



# Go Forward

*Building Towards What God Has Next...*

27-DAY  Spiritual Journey



## Greetings Lifer,

What lies ahead of you in these pages is a journey deeper into the Word and presence of God. As you interact with what's prepared for you each day, my prayer is that God will open your eyes and heart to His truth, that you'd be enveloped by His love and grace, and that He would challenge you to be more like Him in every facet of your life. My world tends to trend in the direction of my affections, and we all are reflections of the things that we give our time to in life. If we take time to reflect on God, He typically shows up more in our lives. If we don't, He won't, at least not as much. So as Bay Life "goes forward" and faithfully engages in this portion of our spiritual journey together, I trust that we will all be transformed by the experience, that God will renew our minds so that we can approve of what's good, pursue what's acceptable, and be found within the perfect will of God.

Mark Saunders  
Lead Pastor

## Devotional Instructions:



### How do I use this devotional?

Each day, you will be provided with a Scripture to read, some points to ponder, and an application from your daily study. These short devotionals will help you to get more out of each week's teaching, digging deeper into the Word of God. The very best way to learn these truths is to talk about what you are learning with someone else, share insights, and think outside the box.



### What are "Mobile Moments"?

"Mobile Moments" are conversation starters for parents and children. The questions correlate with the day's Scripture reading, to help give you some knowledge to guide or answer questions. After you read your Bible and think about the passage, you will be more confident to share what you know with those you love. The questions are designed to initiate conversation and are geared to help each of you know a little bit more about each other and the relationship you each have with your Heavenly Father. You can tailor the questions to fit the interests of your child and then ask more questions as the conversation leads. Enjoy this time as a family and don't be afraid to share your answers to these questions, too!



### Why "Mobile Moments"?

The thought is that at some time during your day, you will be in your family vehicle delivering your child(ren) to various destinations. It may be 10 minutes to school or 20 minutes from the soccer field, but that is valuable time you can use as a parent. Once a day, turn off the radio, put down the cell phones, and give up the video games to talk to each other. Some questions are light-hearted and some make you think, but they all get you talking to your family about God.

# Prayer Events and Opportunities

As we walk through the Go Forward! teaching, we are providing you with opportunities to spend some extra time in prayer and communion with God. Each of these events is designed to enhance your study experience, and open the door for you to be more intentional in your faith walk. Join us for any or all of these events. We will be taking reservations for some events, so please watch the e-newsletter, or visit our website, for more information. Some of these ideas might be new for you, but we encourage you to get out of the box and join us as we go deeper. The opportunities, with explanation, are as follows:



## Prayer Walks

Each weekend service day (Saturday and Sunday) during this teaching series, we will host Prayer Walks during service times. Our hope would be for you to Prayer Walk our campus during one service time, and attend worship at another service. Begin your Prayer Walk in the Prayer Room (located across from the Ladies' Restroom, in the Worship Center Lobby), where you will be given instructions and a prayer guide to assist you along your walk. Once during each service, we will have a guide who will walk with you, and be available to answer any questions you might have. This opportunity is a great venue for families, and is geared toward believers in all stages of their faith walk. Beginners, and seasoned prayers, will be touched by God through this activity.

**PRAYER WALK DATES**

**APRIL 8 | APRIL 15 | APRIL 22**



## Daily Prayer Feed

Each day of the teaching series, we will be asking our folks to stop and pray for the **Go Forward** campaign at 1:38pm. (1:38 comes from Romans 13:8, our campaign theme verse.) We believe that the prayers of many are powerful, and we hope to all be more intentional about making God the center of our lives on a more regular basis. Just as believers throughout history have observed set times of prayer and Bible study, we want to develop a habit of stopping in the middle of the day to honor God, and refocus our lives. Text **BLCPRAY** to **313131** right now, to sign up for a daily text message reminder that will include a prayer point and Scripture verse!

**DAILY PRAYER FEED DATES**

**APRIL 2 - 28**



## Prayer Vigil

During the last week of this series, we will be hosting a 24-hour Prayer Vigil here at the church. As we approach our times of commitment, we are asking God to open the hearts of His people, and help us to fully surrender to Him in all we do. Two-hour shifts will be available around the clock for Lifers to come to the church and pray. We will provide a suggested prayer list, and will have leaders here to pray with you, if you desire. Our hope is that focused prayer time will open the doors for God to continue to move on the hearts of His people. We would love to have you register, but you are welcome to join us, even if you did not register. Watch the web for more information.

