn our salvation. Salvation is *only* found through faith in Jesus Christ. However, when we come into a right relationship with Jesus, we are compelled to do good works out of our love for God and others! This gratitude in action is the perfect response to God's perfect gift of salvation. How can you express your gratitude to God by serving others today?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

A representative is someone who speaks on behalf of another person. Countless times you have come in contact with people who were representing someone else. This can be an employee representing the company they work for, a member of a family acting as a representative of the entire family, or an ambassador representing a nation. How that representative behaves, acts, and speaks gives either a positive or negative impression of whom they represent. If you have ever encountered poor customer service from a company, your assumption can easily be that the whole company doesn't care about or value their customers. On the other side of that coin, if you've experienced great customer service, you're likely to think highly of the entire company. The difference is in whether that representative understands the *values* of the company, and whether they're in line with those values. It's also worth noting that the representative needs to understand that they *are* a representative and their behavior affects those around them. The same is all true for God's children.

You and I, as followers of Jesus Christ, are His representatives and ambassadors to the world. What we say and how we act reflect who Jesus is. Have you ever had an individual say to you, "All Christians are hypocrites!?" That statement is probably made because of an encounter they had with a Christian who was a poor representative of Jesus. Maybe they knew enough to understand they were saved but weren't in line with God's values while here on earth. Great responsibility comes with being a follower of Jesus Christ. Once people know we are Christians, they start to evaluate our lives to see if we truly believe what we say we believe.

Friends, God has entrusted us with the wonderful opportunity of *showing* who Christ is! Our new identity in Christ is expressed as we represent Jesus to our world through our words and actions. How well are you representing Jesus to the people you encounter on a regular basis? Would those around you want to know more about Christ as a result of your life? Live as Christ's ambassador today!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Week 3



RESETTING MY PURPOSE

Week 3 Lesson

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Engage with the daily readings for Days 15-21 in your *Reset* study guide prior to the next time your group of friends meet for discussion. Journal your thoughts each day.

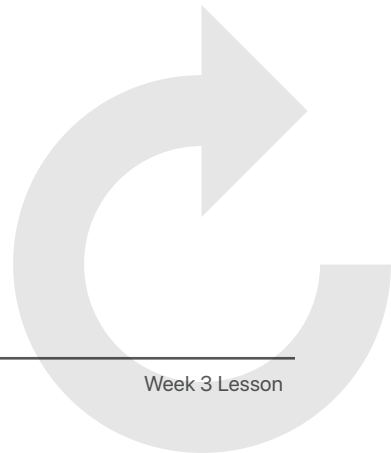
PRAYER DIRECTION

Ask God to help each person live out their God-given purpose. Also, pray for any needs your group of friends may have. You may want to write down the prayer requests and answered prayers in the prayer journal page provided in your study book.

Have each person pick a prayer partner from the group who will commit to praying for their concerns during the week. Then close your time in prayer together.

DIVING DEEPER:

We encourage you to dive deeper with the additional scripture verses found throughout the daily readings. The scripture references found are listed in order of book, chapter, and then verse. For example, 1 Peter 2:9 means the book of 1 Peter, chapter 2, and verse 9.



"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

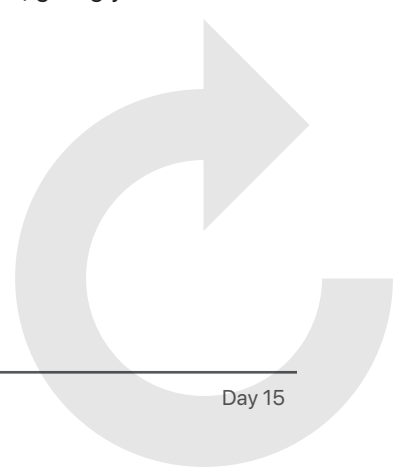
Jeremiah 29:11

Have you ever created a plan? Maybe you have made a diet plan, a travel plan, a financial plan, or even a game plan for a sports team. When you do, you are crafting something you believe will lead to success. In the same manner, God has crafted a plan for your life. It's humbling to stop and think about how the God of the universe cared to design a special and unique plan just for you!

Having a sense of godly purpose is great. For some, however, this can also bring a sense of fear and doubt. They may ask things like, "What if I don't like the plan God has for me?" or "What if I desire a different plan for my life?" If we don't trust God, we can tend to have negative assumptions. We may believe the lie that God's plans are not the best option for us – that our life will be boring or that we'll be missing out on something. But those fears are just lies. That fear is the same lie that brought sin into the world in the

beginning! Satan lied to Eve, implying that she was missing out. He tricked her into believing she would lack something when trusting God's plan. He told her she would be *like* God if she stepped *outside* of God's design. This fear and confusion made her forget that she was *already* made in His image! If we take time to get to know God, and understand our identity in Him we then see that He has the *best* plan for our lives.

God makes it clear that His plans for us bring *peace* and *hope*. He created us and cares for us as our loving Father, and He wants nothing but *good* for us! Let's not confuse circumstances with the plan. Circumstances are brief and temporary, but the plan is the vision and purpose – and within that plan, circumstances are *used* to move us forward! His thoughts toward you are rich with love. He is walking *with* you, giving you a future and a hope.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

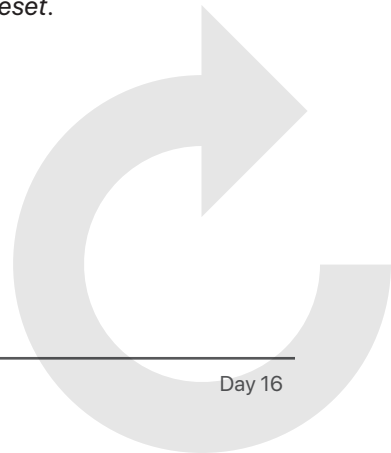
Proverbs 19:21

We live in a society obsessed with planning and productivity. We are constantly looking for new and improved ways to be efficient and effective. We have all the latest technology to help us organize our lives. We plan for retirement, a home purchase, our kids' education, and our career. We live in a fast-paced society that loves to multitask in order to maximize our time and efforts. Nevertheless, how many of us can say with certainty that our plans will succeed? In one moment, those plans could be halted or changed.

When things aren't working our way, we try to convince God to change His plans to ours. We find ourselves negotiating with Him, hoping somehow our bargaining will make God submit. It doesn't work like that – but aren't you glad? Our perspective can get clouded with short-sighted desires. How many times have you wished for something, only to be thankful later that you didn't get it? We can imagine what tomorrow will bring, but the truth is we cannot see even one second into the future.

God, however, isn't bound by time. He is the Beginning and the End – the great 'I Am.' (Revelation 22:13, Exodus 3:14). Anything God sets out to do He *will* do (Isaiah 55:11). God's plans are the only plans that will ultimately prevail (Matthew 24:35). When we realize God's sovereignty, everything changes. We look up from our own agenda and see there is a much bigger plan at work.

One of the great things about God is He's so relational. He invites us to be part of everything He's doing. In fact, He even lets us in on the plan! We don't have to wander around wondering what His will is – He's given us His Word! The scriptures are a *gift* to help us navigate through life, but they're also an invitation to understand Him and join in His plan! When we search for Him in His scriptures and align our lives with His will, we start to see our lives make sense. We can experience a *Reset*.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Have you ever met a “glass-is-half-full” person? They just go through life with an optimistic, contagious perspective that impacts everyone they come in contact with. These people are always there to tell you why something good can come from seemingly bleak circumstances.

