



FOLLOW



Living WITH Jesus

A 43-day devotional journey, exploring and growing in the values of being a follower of Jesus, who lives on mission WITH Jesus.

WELCOME TO FOLLOW

Sermon Recommendation Guide

Thank you for participating in this 43 day devotional journey together. We are excited to help your community experience God daily, get to know Him in new and deeper ways, and join Him in the good He is doing.

The overall purpose of this devotional journey is to help disciples of Jesus start to cultivate a lifestyle of discovering the potential God sees in people, helping develop them spiritually and personally, and deploying them into their area(s) of impact for God's Kingdom (as disciples who can do the same). To help that focus, there is 1 lifestyle value each week that the daily devotional thoughts are built around – the Value in Focus.

Below you will find basic outlines of scriptures that support that weekly value in focus, and set the tone for the next 7 days of devotions. These outlines are intended to give you the key points, and allow you to be guided by Holy Spirit for how you would craft the message in your style. The daily topics/scriptures are also listed below each outline, for your convenience. Please try to avoid using any additional scriptures that are used during the week – the guide has been structured to help people hear God through the scriptures selected with minimal direction/interpretation.

Keep in mind on any given Sunday, you will be speaking to three groups: 1) not yet disciplined, 2) disciplined but not living it/don't know how, and 3) non-believers who are curious. Be sensitive and intentional toward those perspectives as you craft the sermons. This devotional journey is designed to be accessible to all three, with an emphasis toward believers.

We pray this journey helps promote conversation around what it means to be a follower of Jesus (a disciple), how to live as and help others become disciples, and how to plant them as seeds of the Kingdom. Our hope is to restore to our culture the heart of developing people - the way Jesus did - and to see generations raised up that establish His presence and Kingdom everywhere they go.

Lifestyle Values of Discipleship

The words “Discover, Develop, and Deploy” are just words that help us remember how to BE and MAKE disciples. The “I will...” values under each word are what we see Jesus and the early Church teaching others, as they followed Jesus in the Great Commission (Matthew 28) – to be and go make disciples.

Discover: I will see and hear the potential God sees

1. I will listen to the voice of God
2. I will adjust to what He reveals.

Develop:

3. I will model Jesus through life-on-life relationships
4. I will prepare people to follow, be changed by, and love like Jesus.

Deploy:

5. I will release disciple-makers to God's calling in EVERY domain of culture.
 6. I will invest in their Kingdom impact according to God's design.
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Sermon Outlines:

Sermon Week 1 – Poverbs 9:10; Mark 4:21-25

Key Thought: All wisdom and understanding comes from knowing God. We need to hear God in His Word and through His Holy Spirit, see how that applies to life, and seek to live it. Jesus often taught by word pictures/parables so that people could see a practical example of what He was teaching. The more we seek to hear God and understand Him, the more we will discover the potential He see in us and in those around us.

Key Points from the scripture:

1. All wisdom and understanding comes from knowing God. When we have the proper understanding of who God is and who we are, we have a reverent fear, and AWE that causes us to keep things in proper perspective. Wisdom and understanding flourish in us, when we allow God to clarify both subjective and objective reality, so that we are not stuck in our opinions and experiences, but rather constantly are renewed by what HE sees and what HE is doing in every situation.
2. God's Word is meant to change us when we take it in, in the same way that a lamp is brought in to a dark house to provide light. We hide His word in our heart, so that it becomes visible in our life.
3. "Consider" – (blepete/blepo [opaow]) means literally "LOOK AT what you hear" and carries with it the idea of taking responsibility to make something happen as a result. If we really SEE something and understand it, we will respond. Letting God use our imagination to create pictures, to "look at" what we hear, helps us grasp what He is saying in tangible ways. We are supposed to SEE how God's Word applies to every situation, and take responsibility to live it out.
4. If we are "ALL IN" then we will be blessed like we are "ALL IN." If not, then whatever we do "get" and live out, we will be blessed and HE will help us understand and live more. If we refuse, or just don't "get it" then even what we think we have, will be taken from us. God leaves room for us to grow deeper WITH Him, and also allows us to choose to go without Him - the consequence of losing everything is our choice if we choose not to "LOOK AT what we HEAR" from God.