**24-HOUR PRAYER VIGIL**

**APRIL 27, 4PM - APRIL 28, 4PM**

# Fasts

We will have periodic “fasting” times during this time of worship, praise, and prayer in the campaign to Go Forward into all that God is calling us. In essence, a fast is a deeper level of worship offered to God. It’s a way to abstain from the natural (food, water, electronic media, or any other thing that takes time from God) to have the supernatural manifest in our lives and for specific issues. Fasting is embraced as a means of spiritual growth because fasting and prayer go hand in hand. While fasting quickens the body to God, prayer awakens the mind and spirit to God. Fasting can usher in some very meaningful prayer time.

## There are four types of fasts referred to in the Bible.

### No. 1

Partial fast, abstaining from certain foods (Daniel 10:3)

### No. 2

Normal fast, going without food for one day up to 40 days (Exodus 34:28, Ezra 8:21, 23; Daniel 6:18; Luke 2:37; Mark 2:18; Matthew 4:2; Acts 13:2-3)

### No. 3

Absolute fast, going without food or water no more than three days (Esther 4:16, this is very rare in the Bible. It was done for an urgent understanding of God’s will for that specific moment.)

### No. 4

Voluntary group fast, called for a specific reason for a specific group of people (1 Samuel 7:6; 2 Chronicles 20:3; Jonah 3:5)



*Fasting has a spiritual purpose, and that purpose is to get our flesh out of the way, and submit to the Spirit of God as He moves within our lives. Fasting removes the barriers to communication with God and allows the spirit man (our inner man) to commune directly with our heavenly Father. Fasting is about more than just abstaining from food, it reveals things that control us and hinder our intimacy with God.*



## Guidelines for Preparing for a Physical “Fast:”

If you have any type of medical condition, consult your physician for guidance and alternative, safe dietary ways to participate in this spiritual journey. Do not alter your diet unless you get approval from your physician.

- 1 For an occasional fast, eat a light meal (fruit, vegetables, yogurt, etc.) and drink plenty of water prior to beginning.
- 2 Skip 2-3 meals and break the fast with fruit juices, followed by a light meal, avoiding oils, dressing and starch for a couple of meals.
- 3 When starting a regular discipline of fasting, begin slowly with a partial 24-hour (2 meals) fast once a week for several weeks, while drinking fruit juices and plenty of water.
- 4 Monitor your inner attitudes and maintain a worship attitude (Isaiah 58:4), as your spiritual enemy will attack you.
- 5 Break the fast with a light meal of fruits and vegetables, nothing heavy for it will shock your digestive system.
- 6 Always be careful not to call attention to what you are doing. (Matthew 6:16)
- 7 If skipping a meal is not possible, try fasting certain types of foods (like sweets or soft drinks), or you can fast activities (like TV or video games). It is important to convert that precious time into devotional activities (prayer or reading) – not just to abstain from them.

Remember that the major work of scriptural fasting is done in the spiritual realm. Denying yourself is proclaiming war in the heavenlies against all things that are hindering your blessing from God. So get ready for battle and submit your body as a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable. (Romans 12:1-2)

### Fasting dates:

#### ELECTRONIC FAST

APRIL 27, 4PM – APRIL 28, 4PM

Unless your job requires, take this 24-hour block of time and lay down your electronic gadgets – iPads, iPods, phones, computers, TVs, etc. Let God rule in your time, and spend time with Him, and with family, undistracted by the gadgets the world says we must have.

#### FOOD FAST

APRIL 21, 5PM – APRIL 22, 5PM

Following the guidelines listed above, abstain from food for this 24-hour period, focusing on your relationship with God. Pray through the things He has been saying to you in this study, and let this be a time of refreshing, renewal and rededication, to living a life fully surrendered to God and His will for your life.

This activity is optional, but we encourage you to join us as one body to fast and pray for all that God will do in and through Bay Life in the future. As we fast and pray together, powerful change can happen in each of our lives, in our church, and community. (If you are not able to fast during this time, we encourage you to fast when it is best for you to do so).



DAY 01

MONDAY | APRIL 2, 2018

## In His Image



A SCRIPTURE...

**GENESIS 1:26-31**



### A Thought...

God chose to make us in His image. That means we are to be full of grace, love, generosity, kindness, etc. We can, when we choose and are led by the Holy Spirit, exhibit these attributes, and more. God determined that the creation of man was very good. As we seek to live up to our Imago Dei (image of God), we can make a difference in this world.



### An Action...

What do you need to leave behind to fully focus on Jesus? What's holding you back? The examples Jesus used were far more serious than garage doors and coffee pots. But the level of severity isn't the issue. It's the grip that thing has on you that matters. What's the boat anchor that drags on you when you move to follow Him?



### A Prayer...

Lord, help me to see the things that keep me from following you. Help me to release them and be fully engaged in life, according to your plans for me. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- What do you think it means to be in God's Image?
- Look around you. What do you see made by God?
- What are your favorite things God made?