Did you know that when we approach life with a confident and hopeful attitude, we are fulfilling the will of God? In 1 Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul gives us three tips to living a fulfilling life:

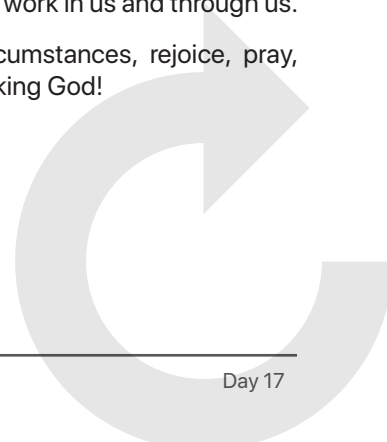
Rejoice always. Learning to rejoice, regardless of our circumstances, shapes our entire mood and outlook on life. We realize our present circumstances don’t have to dictate our mindset and attitude. We can be full of joy in both the good times *and* the tough times, knowing God is with us and *will* take care of us.

Pray without ceasing. Is this really possible? How would anything get done? Practically speaking, this doesn’t mean we must kneel all day long while talking to God. To pray without ceasing means to take an attitude of dependence on God

with us throughout our day. While we work, we acknowledge God and enjoy His presence. When we face difficult decisions, we ask God for wisdom and direction. You see, when we share our lives with God, recognizing He is always with us, we begin to acknowledge Him in each moment and pray without ceasing.

Give thanks. Here, the Apostle Paul encourages us to keep the right focus. When we spend too much time focusing on what is not going right in our lives, we forget everything God has done for us. This is why we’re reminded to give *thanks* in everything. When we experience success at work, we should give thanks to God. When we have a problem we can’t seem to fix, we should give thanks to God in the midst of it, reminding ourselves of all the times God has pulled us through! Whatever we face in life, we can give thanks to God because in all things, He is at work in us and through us.

In *all* your circumstances, rejoice, pray, and keep thanking God!



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

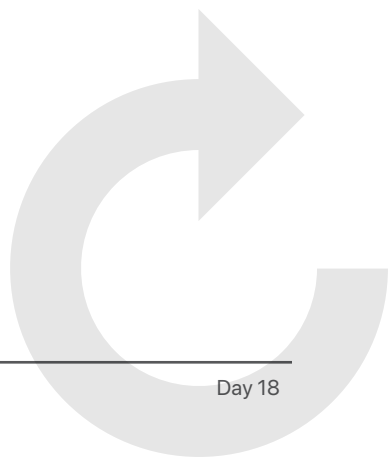
Mark 12:30-31

We are called to love God and love people. These are the greatest commandments. When we commit to fulfill these commandments, we fulfill God's purpose for our lives.

Loving God means we are committed to Him with all our being. We don't just talk about loving God; we show Him our love through our actions. Loving God with all our heart means to love Him with our thoughts and character. To love God with all our soul means to love Him in our feelings and motivations. To love God with all our mind is to love Him in our choices and the things we set our minds on. And to love God with all our strength is to love him with our pursuits and tenacity. When you look at your life, how are you doing with loving God in these areas?

God has called us to love others as well. The love we give is God's love. This is the type of care and attention that compels us to passionately serve others. We are called to think of others and care for them as much as we think and care for ourselves. In this way, God's love shines through us in our words and actions.

God's purpose for our lives is simple – we are to love God and love people. How well are you living out your life's purpose by loving God and people? How can you fulfill God's greatest commandments today?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

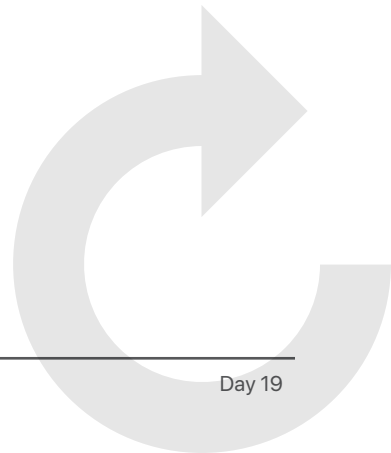
2 Timothy 1:9

Did you know that God's calling on your life is holy? When something is holy, that means it is set apart from ordinary things. Holy also means unchangeable, meaning no circumstance can change or alter it. *God has a holy calling on your life.* This calling is not about perfect performance or the ideal work environment, but about who God has called you to be. Through Jesus, you have the power to fulfill that calling. Instead of equating our value with our work, God has an entirely different way of looking at us. Our failures or missteps don't change God's plan. God looks at us through the filter of His own purpose and grace.

Grace has nothing to do with our performance. We can't earn grace by working hard. We can't purchase grace

by saving up enough money. Grace is completely unearned. God's pure grace comes to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection made it possible to resolve our sin and bring us back into fellowship with God. Being restored in our relationship with our Heavenly Father makes it possible for us to fulfill our purpose!

Today, as you think about God's purpose and call on your life, remember your calling is made possible by the freedom that only comes from His grace. Embrace God's purpose and grace. Live out your calling today and everyday!



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24

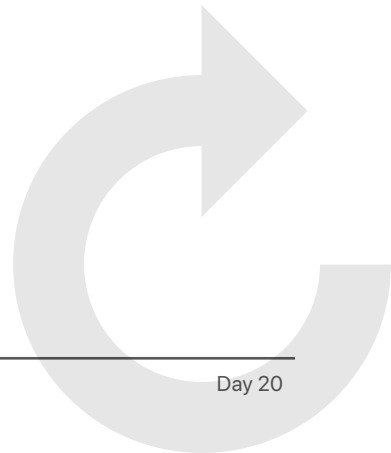
We are called to do our work as if we're serving God directly. At home, we're to reflect the love of Jesus, keep peace, and serve our family with the understanding they have been gifted to us by God. At work, we are to have integrity and strive to bless our place of employment, knowing God is pleased when we give our best efforts. In our finances, we are to make thoughtful choices with the understanding we are stewarding God's provision. In whatever we do, we're to act it as if we're doing it for the Lord. We're to do it heartily – full on, holding nothing back, giving our best.

When we work as to God, it changes how we see what we do. The smallest tasks take on new meaning because we begin to understand the potential for eternal

impact. We work with excellence in order to show our gratitude for all God has done for us. God gave His best for us, and we can give our best to Him as thanks!

When we work with this purpose in mind, it not only changes how we work, it also changes how others see us. When we work with great joy and excellence, we show others what it looks like to serve a God who loves us and has a divine purpose for us.

How does this perspective change the way you approach your job and other responsibilities in your life? As you go through your week, remember to live and interact with the world as an act of worship and thanks. Do everything you do as if for Him!