Devotional topics/scriptures for Week 1:

- Stop – Matt 6:5-18
- Be Still – Acts 9:1-9
- Be Available – Acts 9:10-19
- Surrender – Rom 8:6-17
- Tune In – Luke 10:38-42
- Clarify – John 16:13-15
- Let it sink in - Matt 13:1-23

Sermon Week 2 – Matthew 7:24-27

Key Thought: Jesus gives us a word picture to help us understand the importance of "putting into practice" what we hear from God. "Building a house on the sand" is a word picture for when we do NOT live by God's Word – its like building our house in the middle of a Wadi. But when we seek to live daily by God's Word, its like "building our house on the rock," above the Wadi and safe during seasons of flooding.

Key Points from the scripture:

1. The Greek word used for "puts into practice" or "acts" on them in vs 24 is "poiei" from the root "poema." This is the same root word from Ephesians 2:10 translated "workmanship," and from Romans 2:13 translated as "obey." It is like our English word "poetry." In this context it means to be the performer of the poem or the song. Jesus is saying we should be living His teaching from the core of our design –

not an add on or a show – but a true authentic living of it like a musician playing a song from their soul, or an athlete competing with the best of their skills/training.

2. In the desert of Israel, there are narrow valleys, called “Wadis” that have flash floods. When it rains hard in the north, the desert may be clear and sunny, yet massive flood waters will suddenly come down through those valleys. All that water grinds away at the rocks, and leaves a fine silica sand in the low areas of the valley.
3. As God reveals more of Himself, His plans, and the potential He sees in us (AND those around us), we need to adjust our priorities and habits to make Him the foundation of our life. We need to live fully into the potential He has designed in us, aligned with His teaching. And help others discover and do the same.

Devotional topics/scriptures for Week 2:

- Sacrifice – Luke 12:16-21
- Re-align – Ephes 2:9-10
- Obey – Romans 2:1-13
- Move – James 1:19-25
- Serve – I Peter 1:3-12
- Focus – Acts 4:7-31
- Stay Available – Matt 15:21-28

Sermon Week 3 – 1 Corinthians 2

Key Thought: Jesus is fully seen through God’s Word, but also with God’s power through Holy Spirit. We need Holy Spirit to truly model Jesus. Followers of Jesus make the things of God visible and obvious, but people who are tuned into the world cannot see them. We help people see spiritual realities through Spirit-taught words, so by the grace of God they can grasp them. It is God’s power that makes this possible, and validates what is True. If we are mature disciples, we have the mind of Jesus through the Holy Spirit and are able to model him in all of our relationships.

Key Points:

1. Jesus is fully seen through God’s Word, but also with God’s Power through the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to truly model Jesus. The Spirit knows the deep things of God, and helps us understand the fullness of what God has given to us.
2. The mature in Jesus make the things of God visible and obvious. People who are tuned into the world cannot see the things of God on their own. We help people see spiritual realities through the power and understanding of the Spirit, so by the grace of God they can grasp them. It is not persuasion, but God’s power that validates the Truth and makes all things possible.
3. Mature disciples have the mind of Jesus through the Holy Spirit and are able to model him in all of our relationships. By modeling Jesus in close relationships we help people see the Him through us, and in contrast to our own natural desires and nature. We also model Jesus in brief encounters with people we do not know, by prayerfully discerning whether God wants us to share a word of hope, encouragement, or truth with them. Whether close relationships, or brief encounters, we are to model Jesus relationally and authentically.