### Final Thought...

*I am made in the image of God.*



DAY 02

TUESDAY | APRIL 3, 2018

## God Cares



A SCRIPTURE...

**1 PETER 5:6-7**



### A Thought...

God is Sovereign. That means He is in control of all things that happen in this world. As believers, we need to learn to trust God with every part of our lives. God cares for us, therefore, we do not need to worry...at all...about anything.



### An Action...

In what areas of your life do you try to take God's place? What situations cause you chronic worry?



### A Prayer...

Father, please help me learn to be humble and trust you with every area of my life. Teach me not to worry, but instead, to trust you completely. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- What are you afraid of and why are you afraid?
- Who do you go to when you are afraid?
- Can you ask God to care for you?
- Let's practice talking to God right now.

### Final Thought...

*Humble yourself before the Lord.*



DAY 03

WEDNESDAY | APRIL 4, 2018

## The Inclination



A SCRIPTURE...

1 KINGS 8:54-61



### A Thought...

After the Temple was built, Solomon gave a prayer of dedication. He asked the Lord to incline the hearts of His people to Him. He acknowledged that none of His promises had failed. He wants God's people to be wholly devoted to Him. Devoted hearts will result in all the nations knowing that He is Lord.



### An Action...

What is keeping you from being wholly devoted to the Lord? What can you do to correct this?



### A Prayer...

Father, incline my heart to You that I may be wholly devoted to You. I want to live in such a way that people, with whom I interact throughout the day, will know that You are my Lord. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- When you go to the refrigerator, what do you expect will be inside?
- What if you open it and it's empty? Why do you expect to find food there?
- Did we say that we promise to provide for you or did you just know?
- God promises to provide for us, too. Do you think that only means food?
- We can talk about things you want or need, but how do we do that with God?
- How do you spend time with God?
- We may know what to do, but do we actually do those things?
- How can we, as a family, do those things more often?

### Final Thought...

*What is keeping you from being wholly devoted to the Lord?*



DAY 04

THURSDAY | APRIL 5, 2018

## Walk this Way



A SCRIPTURE...

**EPHESIANS 5:1-2, 15-21**



### A Thought...

There are several commands in this passage. We are to imitate God by walking in sacrificial love as Christ did. We are to walk wisely, making the most of our time. We are to understand what the will of the Lord is, and to be filled (controlled and empowered) by the Holy Spirit. And, finally, we are to submit to one another. What an example for the world!



### An Action...

In what area has God shown you that you are to imitate Him and make the most of your time? How will you rely on the filling of the Holy Spirit to empower you to do this?



### A Prayer...

Lord, teach me how I can become an imitator of You. I want to live wisely and make the most of my time. Thank You that Your Spirit will enable me to be more like You! Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Have you ever heard me say something like “if your friend jumped off a cliff would you jump too!?”
- What do you think that means?
- What kind of choices do you think I want you to make?
- What kind of choices does God want you to make?
- How can you be sure to make those choices? Can God help you?

### Final Thought...

*Lord, teach me how I can become an imitator of You.*



DAY 05

FRIDAY | APRIL 6, 2018

## Live to the Lord



A SCRIPTURE...  
**ROMANS 14:7-8**



### A Thought...

As believers, we belong to God. Our country's individualistic culture wants us to think we are our own. But Scripture tells us differently. The hard thing is for us to live as though we belong to God. We need Him, and we need each other. God planned it that way.



### An Action...

Where do you live as if it's all up to you...as if you are your own person? What can you change to situate your life to be more dependent on God?



### A Prayer...

Lord, help me to surrender all things to you. I want to live for you... to do everything in my life remembering I belong to you. Thank you for loving me enough to change me. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- How do we please God with our lives?
- How did you act and feel when you didn't get your way?
- Do you think God would be happy with your behavior? Why not?

### Final Thought...

*We belong to the Lord.*



DAY 06

SATURDAY | APRIL 7, 2018

## God's Good Works



A SCRIPTURE...

**EPHESIANS 2:1-10**



### A Thought...

Through God's grace, we have been brought from death to life. In this new life, God has planned "good works" for us to do. "Lost" people need to know Jesus. "Found" people need to learn to be more like Jesus. And God will use us to help others find Him and grow to be like Him.



### An Action...

Where are you currently serving in God's Kingdom? If you are not serving, how can you begin to serve? What do you need to do to clear your schedule to make room for serving opportunities?



### A Prayer...

Lord, teach me to order the activities in my life in a way that will honor you. Show me the specific "good works" you have created me to do. Father, I want to honor you with my life. Teach me how and where. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- When was the last time you were disobedient to your parents, grandparents, or teachers? Were you sorry? Did they forgive you?
- Do you think God forgives you like your parents, grandparents, or teacher did?
- Let's talk about Jesus' forgiveness.