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

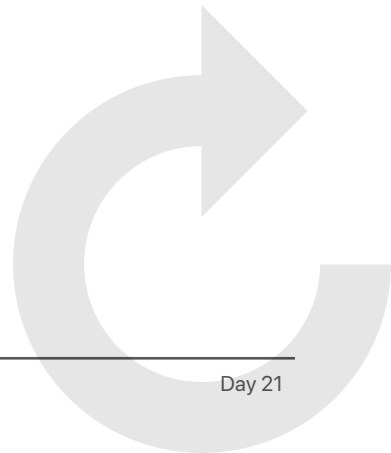
Philippians 1:6

We can be confident to have a *Reset* in our purpose when we trust in Jesus. The God who created us and loves us is the One who is working in us to shape us for His purpose. The fact that *God* is doing the work in our lives is what gives us this great confidence. We do not have to strive to fulfill our purpose on our own. Rather, we can know God will guide our steps each moment along the way. Our responsibility is to be patient and trust Him through the process.

God is always working on us, and the work He has started is something He will continue until the day we see Jesus face-to-face. God is not going

to leave us alone to figure out how to fulfill our purpose all by ourselves. He guides us with His Holy Spirit. He never leaves us or forsakes us (John 16:13, Deuteronomy 31:6). Each day, He makes us more and more like His Son, Jesus (Colossians 3:10).

God will complete the work He began in us. We will not be left unfinished or incomplete. God never quits on a project He starts, and He most certainly will not quit on us. Lift up your head! You've been created with divine purpose, and God will never give up helping you fulfill that purpose.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Week 4



RESETTING MY RELATIONSHIPS

Week 4 Lesson

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Engage with the daily readings for Days 22-28 in your *Reset* study guide prior to the next time your group of friends meet for discussion. Journal your thoughts each day.

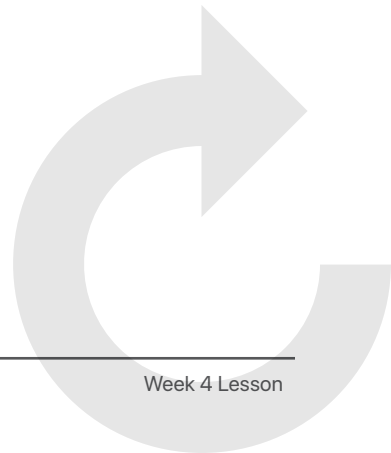
PRAYER DIRECTION

Most people have struggled with unforgiveness at some point in their lives. Someone in your group may be struggling with a difficult relationship right now. Take some time to share what you're going through with the friends in your group.

Have each person pick a prayer partner who will commit to praying for those concerns during the week, then close your time in prayer together. Remember to write your prayer requests and record answered prayers in your prayer journal.

DIVING DEEPER:

We encourage you to dive deeper with the additional scripture verses found throughout the daily readings. The scripture references found are listed in order of book, chapter, and then verse. For example, Psalm 19:14 means the book of Psalms, chapter 19, and verse 14.



Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

Matthew 18:21-22

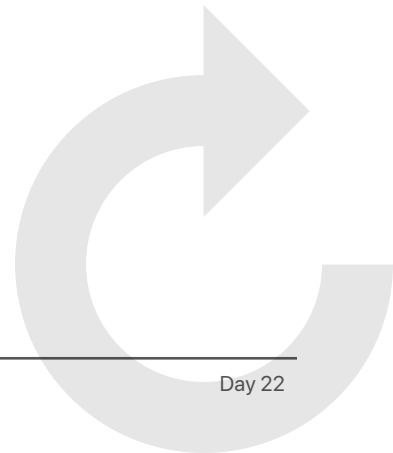
In Peter's eyes, forgiving up to seven times was a generous number. To him, this felt like an abundance of grace. Jesus tells him, however, we should pour out forgiveness on those who hurt us even more – suggesting seventy times seven! But how can someone forgive a person if they've hurt us *that* many times? Surely there has to be *some* kind of limit! No, God has *no* limit when it comes to forgiveness. He is gracious to forgive us for the *countless* times we've messed up, and He calls us to be like Him. That's the point. If we've been forgiven for all the times we've sinned, who are we to refuse forgiveness to others (Matthew 18:23-33)?

Forgiveness isn't just for the one at fault. We've all wrestled with unforgiveness at some point. At one time or another, someone has caused you deep pain. If that wound goes unhealed for too long, it can fester into bitterness. The hurt they caused is all you can see. We can

even trick ourselves into thinking we're punishing them. We say things like, "I'll never forgive them," as if it's retribution. But they're off living their lives while you're buried in a hurt you keep reliving. God doesn't want you to keep suffering. He wants you to let them go—so *you can heal*. Forgiveness stops bitterness from taking hold of our lives.

Forgiveness doesn't mean what they did was ok. It means the pain of what happened no longer has power over us. As we forgive others, we are set free ourselves! Let God sort them out – as for you, take off the chains of unforgiveness that have been weighing you down. When you do, you'll be able to move forward, unhindered, both in your relationship with God and your relationship with others.

How can you embrace God's forgiveness? Who do you need to extend God's forgiveness to?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:23-24

God is a good Father, and He wants His kids to get along. He wants us to be in *unity* with one another. It's easy to make excuses, or try to cover up our sin in hopes of avoiding embarrassment, but where's the good in that? We need to repent and seek forgiveness from those we've offended. Repentance is evidence of the change in your heart. Asking for forgiveness shows that you value the other person.

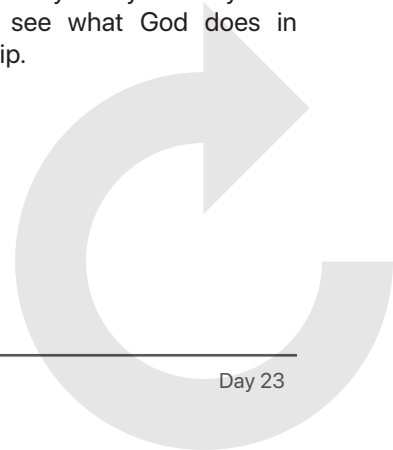
We know how hard it is to forgive. We also know what happens when unforgiveness settles into bitterness. So when we've harbored an offense, we should go to the person and ask for forgiveness. Make it easier for them to forgive by *going* to them! Pride and fear both create division. Let those things go so your relationship can mend and be whole! Take responsibility for what you've done and make the first move. *Be genuine.*

Everyone is responsible for their own choices. There's a chance they'll choose to hold onto an offense, but that's

not your responsibility. You are responsible for going to them with a genuine apology and a humble heart. Humility is key to mending hearts and healing relationships.

God wants you to approach Him unburdened, reconciled with Him and others. It's so important to God that He tells us not to wait. Let nothing come before unity (Colossians 3:14). He doesn't want our gifts until we make things right with the person we hurt – He doesn't mind waiting. In fact, the offering He's more interested in is your heart. This *doesn't* mean "getting your life right" before coming to God. It means letting go of pride and fear, letting go of the things we try to avoid, and seeking unity with others as an *offering to God* (Colossians 3:23-24).

