

WEEK 4

DAY 1: THE GOOD NEWS

Today's Reading: John 3:1-30, Romans 3:10-23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:1-11, Romans 10:9-13, Romans 5:1, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:38-39

If you grew up attending church, you no doubt heard a sermon about the Gospel. More than likely, you have attended discipleship classes that taught about the Gospel and how you can share it with others. If you didn't grow up in church, you might be curious: What in the world is the Gospel?

I remember sitting in church as a young girl, hearing our pastor talk about the Gospel and wondering what exactly that meant. The Gospel, simply put, means "the Good News." But, not just any good news, the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our God in heaven loves us so much that He sent His only Son to this earth to live as a human. Jesus walked the earth and experienced all the trials and temptations we, as humans, face - yet He never sinned. He lived a perfect and blameless life so that He could become the perfect sacrifice for all of humanity. It all boils down to a straightforward statement: Jesus came to die so that you and I could live.

Contrary to the belief of some, the Gospel isn't a decision passed down from your family or made by your spouse. Your mother cannot pray it for you, and the fact that your grandfather was a deacon or an elder doesn't gain you access either. Accepting the truth of the Gospel is a decision you must make and act upon yourself.

If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, I encourage you to stop and pray right now. Ask Jesus to forgive your sins and redeem you as His son or daughter. He wants to come in and heal your brokenness, forgive your sinfulness, and restore your relationship with Him. Will you submit yourself to Him today?

PRAYER:

Jesus, I want a relationship with you. I repent of my sin and humbly surrender my life to you.

WEEK 4

DAY 2: TRANSFORMATION

Today's Reading: Romans 12, 2 Corinthians 3: 12-18, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Ephesians 4:17-32

In today's culture, people spend much time, money and energy on transformation. We invest in personal trainers, stylists, supplements and sometimes even surgery to get the results for which we are looking. Often, however, we spend far less time, money and energy transforming our mind and heart. While humans look at the outward appearance, God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). As believers, we must evaluate how we are investing our resources and energy into the things that God values.

How do we transform our heart? It's a valid question, and I'm encouraged to say you are on the right path.

As we spend time in God's Word, we will grow to know Him more. The more we know Him, the more we can pattern our lives and actions after Him. Now, this doesn't mean you won't sin again. But it does mean that you will become much more aware of your sin and feel conviction to eliminate it from your life. Your desires will become more righteous as you seek to live a life honoring to God.

The fantastic part is that once you surrender your life to Christ, He will help you work on your heart.

He will reveal areas in which you need to improve and things on which you can focus. Selfish goals will be replaced by ones that seek to honor and please God. By growing in our knowledge of God, through prayer and studying Scripture, we can become the men and women God created us to be. Over time, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we'll reflect Him in our daily decisions and actions.

PRAYER:

God, thank You for loving me enough to mold me into the person You designed me to be.

WEEK 4

DAY 3: FAITH

Today's Reading: Romans 10:5-17, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Hebrews 11:1-3, 1 Peter 1:6-9, Ephesians 2:1-10

If you've ever played on a team sport, I'm sure you've heard the phrase, "Have faith, we can do it"! But what does it mean to have faith? The Oxford Dictionary defines faith as "complete trust or confidence in someone or something." As humans, we put our faith in many things: teammates, jobs, family, friends, and even the chair in which we sit.

Faith, however, is inadequate if it's only held in belief, and not practice. Faith requires action. We can have faith that a chair will hold us up, but if we never sit down, we will never know. When we believe enough to exercise faith and sit in the chair, we see that it is strong enough to hold us.

This is how our faith in Jesus should look. We must have faith that shows up in our words, actions and deeds. We demonstrate our faith in Christ by following His commandments and living a life honoring God. Living out our faith in Jesus allows others to be drawn to the source of our strength. It gives us opportunities to speak of God's goodness and mercy. And it allows God to work in and through us to build a beautiful testimony of His faithfulness to us. When we can recognize God's faithfulness to us, it strengthens our faith in Him also.

PRAYER:

God, strengthen my faith in You. Teach me to rely on the strength that You have given me.

WEEK 4

DAY 4: ETERNAL LIFE

Today's Reading: John 10:22-29, 1 John
5:6-11, John 17, Galatians 6:6-10

In this world, there is one sure destiny to which all living things are bound: death. Plants, animals and people all have a life span that will one day come to an end. Our physical bodies were not meant to last forever; we are finite beings.

As humans, we are distinct; set apart and made in the image of God. As such, we were given a soul that transcends our earthly existence. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we gain the right to spend eternity in heaven with God. We see throughout Scripture that God has given us eternal life through His Son. Living eternally in heaven means that we will forever be in the presence of God. That is heaven, being present with the Father.

Once we have accepted the Gospel message, our eternal destination is secured, but we need not wait for heaven in order to walk in relationship with God, the Father. Upon our conversion, God sends us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. This world is fallen because of sin, but God is with us and promises to never leave us or forsake us. He wants us to live life to the fullest, and love and honor Him with our actions.

As we learn and grow in our walk with the Lord, we can look forward to what is to come while cherishing what He has given us here.

God has surrounded us with His beautiful creation. He has given us relationships and community. Please don't rush through life without slowing down to cherish the gifts He has given you.

PRAYER:

God, help me cherish the beautiful things You have given me as I live in light of eternity with You!

WEEK 4

DAY 5: SHARING WITH OTHERS

Today's Reading: Isaiah 52:6-8, Matthew 28: 16-20, Psalm 96, Romans 1:16-17

When something significant happens to us, we love to share our news. News of a marriage proposal, a new baby, a job promotion, or even a big win for our favorite team is news worth sharing. We want to share our lives with those around us, especially the news we find fantastic.

I remember when I found out my daughter was pregnant. Early on, she and her husband were not announcing it to anyone, choosing to wait until the pregnancy was further along. Those several weeks were hard for me; unable to share this good news. I wanted to blurt out, "I'm going to be a granny" at every opportunity because I was so excited. However, it was only my news to share once I had been given the green light by the ones whose message it was. I had to wait for the right time to share the news with those close to me.

Jesus Christ came to earth and lived a sinless life, died on the Cross, and rose again so that you and I might have eternal life through Him. This is the biggest and best news ever, and it is our news to share! When I think about the weight of eternal glory delivered by the Gospel, I want to share it with everyone I encounter. I would never want to hold this news to myself. Let's be people who shout from the mountaintops and to the valleys below that Jesus Christ is Lord!

PRAYER:

God, give me boldness and opportunity to share the Gospel message with others. Help me speak confidently of Your saving power.