### Final Thought...

*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.*



# Consecrated



A SCRIPTURE...

**JOSHUA 3:5-17**

## A Thought...

What does the word “consecrate” mean? The dictionary says to consecrate is to “set apart or dedicate to the service of a deity.” Joshua told the people to consecrate themselves to the Lord. This kind of devotion and dedication will automatically lead to a life of obedience that is marked by a deeper relationship with Christ. The obedience of the priests brought the Israelites to safety on the other side of the Jordan River. What might have happened if the priests had refused to obey God’s commands? What happens in your life when you are obedient to God’s leading? What happens in your life when you are disobedient to God’s leading and commands for your life? Don’t miss the fact that Joshua 3:5 tells the people, “God will do amazing things among you.” What are the amazing things that you want God to do in your life?



## An Action...

Today, as you pray, ask God to show you areas where you might be disobedient. Share that with a Christian friend and ask them to help hold you accountable to walk in obedience. Be prepared to see God do amazing things as you walk in faith and obedience.



## A Prayer...

Father God, I am amazed by all that You do in my life. Show me the disobedience in my heart and help me to overcome a lack of faith. Give me the courage to step boldly into the places You would have me to go. Amen.



## Mobile Moments...

- What is the most amazing thing you have ever seen?
- Was it a person, a place, or a thing? What made it so amazing?
- Could you explain what you saw or how it was made?
- What’s your favorite animal?
- What are some of the amazing things that God creates?
- When you look at their unique features, are you reminded of how amazing God is?

## Final Thought...

*What are the amazing things that you want God to do in your life?*



DAY 08

MONDAY | APRIL 9, 2018

## Loving Like Your Father



A SCRIPTURE...

**LUKE 6:33-38**



### A Thought...

This whole passage is countercultural; not just in our culture, but also when Jesus spoke it. He was talking to a group of people who were oppressed and limited in resources. He asked them to love those who were oppressing them and to freely give of their limited resources. It is difficult to give when it feels like there is a lack, and to love when others are not acting in love toward you. Jesus says that when you do these things you are like your Father, the Most High. He loved us by giving His only begotten Son for our sin, while we were still God's enemy (Romans 5:8).



### An Action...

Be like your Heavenly Father today. Be spectacularly kind to that person who is seldom kind to you. Show them mercy in a very real way. Love them in the same way God has loved you.



### A Prayer...

Lord, I know You love me unconditionally. Thank You. You know all the ways this person has hurt me. Lord, I leave the judgment and punishment for those actions in Your hands. Today, I choose to show them love and mercy. Help me, Father. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Do you get along with everyone you meet?
- Can you think of someone with whom you don't get along?
- Why don't you get along?
- How do you treat each other? How does that make you feel?
- How do you think God would have you treat them?
- What do you think God means by "love your enemies"?
- Will being kind to that person make them be nice to you?
- Why does God want us to do this with "difficult" people?

### Final Thought...

*Be like your Heavenly Father today.*



## Love is...



A SCRIPTURE...

**PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11**

### A Thought...

Paul, at one time, was in one of the highest and most revered positions in the Hebrew culture. He could boast of all the esteemed things he had done, of all the worldly riches he had, and the power that he so unabashedly used. However, one day on a lonely road, the very man that he had ridiculed stood face-to-face with him. That day, as he heard Jesus speak, Paul knew that this man was more than all he had ever had. When Paul accepted that Jesus was who He said He was, all of those treasures were willingly, completely stripped from his life. Paul sacrificed everything he knew, everything he loved, and everything he thought was important. He understood that the greatest love is that of our Lord, Jesus Christ. This sacrifice of all things once treasured is what makes our love of Christ the most valuable possession we have. The promise of our everlasting life with Him is worth more than anything else we have or could have.



### An Action...

Think of the things in your worldly life that have a stronghold on you. Are those things more important than the love of Christ? In your quiet time, list those things and then see if they could ever measure up to the promise of eternity with Christ. It's time to let go of them and hold dear in your heart the love that Christ so generously gives when we sacrifice the things of this world.



### A Prayer...

Lord, the promise of Your love for eternity is all I need to live each day. To sacrifice those things I once treasured is my act of loving You more than anything else in this world. Lord, help me to keep this promise to You that I will never put other things in front of loving You. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- If you were in your room, what is the most important thing that you would see?
- If you stood in your classroom, what's the most important thing you would see?
- If you stood at (an activity or practice your child is involved in), what is the most important thing you would see?
- If you stood beside God, in Heaven, would you see any of those things?
- What do you think God sees as important?

### Final Thought...

*You are loved with an everlasting love.*



DAY 10

WEDNESDAY | APRIL 11, 2018

## Seek the Kingdom First



A SCRIPTURE...