Do you need to ask someone for forgiveness? Today is your day. Go to them, and see what God does in your relationship.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’”

Matthew 18:15-16

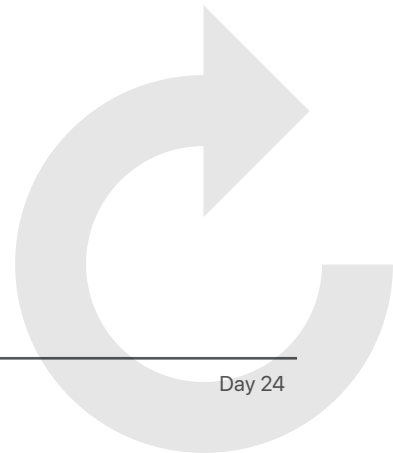
When you’ve been hurt, what is your response? Are you more interested in justifying your offense or resolving the issue? Reconciling broken relationships can be difficult. Conflict isn’t fun and can feel intimidating. But shrinking away and falling into gossip isn’t the answer. In fact, the damage can be just as bad as the initial hurt. Conflict can spread division and destroy relationships (Proverbs 17:9). Jesus knew how difficult it was for people to deal with conflict, so He gave us clear steps to find resolution.

First, go to the person directly. Notice, He doesn’t say get a group of people who’ve heard all the details and are ready to argue your point. Jesus says to go alone and speak with the person. This takes both integrity and courage. Some of us skip this step because we’re afraid of their reaction, or we assume they won’t listen. But relationships are restored when

we’re courageous enough to take these biblical steps towards reconciliation.

If speaking to the person alone doesn’t work—if the behavior continues—then we’re to take two or more people with us who can help bring resolution. We need to be selective with who we let advise and accompany us (1 Corinthians 15:33). It’s easy to get caught up in emotion. We need wise counsel – people who will help us keep focus so we don’t sin in our own anger (Galatians 6:1-3, Ephesians 4:26). Your approach needs to be done in love, with the goal of restoration, not confrontation or justification.

Are there any relationships in your life that you need to approach in this way? Do you have wise counsel in your life to help you peacefully resolve issues? With prayer and a heart of love, take God’s approach.



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32

Your behavior toward people heavily influences their response back to you. If you treat someone with grace, you'll be met with appreciation and a smile. Likewise, if you treat someone rudely, you probably won't be greeted with open arms. *How we treat people matters.* In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul lays out a life-changing way to foster healthy relationships:

Be kind. God wants us to show *kindness* to others. Kindness involves generosity and consideration for others. Kindness isn't self-seeking, but looks out for others and blesses people with a pure heart. It's not quick to anger, but stays patient with people where they are. Kindness takes joy in others' achievements. How could your life better impact others if you were committed to living a life of kindness?

Be tenderhearted. A tenderhearted person is welcoming. They listen and make space for others in their life. They allow people to share what they're going through and don't constantly turn the topic back to themselves. They share the conversation. They have empathy for others. A tenderhearted person

embodies *gentleness*, and God uses this to reach areas of other's hearts that need the most care. Don't be mistaken, tenderheartedness isn't mushy and weak. On the contrary, it's a deep inner strength that's used like a surgeon's tool. It allows you to bear the weight of others' burdens while sharing the power of God's grace with precision.

Be forgiving. Forgiveness is one of the most important things we can do. We can't get around it. In fact, without forgiveness a relationship cannot last. Forgiveness heals wounds, creates safety, and strengthens bonds. When we remember *we've all fallen short*, it becomes easier to forgive (Romans 3:23). In this passage, Paul encourages us to remember where we came from. We didn't deserve God's forgiveness, but He gave it freely (Ephesians 2:8). We're to have a humble, approachable attitude towards others, extending the same grace that Jesus showed us.

In what ways can you be more kind, tenderhearted, and reflect God's forgiveness to the people in your life?

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

James 1:19-20

Communication is the lifeblood of healthy relationships. Without it, your relationships will struggle. God gives us some important aspects of communication to help us relate to others.

Be swift to hear. Have you ever been in a conversation where either you couldn't get a word in or the other person wasn't listening? No one enjoys those scenarios. Yet, they're more than common. But what about us? We've fallen into the same behavior. In fact, while they're talking, we often think about our response so much we miss the point of what they're saying. We *appreciate* good listeners because we feel valued in their company. Take time to be present and listen intently.

Be slow to speak. Many of us don't take the time to fully consider what we *should* say. We blurt out with little to no forethought. We're impulsive with our words. How often has this gotten us in trouble because we didn't think through how those words might impact the other person? When we slow down and

consider how we're speaking, it saves a lot of hurt feelings and sets us up for a healthier relationship.

Be slow to anger. When we speak in anger we can quickly dig ourselves into a relational hole. Anger ignites us and makes us reactionary. We may feel emotionally justified in the moment but are always left to patch up the damage afterward. Controlling our anger takes willpower and discipline. We have to recognize that when we're angry, we aren't going to see clearly or speak life into the relationship. Take time to cool down, pray, and be considerate of the other person's perspective before you approach the conversation again. Remember, anger divides people. To keep unity we have to communicate calmly. The relationship is more important than the argument.

In all of these areas, self-control is key. When we choose to listen more, talk less, and keep calm, we set the pattern for healthy relationships. Who do you need to practice this with today?

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

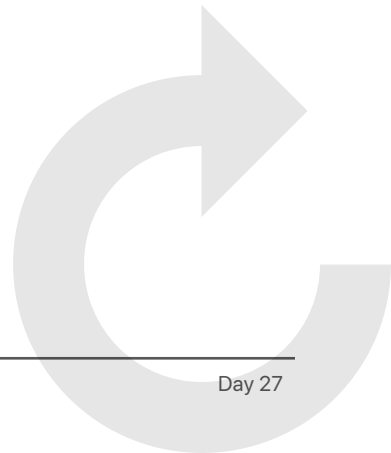
Philippians 2:3-4

Healthy relationships start with a healthy attitude. How we think about others and ourselves determines the health of our relationships. If we think we're better than someone, our relationship with them filters through our pride, and we're more interested in how they feed our sense of importance. If we see other people as an equal, we're free to enjoy them for who they are, and we can build relationships that will endure.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit..." As we look to *Reset* our relationships, we need to take a good look at *why* we do the things we do. If we do something for someone based on what we can get from them, that's called selfishness. No one wants to be in a relationship where they're taken for granted. We all want a true friend, but we need to stop and ask if we are a true friend. As followers of Christ, let's reflect

the love of God (Romans 2:8, 1 John 4:7-11). We're to be a blessing to others *for the sake* of blessing them. Don't look to what you'll gain from it, "...But in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." We are not only to look out for the needs of others: we are called to regard them higher than we regard ourselves. Paul is saying we should have a humble attitude. This doesn't mean to put ourselves down. Christ died for you because you're valuable to Him. But we are to think of others more often than we do ourselves.

If we guard our attitude and seek to show God's love with a clean heart, we will be blessed with rich relationships. How is your attitude towards others? Who do you need to esteem better than yourself this week?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

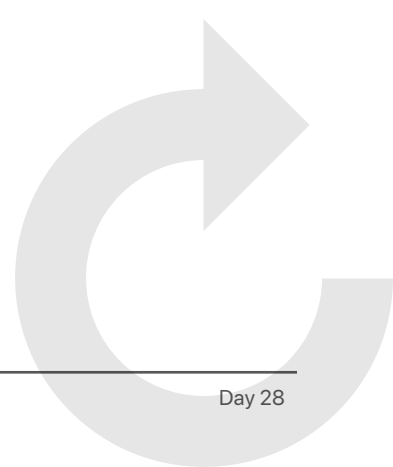
Have you ever had a special person in your life whose words of encouragement made you a better person? Those are the relationships we cling to. Those are the friends we call when we're struggling and need advice. We trust what they say because we know they understand us and have our best interest at heart. They boost our energy and bring life wherever they go.

God intends for us to be a source of encouragement. He *Himself* gives us encouragement all throughout His word! He tells us we can do all things because Christ strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). He cheers us on, telling us not to fear because He Himself is there alongside us (Isaiah 41:10). He tells us to be courageous in our efforts (Joshua 1:9)! He tells us to *be like Him* (Ephesians 5:1) Speak well and build each other

up (Ephesians 4:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:11). Guard and support one another (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). And think the *best* of each other (Philippians 4:8). We are to be people who "stir up love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24).

It's important to note that encouragers may not always agree with us. There are times when what we want isn't wise or pure. A true encourager doesn't let us go in the wrong direction. But this doesn't mean they tear us down. They exhort and encourage us to do the right thing because they have a long-term view of where we are going and who we can become.

Take notice of the encouragers in your life and thank them for their influence. Make some time to extend the same life-giving support to someone today!



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Week 5



RESETTING AFTER FAILURE

Week 5 Lesson

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Engage with the daily readings for Days 29-35 in your *Reset* study guide prior to the next time your group of friends meet for discussion. Journal your thoughts each day.

PRAYER DIRECTION

Most of us have struggled with failure at some point in our lives. There might even be someone in your group who is struggling with failure right now. Take some time to allow the friends in your group to share anything they may be struggling with.

Have each person pick a prayer partner from the group who will commit to praying for that concern during the week, then close your time in prayer together.

DIVING DEEPER:

We encourage you to dive deeper with the additional scripture verses found throughout the daily readings. The scripture references found are listed in order of book, chapter, and then verse. For example, 2 Timothy 1:7 means the book of 2 Timothy, chapter 1, and verse 7.



Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.

Deuteronomy 31:6 (NASB)

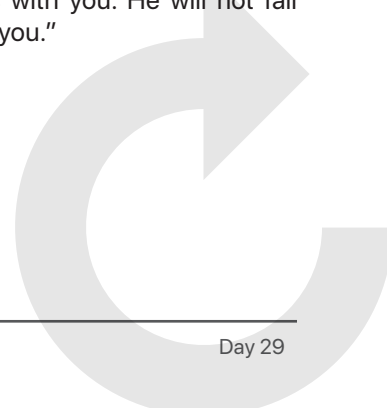
"What if I fail again?" Once you have experienced failure, it can be difficult to overcome that question. Doubt can start to color our perspective about new opportunities and change the way we see ourselves. Failure can leave us feeling alone and wondering if anyone cares. We may even think people are looking for us to fail so they can point out our failures. This type of fear is paralyzing. The good news is, we are *not* alone! As Christians, we have the Almighty God within us. He gives us strength to face *any* circumstance. What does it mean to have God with us through our trials and failures?

Fear is removed. Have you ever faced a situation alongside someone you felt was stronger and wiser? Did it ease your nerves to know *they* were the one leading? When we know the God of the universe is with us in *everything* we do, we no longer have to fear (Isaiah 41;13-14). His presence brings us *confidence*, knowing He will be there to take the lead—no matter what we face.

Strength is gained. There is something that happens within us when we know God is for us and by our side. We gain strength to keep going, knowing nothing can stand against us (Romans 8:31). We become strong by relying on Him (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Courage is multiplied. When fear is removed and we rely on God's strength, we can step out courageously because we know God Himself is with us. Even when the odds seem stacked against us, we can move forward with confidence, knowing God will *use* our circumstances for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28). When God goes before us, we can have the courage to face whatever challenges come our way.

When you realize God *loves* you and is *with* you—fear flees (1 John 4:18). You gain the strength and courage you need to move forward and not quit! Are you facing a difficult challenge right now? Remember, "...the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Romans 5:3-4

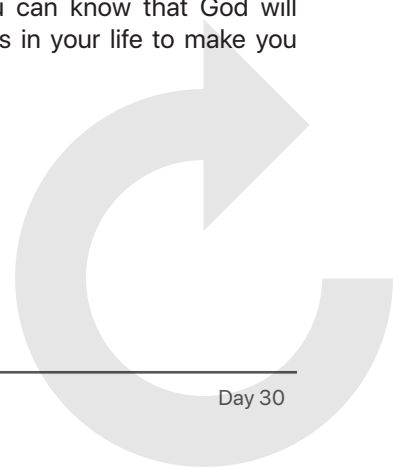
When we face difficult circumstances, we usually look for ways to escape them. Rarely amidst a trial do we stop to think how these difficulties may *benefit* us. Our main focus is to find relief as soon as possible. We try everything, including bargaining with God. We might promise to serve on a mission trip, never miss a church service, or give money to the poor – whatever it takes! If the relief we seek doesn't come quickly, we feel as though God doesn't care. This couldn't be further from the truth.

God sees trials as opportunities. He is interested in developing our character, and that involves opportunities to *exercise* it. Just like our bodies build strength by exercising our muscles, our character becomes stronger when we push through trials. Even a tree becomes stronger because of exposure to high winds. If we never experience resistance, we will be weak and break easily. Perseverance *produces* character. God knows trials help you grow Christ-

like character as you remain faithful through difficult times.

He also wants us to live with the *assurance* of hope. To truly have hope, we must trust. God is faithful, and He will show you time and time again He is faithful. Each time a new trial comes, you can be assured in the hope that He'll be there—because He's done it in the past. We have the opportunity to look past the trial itself, toward a God Who is worthy of our hope and trust.

When we understand that trials are opportunities, we gain a sense of determination. We know we can move forward with God no matter the circumstance. In fact, we can even take *joy* in them. We can know He's developing us. What trials are you facing right now? Are you committed to focusing on God and persevering through them? If you persevere, you can know that God will use those trials in your life to make you more like Him!



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6

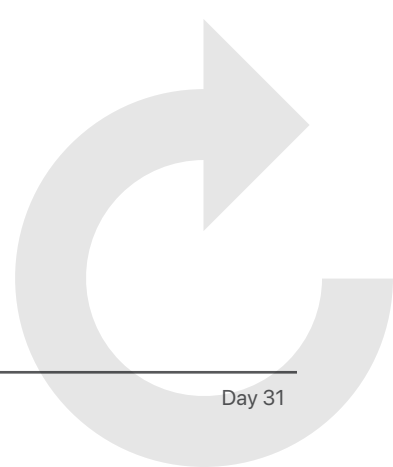
God's love holds nothing back. He's not a half-hearted kind of God. He wants *us* to do the same. Today's passage tells us to trust Him with *all* our heart. Not some. Not part. *All*.

But how? How do we find the strength to take another step in moments of discouragement? The key is to not lean on our own understanding. God holds our future. Our circumstances may not make sense to us in the moment, but we know that God sees the end from the beginning, and He has a plan. As we hold fast to Him in faith, we can live each day knowing He will guide us through even the most painful of failures and deepest of disappointments.

This passage encourages us to *acknowledge* Him in all our ways. The word 'acknowledge' means "to know intimately." God is inviting us to walk particularly closely with Him. His promise

is to "...direct your paths." When we follow Him closely, we're positioned right where we're supposed to be in order to navigate through difficult times when they come. Just like we would follow an experienced guide closely through the wilderness, trusting the paths they open for us, God promises to guide us and direct our paths. He knows every twist and turn. He knows where we're going and how to get there.