**MATTHEW 6:25-33**



### A Thought...

Are you a worrier? Worry is a lack of trust in God's sovereignty. When we worry, we are trying to control areas in which we have no real control. Worry has a direct correlation to a lack of faith. God cares deeply for us. The trials and tribulations of life give us more opportunity to see how much God cares for us.



### An Action...

What do you worry about? How can you stop worrying about these things? Print this passage of Scripture and review it each time you are tempted to worry.



### A Prayer...

Father, teach me not to worry but, instead, to pray when I am tempted to worry. Lord, help me to remember how much you love me and to trust you with all things in my life. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- How do you feel when your friends have things you don't?
- Do you whine?
- Do you ever think about kids who don't have toys or clothes like you do?
- Talk with your family about how you can help those kids.

### Final Thought...

*Seek God's Kingdom first.*



## Treasures in Heaven



A SCRIPTURE...

**MATTHEW 6:19-24**

### A Thought...

Everything we work for in this life will eventually disintegrate. Yet we often put our faith and trust in those things – money, job, people, etc. The only lasting rewards will be those things done that make an eternal difference. We are built for eternity. When we show kindness to another, when we go the extra mile serving others, and when we share our faith with others, we can know these actions will carry into eternity.



### An Action...

Make a list of actions in your life that have eternal value. Now make a list of actions that “moth and rust will destroy.” What does God want you to change in your daily life? Where does your treasure reside?



### A Prayer...

Lord, I give you all my “treasure”. Teach me to put my time and energy into “treasures” that will last through eternity. Help me discern your will in my life. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- What is a treasure?
- What do you treasure? Why?
- What do you think God treasures?
- Do you know you are a treasure to God?

### Final Thought...

*Store up treasures in heaven.*



## Difficult Questions



A SCRIPTURE...

MARK 12:28-34



### A Thought...

Jesus had just finished answering a difficult question and this teacher of the law took advantage of the opportunity to have his difficult question answered. "Which commandment is most important?" The simple answer Jesus gives is "Love God. Love people." When the teacher agrees, Jesus tells him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." The Kingdom of God is about loving God and letting that love flow into the lives of other people. How far are you from the Kingdom of God?



### An Action...

I have found that most people feel loved when they are truly heard. Take time today to really listen to someone else. Ask questions about what they are talking about; repeat back what you think you have heard; do not talk about yourself – listen; love them.



### A Prayer...

Patent Father, thank You for lavishing me with Your love. Loving You is my desire. Loving others is seldom easy and, because of the difficulties, I do not always desire it. Help me to love those around me in the way that they feel loved not just how I want to love them. Help me love them the same way You have loved me – unconditionally. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- If you had to tell someone how to make me/us happy, what would you tell them?
- When you are older, which do you think will make me happier: if you have a big house or if you make God important in your life?
- Do you think I feel it's important for you to have a cool car, or to love people like you love yourself?
- So, what do you think are the two things that make me the happiest?
- Do you think those would make God happy, too? How can you do those things?

### Final Thought...

*Jesus says: "Love God. Love People."*



## Doing to Others



A SCRIPTURE...  
**MATTHEW 7:7-12**



### A Thought...

Did you know that God's love is without bounds? By God's grace, we who love Him have knocked and the door has been answered. We were made in God's image and have been called to love as God loves. In the fallen world in which we live, people will knock and we will not answer. People will ask for bread and we will give them a stone. Jesus says it is not to be this way. God gives to us when we have needs. Are we not to do the same to others when they are in need? This is a symptom of love, the very thing that separates us from those who do not love. We are to treat others the way we would like to be treated. What does it say about us, if, when we knock, the door is answered, yet when our neighbor knocks, we keep them waiting? Love is given to you, so that you may share that love with all.



### An Action...

As you reflect in prayer today, think of those close to you that need to have a door answered. Remember the grace that has been given to you. Share God's love with someone who needs to experience a touch from the Father.



### A Prayer...

Father, today I ask that I may have the faith, love, and courage to share Your love, and to open the door when you send someone to knock. I pray that I may influence those around me through my actions and generosity. May I love as You do, and remember that every person is made in Your image, just as I am. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

What is the best present you were ever given? Why was it so special? Who gave it to you? Did you tell them you wanted it, or did they just know? Why did they give it to you?

### Final Thought...

*Love is given to you so that you may share that love with all.*



## Unity of the Body



A SCRIPTURE...

**EPHESIANS 4:1-16**

### A Thought...

We are called by God to live like Him. That means we are to be different than those around us. We are to treat others with kindness and gentleness. As often as we can, we must live at peace among believers, living lives that draw unbelievers to Christ. We must always keep in mind that we serve the risen Christ.



### An Action...

What character traits does Paul talk about in this passage? Make a list of them, then rate yourself in how you are doing in each area. Make an actionable and measurable plan to improve in one of your areas of weakness.



### A Prayer...

Lord, humble me that I may live in unity with other believers. Prick my conscience, Father, when I am tempted to give a sharp answer or speak crossly to a brother or sister in Christ. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- How does God want you to act toward other people?
- Does that include your brother and/or sister?
- How can we get along with other people?
- Do something extra nice for another person today.

### Final Thought...

*To each one of us, grace has been given.*



DAY 15

MONDAY | APRIL 16, 2018

## Devoted to One Another



A SCRIPTURE...  
**ROMANS 12:9-21**



### A Thought...

We are in this life together. And we need each other. God created us to live in community, to care for one another, and even to bear with each other. As we serve one another, honor one another, and give to one another, we begin to experience true community — the relationships created by God, for God, and to be lived in Christ.



### An Action...

Look around and see who needs your love and care this week. Who needs an invite to your home or your table? Make a specific plan to “practice hospitality” in the coming week.



### A Prayer...

Father, help me know what it means to be devoted to my brothers and sisters in Christ. Give me the grace I need to put their needs above my own, and show them the hospitality you have placed in me. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Who do you love very much?
- What do you do when you get in a disagreement with someone else?
- God says we are not to get back at other people. How do you feel when a friend is happy?
- How do you feel when friends are sad?

### Final Thought...

*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.*



## Pure Religion



A SCRIPTURE...

**JAMES 1:19-27**

### A Thought...

As Christians, we have certain responsibilities to the church and to other believers. We have a responsibility to follow Christ's commands and to live a righteous life. We also have a responsibility to care for the widows and orphans God places in our midst. God's plan is for all of us to offer care and support to those in need. The local church is the hope of the world.



### An Action...

Find someone in your neighborhood or your circle of acquaintances who needs assistance. Figure out how you, or your group, can help them.



### A Prayer...

Lord, help me to be aware of the needs of others. Remind me of the importance you place on caring for widows and orphans. Show me a way that I, specifically, can help. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- What do you do with your anger?
- How does God want you to act when you get angry?
- What could you do if you saw another child who was sad and needed help with something?

### Final Thought...

*Pure religion looks after widows and orphans.*



## What's It Worth To You?



A SCRIPTURE...

**MARK 14: 3-11**

### A Thought...

As we read this story, we need to feel the magnitude of the gift that this woman gave to Christ. She showed a selflessness rarely seen then, or now. We should be inspired by her, but at the same time, challenged to understand the condition of her heart that would prompt someone to make this kind of gesture. We live in a culture that is far richer than 95% of the world's population, yet many of us have difficulty sacrificially giving to others. How can we be surrendered to Christ in a way that we are willing to sacrifice what we have that is of great worth? What things stand in your way of giving sacrificially?



### An Action...

Ask God to show you something of worth that you hold too tightly, and find a way to give it away.



### A Prayer...

God, please help me not to hold so tightly to the things of this world that I miss the opportunity to bless others in measurable ways. Show me, Father, the things that might be in my way, and then tell me how to do away with them. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- What did you learn about the Village of Hope in church?
- Do they have many things in the village?
- Do they have a lot of new things like we have in our country?
- If you could give them a gift of something you had, what would it be?
- Would it be your newest, best or favorite thing?
- What would God want you to give?

### Final Thought...

*Ask God to show you something of worth that you hold too tightly.*



DAY 18

THURSDAY | APRIL 19, 2018

## Count the Cost



A SCRIPTURE...

**MARK 10:17-31**



### A Thought...

The cost of discipleship is great. Following Christ will cost you everything. Wealth, possessions, preferences, and desires must all be surrendered to God for Kingdom purposes. Many are not willing to make that sacrifice. But those who are willing will receive reward, sometimes a hundred times more than they give up.



### An Action...

What are you holding tightly to, refusing to surrender to God? What keeps you from giving God your all? Share that information with someone else and have them pray with you.



### A Prayer...

Father, help me give it all to you...my money, my family, my career, my time, and anything else you require of me. Teach me to live open-handed, knowing you are the Owner and Creator of all things. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Do you always like to be first in life?
- Why or why not?
- How does it feel to be last?
- God wants us to let other people go first. When can you let someone else go first?

### Final Thought...

*Many who are first will be last,  
and the last first.*



## Your Treasures



A SCRIPTURE...  
**LUKE 12:13-21**



### A Thought...

How does it work? Do we forsake all things of this world for Jesus, or pursue them? Neither. We steward what we are given. In this parable, the rich man made his wealth his focus. When we understand that God owns it all, and that we are His stewards, we can live holding loosely the things of this world.