As we spend consistent time in God's Word, we get to know Him better and trust Him. The more we know Him, the more we understand His ways and His rock-solid character. As we trust Him, He is able to direct us on straight paths through even the most difficult of journeys. Are you holding back or giving God your whole heart? How can you walk closer with God and acknowledge Him in all your ways?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Isaiah 40:31

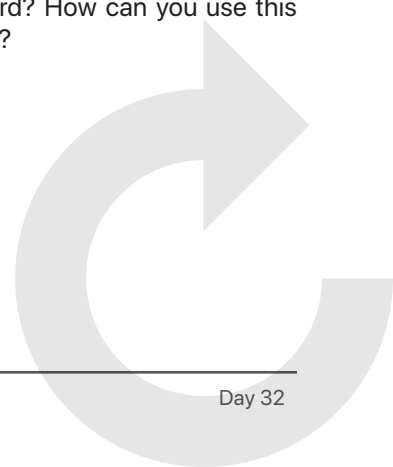
Waiting is hard. At times it can even feel painful. We usually do everything we can to speed up the process. We have express check out at the grocery store, drive-thrus, on-demand entertainment, digital photos, and instant access online to all the information we could ever want. We've become impatient. We forget that in the process of waiting—things still happen. Within the waiting, things develop. We often forgot the value of anticipation and discipline.

The most valuable things in life take time. When babies develop in the womb, their mother waits with great anticipation. When one sets out to accomplish their dream of becoming a surgeon, they laboriously prepare for years through discipline as they pour over their studies in medical school. And the best relationships are developed over time and faithfulness. Hurry can cause us to miss out on a thriving relationship with God. Waiting allows us

to be present with Him as He teaches and develops us for our future. If we're too busy rushing to the next thing, we miss out on the moments God places right in front of us – here and now.

The more we wait, the more we learn patience. It allows us to take in everything God has for us. Waiting is the spiritual discipline God uses to help us grow stronger in our relationship with Him. Waiting on God gives us peace and strength. When we choose to wait on God and seek His wisdom before moving forward, He gives us renewed strength to face the task at hand. God lifts us above our circumstances, giving us a proper perspective. He gives us the energy when it's time to run. And, He gives us the endurance to finish all He has called us to do.

In what areas of your life do you need to wait on the Lord? How can you use this time of waiting?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

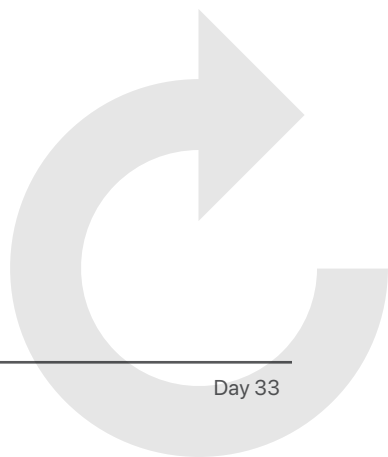
Life is much like a race. Instead of a sprint, however, we're running a marathon. Distractions vie for our attention, and various obstacles along our course tempt us to quit. The goal of this race is to endure to the end with both our faith and character intact. To run well, we must focus ourselves like an athlete. We nourish ourselves with the Word of God, train ourselves to dismiss distractions, and push forward when things get tough. We will cross the finish line by refusing to quit and keeping our focus on Jesus.

We're also not running alone – this is a relay. Others have gone before us, and have passed the baton to us. Our forerunners encourage and teach us to finish our race well. These champions inspire us to avoid the snares of sin and

to lay aside every weight that holds us back. We learn from their successes and their failures. Likewise, we are to help those who are beginning their race.

Most importantly, we are to learn and help others focus on Jesus. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the one who paved the way for us. He gave everything He had, holding nothing back. He counted it *joy* to endure to the end, embracing the cross so that we could live – so we could run our race. And, He is gloriously awaiting us at the finish line.

Who has been an encouragement to you in your own life? How can you help someone else run their race?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Our Scripture today ends by telling us we are strong when we are weak. *What a contradiction!* We assume weakness is something we need to fix, run from, or at least cover up so no one sees. God's ways are not our ways. He's patient, loving, ever-present, and *real*. He's not interested in a perfect version of us. He's interested in who we *really* are. If we're consumed with efforts to be perfect, we miss the point. Perfectionism puts us right back to where we started, trying to do things on our own.

It's actually through our weaknesses we're perfected and matured, because we're *made to rely on God!* Perfectionism is a burden. Sure, it's important to develop and grow, but not to the point where you put unattainable pressure on yourself and others. Have you ever known someone that expected only perfection from themselves, and from you? That was likely a stressful experience, and probably not the healthiest relationship. That's because perfectionism was never God's *design*. If God chose to use our strengths

to show His power, it could confuse things. We would start to think God uses us solely because of our strengths. This would only foster insecurity and the fear of failure.

There is *power* in grace. When we lean on Him, we let God take over and His power is shown. We can clearly see His miraculous hand and proclaim, "That was God!" God is fully able to accomplish all things and wants to lead you with His strength. We also get closer to Him. We can look up and appreciate God for who He is, and we realize God's love is unconditional. This is true with God and with others. When we make space for people, showing grace to them, we create a feeling of safety. Relationships that allow people to be real in moments of vulnerability become the strongest relationships – *there is power in grace*.

Are you ready to trust God with both your strengths and your weaknesses? Commit those things to Him, and watch what He does in your life!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16

"I understand. I feel your pain." When we are going through a difficult time, those are comforting words to hear from someone who knows firsthand what we're experiencing. When we have someone in our life who has walked our path before and understands our difficult moments, we gain confidence. We know they can help guide us. They don't just sympathize, but they have valuable advice that can be trusted. That's the beauty of Jesus. He's been there.

Jesus understands what we are going through. Jesus was both fully God *and* fully man. He experienced everything we do. He dealt with sadness and grief over losses in His life. He was tempted in every way and had His character tested. He experienced betrayal at the hands of friends He loved. He experienced excruciating physical pain on the cross. Even though Jesus was God, He didn't avoid any of the things we struggle with in our lives today. *He feels our pain and empathizes with us.*

Jesus is here for us. Jesus gives us the grace and mercy we need to overcome in the challenges we are facing. We can have confidence in Jesus because He understands what we are going through. We can have boldness to approach Him for help, and He answers by giving us the power to move forward! Jesus experienced what we experienced and made it through the same trials we face daily – yet He never sinned! He ran that race. He knew exactly what it felt like. And, He won for us! Jesus is our ultimate Source of help and comfort. His encouragement and advice is precisely what we need to make it through each day.

If you have ever felt alone in your suffering, remember Jesus, the Savior of the world, has been where you are. He loves you and wants to provide you with the grace and strength you need. Share your troubles with Jesus today, and ask Him for the strength and wisdom to make it through.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Week 6



RESETTING MY FINANCES

Week 6 Lesson

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

This is our last week in the *Reset Series*! Make sure to engage with the daily readings for Days 36–42 in your Reset study guide prior to the next time your group of friends meet for discussion. Even though this is our last week in this study, continue your habit of studying God’s Word. Make it part of your daily routine, to spend time seeking Him in the Scriptures and journal your thoughts each day. This is one of the most valuable habits to develop in your life.