### An Action...

We are more willing to share, to invest wisely, and most of all to consult God in all our decisions, when we focus on God. Have you asked God what He would like for you to do with your excess (the stuff sitting in the garage, back of the closet, other storage areas)? Have you asked God how to steward what He has given you?



### A Prayer...

Heavenly Father, help me to see today the ways You would have me use all the blessings You have given me for Your kingdom. Set me free from greed, pride, and selfishness that I may be Your good and faithful servant. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- What's your favorite candy?
- If you won 500 pieces of that candy, what would you do with them?
- Would you eat them all at once?
- If you ate one a day, would they still be good in a year?
- Would you share?
- What does God want us to do if we have more than we need?
- What's something you already have that you could share with others?

### Final Thought...

*We are more willing to share, to invest wisely, and most of all to consult God in all our decisions, when we focus on God.*



DAY 20

SATURDAY | APRIL 21, 2018

## Stand Firm



A SCRIPTURE...

**PHILIPPIANS 3:12-4:1**



### A Thought...

Spiritual maturity doesn't happen overnight. We learn to become more like Christ through many years of practice, surrendering our hearts and lives to Him. We must continually seek the heart of the Father, pressing through the trials and tribulations of life. Then we must stand firm on what we know and what He has taught us.



### An Action...

Where do you need to surrender more to Christ? Where do you need to stand firm in what God has taught you? Continue to pray for God to reveal how He wants you to be involved in the Go Forward campaign.



### A Prayer...

Lord, I choose to give my all to you! Take what I have and who I am, and use it, and me, to grow God's Kingdom. Place a desire in my heart to surrender everything to you. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Are you ever tempted to go along with your friends when they do something wrong?
- How can you respond knowing the way God wants us to act?
- Remember how much God loves you. Can you promise to try to live to please him?

### Final Thought...

*Press on toward the prize of heaven.*



DAY 21

SUNDAY | APRIL 22, 2018

## Keep on Praying



A SCRIPTURE...

**EPHESIANS 6:10-18**



### A Thought...

The battle in the heavenly realm rages for the souls of men. We are called to do battle, keeping ourselves protected from the pollution of the world, while interceding for others. It is important how we live, act, and pray. We must remember we are battling a very real enemy who is out to destroy us. Remember, the battle belongs to God.



### An Action...

Where are there chinks in your armor? How can you more adequately protect yourself from the fiery darts the enemy zings at you?



### A Prayer...

Father, teach me to be a man/woman of prayer. Remind me who the real enemy is when I am tempted to lash out at another person. Thank you, Lord, for giving me ways to protect myself. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- God is strong. He wants you to be strong when you are tempted to do something wrong. Do you pray for other people or just for yourself?
- Who can we pray for right now?
- Let's pray!

### Final Thought...

*Be strong in the Lord and His mighty power.*



## Abounding Love



A SCRIPTURE...

**PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11**

### A Thought...

Our lives should be filled with words and actions that bring glory and honor to God. The more we know about Christ, the more we come to know Him in a very intimate way. We are partners with one another in ministry as we seek to serve Christ. We are to love Christ, and one another, with an abounding love.



### An Action...

What can you do to further your knowledge and depth of insight into the things of God? How will increased knowledge of the things of Christ help you abound in love for one another?



### A Prayer...

Father, teach me more about You so I can live in such a way that brings You glory. Show me how I can play a role in helping my church reach more people and bring glory and honor to You. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Who are you glad God put in your life?
- Do you thank God for them and do you pray for them?
- Would people know by your actions that you love Jesus?
- How can you do better at showing you are a Christian?

### Final Thought...

*Be filled with the fruit of righteousness.*



DAY 23

TUESDAY | APRIL 24, 2018

## Not So With You



A SCRIPTURE...

**MARK 10:35-45**



### A Thought...

Often, our first reaction in certain situations is to want to be first: first in line, first to get the latest tech gadget, first to know the most current news and information. But God's Kingdom turns those notions upside down. Jesus reminded us we are to be "slaves of all"



### An Action...

Where might you be pushing to be first...maybe your marriage, your work, even church? How can you step back in those settings and learn to be great by serving?



### A Prayer...

Father, I confess that I often push to the front to avoid a wait. Give me the patience necessary to allow others to be first. Please help me learn to serve well. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Do you ever get jealous when good things happen to other people?
- Why do you get jealous?
- God wants you to be a servant to other people. Who and how could you serve today?

### Final Thought...

*Not so with you.*





DAY 24

WEDNESDAY | APRIL 25, 2018

## Go, Therefore!



A SCRIPTURE...