PRAYER DIRECTION

Ask the friends in your group to share a need they might have that you can pray for as a group. Remember to write your prayer requests and record answered prayers in your prayer journal. Then, close your time in prayer together.

DIVING DEEPER:

We encourage you to dive deeper with the additional scripture verses found throughout the daily readings. The scripture references found are listed in order of book, chapter, and then verse. For example, Matthew 6:33 means the book of Matthew, chapter 6, and verse 33.



"I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

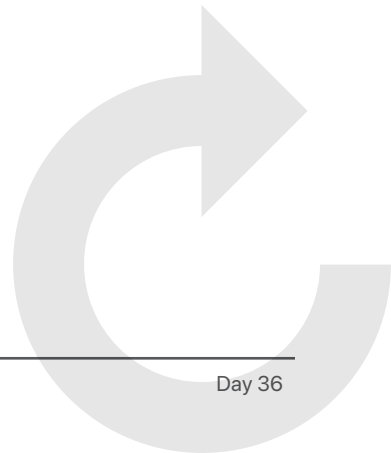
Acts 20:35

Perhaps you have heard the phrase, "It's better to give than to receive." It sounds great, but if we're totally honest, receiving gifts feels pretty great, too. We can easily slip into seeking things for ourselves more than opportunities to give. However, when you step out to make a difference in someone's life you discover firsthand what God is talking about in today's scripture.

You see, you have been blessed to be a blessing. God did not give us all we have for us to only enjoy ourselves. He gave us time, talents, and treasures so we're able to bless *others*. He wants us to be like Him, and we are most like God when we are a blessing to other people. When we bless someone in need, we are using what God has given us as a tool to make a difference in their life.

You are blessed in return by experiencing the true joy that comes from blessing

others. We usually think that blessing someone else means we don't gain anything. It's true that we shouldn't give in order to receive recognition or thanks – we should give freely with no strings attached – but it's precisely by giving with a free heart that we *do* gain something in return. When we give of ourselves, without asking for anything in return, there is a deep joy that springs up inside of us that can only be found in this type of giving. God shares with us the joy of heaven – through the look on the other person's face, the burden relieved from their shoulders, the love they feel from both you and God, all extend well beyond words. *Our* reward is the quiet inward joy of knowing *God* sees, and *He* says 'Well done!' (Matthew 6:1-4, 25:23). When we bless others, we are blessed *exponentially* in return. Who do you need to bless today?



What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

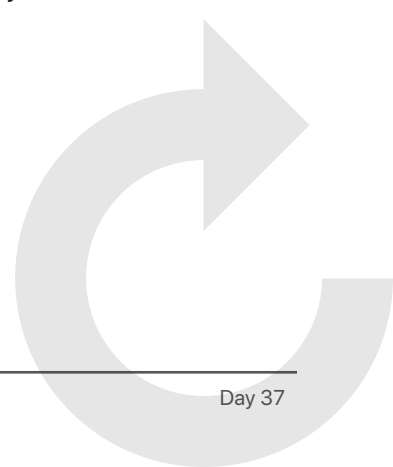
1 Timothy 6:10

Perhaps you have heard the phrase, "Money is the root of all evil?" If you compare the two statements, you'll see this scripture has been misquoted. This verse clearly explains the *love of money* is the root of all evil. Money is a great tool we can use to care for and bless others, but it's not designed to be our source of security – God is. When we love money, we end up placing our trust there—instead of in God.

The love of money drives us to greed. Greed is solely concerned with gain, causing us to compromise our standards to get what we want – even at the expense of others. Greed can cause us to stray from God, believing we have to leverage what we have to gain favor. Love for money can actually rob us – causing us to miss what really matters. Jesus, in Matthew 19:22, says to the rich man, "...sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." The man was so

attached to his wealth that he ended up walking away from Jesus! He trusted in his money more than he trusted Christ. There's no problem with *having* money – as long as money doesn't *have* us.

Loving money replaces our pursuit for God with the pursuit of possessions. Many people promise themselves, "When I reach this financial goal, I'll give my life to God." With that attitude, you'll continue to push God aside as you chase more. Instead, recognize *God* as the source of all provisions (1 Chronicles 29:12). It's *through Him* that all blessings flow (James 1:17). We are to prioritize Jesus and trust Him above all else. Don't worry, He'll take care of our needs (Matthew 6:31-33). When we do, we discover true contentment and success! When we have a proper perspective of God and money, we experience God's blessing in every area of our lives.



What is God saying to you?

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So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

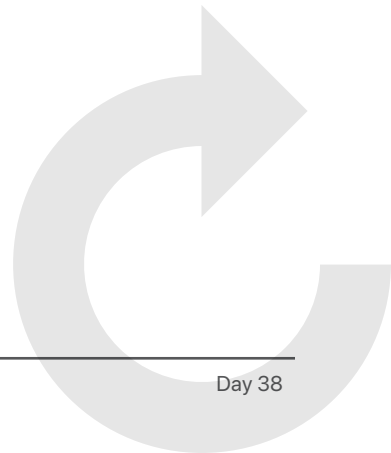
2 Corinthians 9:7

How we give is just as important as what we give. When we give to God and others out of obligation, our attitude is much different than when we give out of joy. When it comes to giving, God wants us to give cheerfully—not just out of duty. In other words, He wants us to give because we *want* to, not because we *have* to. Have you ever received something but could tell the person didn't want to give it? As the recipient, that's a less-than-pleasant experience regardless of how valuable the gift. In fact, a bad attitude devalues the gift itself. On the contrary, even the tiniest gift feels like a treasure when it's coming from a genuine and cheerful heart! Can you recall a moment where a simple gift felt valuable because of how the person gave it? If so, you have a glimpse into why giving with a good attitude is *important* to God.

When we give cheerfully, it allows us to step out of a scarcity mentality and live

from a place of abundance. When we give only when we have to, we function in fear of not having enough. Our perspective shifts to a place of lack, focusing on what we lose more than what we gain. When we live like that, we'll never have enough for ourselves. A cheerful giver is someone who is thankful for what they have but understands the *Source* of those blessings. God provides for our needs, and He has no shortage of supply (Philippians 4:19). When we're free from the burden of clinging to what we have, we're able to join God in His abundance by letting it pour out of us toward others!

When giving becomes an expression of our love for God and our love for others, we can't help but be cheerful! As you give, check your attitude. Are you giving cheerfully or grudgingly?



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“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”

Matthew 6:26-27

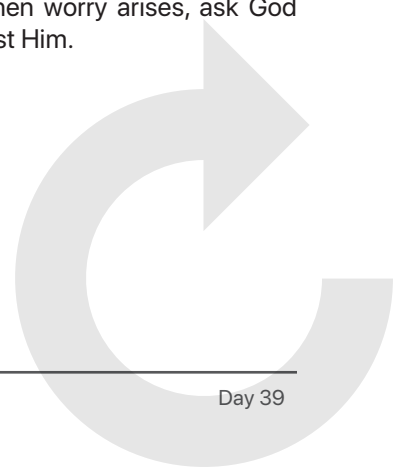
Worry kills trust. Worry shifts our focus off the promises of God. It leads to anxiety and fear, stealing our peace as “what if” scenarios play out in our mind. But with all the worrying, what do we gain? Can even one day be added to your life through worry? *No*. When was the last time you worried over a situation that ended up working out fine?