**MATTHEW 28:18-20**



### A Thought...

We do ministry in the authority of Christ. That fact should thrill and humble us. God has surrounded us with people who need to know His love and grace...people who are desperate to feel the beauty of His love and care. We must be willing to go where they are and share the joy of our faith.



### An Action...

How comfortable are you in sharing your faith? If you are comfortable, share your faith this week with someone who does not know Christ. If you are not comfortable sharing your faith, contact our Connections office to find out about our next training.



### A Prayer...

Lord, give me boldness to share my faith with others. Help me love You so much that Your love overflows from my heart. Help me to be obedient to Your commands so I can be a good example to those around me. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Jesus tells us to obey His commands, how do you learn about His commands?
- Who teaches you about His commands?
- With your family, read all of the book of James and write down the commands you find.

### Final Thought...

*Make disciples of all nations.*



# He Passed



A SCRIPTURE...

**HEBREWS 11:17-19**

## A Thought...

All persons who choose to live by faith will have that faith tested. Abraham passed the test because:

1. He believed that God is faithful to keep every promise He makes.
2. He showed his faith by obeying God—even when it didn't make sense.
3. He knew God.

Abraham's knowledge of God didn't happen overnight. Faith and obedience began many years before when God told him to move. However, Abraham began to understand God could bring life from death when an old man and a post-menopausal woman conceived Isaac.



## An Action...

1. What part of your life, finances, family, work, or relationship with God appears to be dead?
2. What command does God want you to obey so He can give "new life" to that area?
3. What attribute of God will you remember as you obey God by faith?



## A Prayer...

God, You are the Creator, Ruler and Master of the entire universe, yet You care about me. I really want to obey You in every area of my life but it's hard. Will You please help me, step by step, to know You, trust You, and obey You better? Amen.



## Mobile Moments...

- When you go to school each morning, are you ever worried I won't be here when you get home or be there to pick you up? Why or why not?
- Did I tell you I would be there?
- Do you have faith in me?
- What is faith?
- Does God tell us He will always be with us?
- Do you ever doubt He is there?

## Final Thought...

*All persons who choose to live by faith will have that faith tested.*



DAY 26

FRIDAY | APRIL 27, 2018

## To Act in Firm Reliance



A SCRIPTURE...

**PROVERBS 3:1-12**



### A Thought...

Why is it that a baby trusts so completely without even trying? Yet, we adults have to work so hard at trusting. Other-reliance gives way to self-reliance as we strive to become independent and self-sufficient. We sometimes forget independence and self-sufficiency is worthless if we can't use it as an offering to God.



### An Action...

Take time today to remember a time when: you were well coached; you loved with abandon; you tried something new with only a friend to guide you; you turned from something you knew was wrong; you gave out of love; and a time when you accepted a friend's correction. How can you use those experiences to build your trust in Jesus? How can you allow Him to be your coach, your beloved, your friend, and your reason for the direction you choose?



### A Prayer...

Lord, help me to trust in You. Help me to see the ways You have already loved me that I may be more mindful of Your care each day. Help me to know that I can turn to You, hear from You, and act in firm reliance on You. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Do you like cleaning your room?
- Why do you think I make you do it?
- Do you think I do it to be mean?
- Does God give us responsibilities?
- What responsibilities do you think I have?
- What do you think is the best, and hardest, responsibility God gave me?

### Final Thought...

*Lord, help me to trust in You. Help me to see the ways You have already loved me that I may be more mindful of Your care each day.*



## Holy Celebration



A SCRIPTURE...

**HEBREWS 12:28**

### A Thought...

In our broken world, it is so comforting to know that God's kingdom is unshakable. As Christ followers, we will be with Him in His kingdom for eternity. Worshiping Him in prayer is music to His ears. Let us humbly bow down as we pray to our Holy Father in celebration of what He does for us. Be thankful that God answers our prayers — prayers for His provision for our daily needs, all the blessings we receive, and our brothers and sisters in Christ. God is an awesome God and He loves us. Wow!



### An Action...

Take a few moments to reflect on all the blessings you receive, all the prayers He has answered, and all the love He gives. Write down those reflections as a tribute of gratitude for all God's blessings to you.



### A Prayer...

Father God, thank You so much for all You do for us. You watch over us each day without seeing our sins. You provide us with everything we need and shower us with blessings. You are truly an awesome God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords; the One that has built an unshakeable Kingdom that someday will be our home. Amen.



### Mobile Moments...

- Looking out the window, can you find one thing you think is beautiful?
- What do the clouds look like today?
- Have you ever looked at something in nature and thought "That is awesome!"?
- What was it? Does it ever make you thankful that God put you here to see it?
- What do you think is one of God's most amazing creations?
- How can we be more thankful to God when we see these things?

### Final Thought...

*Father God, thank You so much  
for all You do for us.*













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