As discussed earlier, in Day 16 of our *Reset* guide, we can imagine what tomorrow will bring, but can’t actually see even one second into the future. Now, that thought should *not* give you more anxiety. The fact is, that statement was always true; you’re just becoming aware of it. It only feels scary because it confronts our desire for control. You see, when we re-run all the possibilities in our mind, we can trick ourselves into thinking we can get through life in our own strength. But this just leads to a downward spiral of anxiety, fear, and even depression, because ultimately deep

down we *know* we’re not in control. We were never meant to carry that burden.

The point is, we were never meant to go through life without God. We were *made* for a relationship with Him. Why do we assume He would leave us to our own devices? Why do we assume He won’t be there for us? He’s interested in every part of your life! Understanding and embracing the truth of our dependence on God frees us to live in the present. When we *trust* God, we can embrace the joys awaiting us *each day*.

God, in His infinite love, designed us to be dependent on Him. This is actually a gift – He *delights* in taking care of us (Psalm 18:16-19). The more we trust Him, the more we’re assured of His care for us (Philippians 4:6-7). Our concerns are His concerns. He created us to share life with us – of *course* He’ll provide for our needs! When worry arises, ask God to help you trust Him.



What is God saying to you?

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Bring it to God in prayer.

Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10

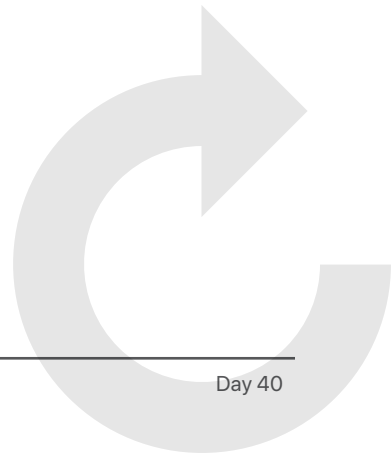
To honor God means to acknowledge He is Lord – He's in control of our lives. When we ask Him to be Lord over our life, He answers by blessing us with His presence. Everything we invite Him into, He blesses. This applies to every area of our life – including our resources.

To honor God with your possessions means to surrender them to Him so they can be used for His glory. Look around your home, do the things you own help you to honor God in your heart and give Him glory, or do they pull you away and put the focus on you?

We honor God when we put Him and His purposes first in what we have. God is generous, and one of the best ways we can honor Him is by imitating His generosity. Do you have a craft or skill that could benefit a neighbor? Maybe you can purchase a meal for someone going

through financial hardship, or could help build your neighbor's fence when you see they need help. There are endless ways to honor God this way.

We honor God when we give Him the *firstfruits* of our increase. Increase is anything that's been added to us, whether from our own hard work or what has been freely given. When we work at our job, we receive wages. When we learn a new skill, we develop new abilities. When we wake each morning, we've been given a new day. Honoring God by giving Him the *first* of what we receive aligns our hearts toward thankfulness and reminds us who has given us these things. When God sees us honor Him with all He has given us, He entrusts us with more (Matthew 25:24). What ways can you give Him your firstfruits?



What is God saying to you?

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“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

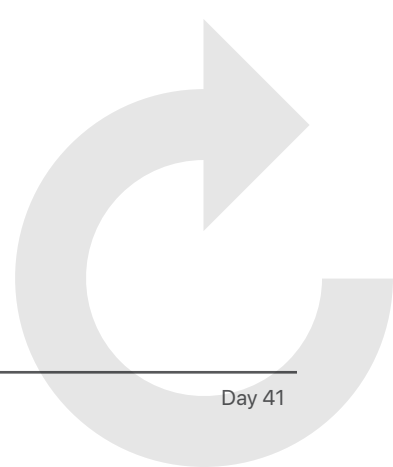
Malachi 3:10

The principle of tithing is really a lesson in faith. God asks us to bring the first ten percent of our income to the storehouse – the local church where we are fed – as an act of obedience. When we step out in faith to give back to God from what He has given us, we show thankfulness and trust. When we tithe out of obedience, God blesses us just as He promised.

Tithing is an expression of faith. Giving the first portion of our income can feel like a big stretch, yet God challenges us to give our first tenth to Him as an act of faith and worship. When we do this, it shows we trust Him and believe He will take care of our every need. It’s easy to talk about trust in theory, but do we really mean it? Tithing is a great way to practice our faith. It’s a way to express worship and gratitude to God for everything He’s done for us.

Tithing is a test. He invites us to test Him in this and see His goodness. It’s a leap of faith, yes, but He is ready and able to pour out blessings when we trust Him. And you and I can never out-give God – His resources are unlimited. One of the best ways to test and grow our character is by trusting God with the tithe.

Tithing is a blessing. God says if we are faithful to give to Him, He will open the windows of heaven to bless us. He says not only will He bless us, but there will not be a storehouse big enough to contain it! You see, God doesn’t *need* your tithe. He *wants* your heart. When we trust Him with our finances, we’re trusting Him as our source. Tithing is a powerful way to offer Him our heart. Trust God with the tithe today and see how He will open the windows of heaven to bless you!



What is God saying to you?

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Bring it to God in prayer.

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"

Luke 16:10-12

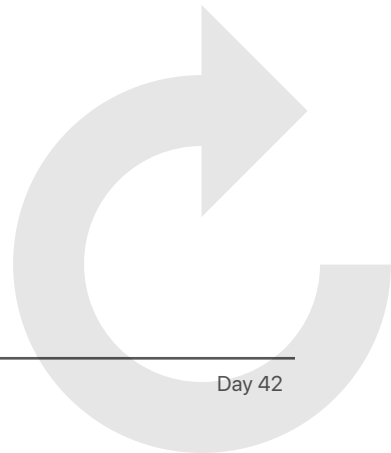
"Can God trust me?" What an important question to ask ourselves. Most of us want to answer yes. When we look at how we manage our finances, however, we might see a different story. Does it tell us we're trustworthy, and we put God first in our lives, or does it show us we don't live what we say we believe?

God is much more interested in what's in our hearts than what's in our wallet. Today's passage teaches us the principle of stewardship. To understand stewardship, we need to understand that the things we've been given are *entrusted* to us. The whole earth belongs to God and everything in it. We have the opportunity to be faithful – wise and honorable in managing what we've been given.

This principle holds true in all areas, but our stewardship rings loudest in the area of our finances. Throughout Scripture, God speaks to how we are to

handle our finances because He knows what we value is a clear indicator of our hearts (Matthew 6:21). God wants to trust us with much more than just money and possessions, but He can only do that once He knows the condition of our hearts. Why would He give us more when we abuse what we've been given (Luke 16:11)? He blesses us, but He won't enable bad behavior. The way we handle what He has entrusted to us indicates whether He can trust us with more (Luke 12:42-44).

When we start to see what we have as God's, it changes our perspective on how we manage them. Today, take a look at how you care for the things God has given you. How can you manage them better? As you grow in your faithfulness and stewardship, watch how God entrusts you with more!



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REACHING PEOPLE BUILDING LIVES

CHURCH OF THE KING