Devotional topics/scriptures for Week 3:

- Gospel – Mark 1:14-17 & 8:34
- Love – I Cor 13

- Up Close/Personal – Phil 3:10-21
- Humility – Ephes 4:1-16; I Peter 5:1-11
- Teachability – Rom 12
- Power – Acts 1:8; 2:1-47; 19:11-20
- Redeem/Restore – Galatians 6:1-10

Sermon Week 4 – 1 Corinthians 4

Key Thought: People Development spiritually and personally is the work of a follower of Jesus – and its called “discipleship.” Helping people mature in who they are, and how to live according to the Gospel is our work of “watering, planting, tending, etc” and its JESUS who brings the growth/change/transformation. Human leaders and their legacies are not the focus. Anything built with human or worldly motives in mind will not last and will not survive being tested by God. When we model Jesus as our only reward desired, we make Him the focal point and people can see him more clearly. We point people to Jesus and make ourselves available to develop them, and He brings the transformation and eternal rewards in their lives. We water, tend, seed, God provides the growth.

Key Points:

1. We prepare people to follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and love like Jesus. People Development, spiritually and personally is the work of Discipleship. Helping people mature in who they are, and how to live according to the Gospel is our work of “watering, planting, tending, etc” and its JESUS who brings the growth/change/transformation.
2. Human leaders and their legacies are not the focus of the mature in Jesus. Anything built with human or worldly motives in mind will not last and will not stand being tested by God. Anything built with Jesus as the only reward desired, will bring eternal results in the lives of those we walk with and develop. Whenever we make a name for ourselves, call something “my/mine,” or allow others to expect us to make God things happen for them, then we are off mission and apart from Christ. All believers are disciples, and all people have responsibility for their own relationship with Jesus. We should not be concerned with Legacy at all, but rather the planting, watering, and tending the seed of the Kingdom.
3. If we take our eyes off of human celebrities in the faith, and understand the nature of our relationship with Jesus, we become aware of how much is already accessible and available to us through Jesus. His power and His name is all that matters. Jesus has given us access to every ability and power that is His, for the sake of making disciples and planting the seeds of the Kingdom.

Devotional topics/scriptures for Week 4:

- Exchanged Life – Rom 6:1-14
- Tend/contend – Col 1:9-29
- Pace – James 1:1-18; Heb 12:1-13; Rev 2:2-4
- Refocus continually – 2 Tim 2:2; 3:1-17
- Be safe – I Peter 5:8-11
- Encourage – 2 Cor 3:16-18; 2 Thes 2:13-17
- Depend on Him - John 14:6; John 15:1-11; Phil 4:12-13

Sermon Week 5 – Acts 16:6-40

Key Thought: Disciples serve EVERYWHERE God has called them. Lydia, the other women, the jailor and others who listened to Paul and Silas, continued in their professions AFTER coming to faith in Jesus. Being a

disciple doesn't mean going into "professional" church ministry – in fact all disciples should be in the world and not of it. It has been a mistake to emphasize "professional pastoral" ministry for followers of Jesus. The Church has slipped into institutional training programs to maintain the organizational roles and methods, and in many ways has pulled out of the world. This is the opposite of what Paul, Silas, and the other Apostles did.

Lydia continued to run her business and provide for the local body of believers, as well as the mission of the Kingdom. The Jailor continued as a jailor as far as we know. Paul and Silas did not hold any assumptions about where people should serve Jesus, they developed them and then deployed them where GOD prepared them to go. Sometimes that was a new direction, but most of the time it was right where they already were. We need to release our expectations of what ministry, church, and discipleship look like and see how God deploys HIS Church everywhere people are.

Key Points:

1. Lydia, the other women that listened, the jailor and others who listened to Paul and Silas, continued in their professions after coming to faith in Jesus. Being a disciple doesn't mean going into "professional" institutional ministry – disciples should be IN the world and not OF it. This means we should be preparing people to be disciples in their homes, their places of work, their schools, public settings, social gatherings, etc. Developing someone as a disciple requires MORE than just teaching and training them in weekend worship and small group activities – they need equipped to live Jesus everywhere they are.
2. It has been a mistake to emphasize "professional pastoral" ministry for followers of Jesus. The Church slipped into institutional training programs to maintain the organizational roles and methods, and has in many ways surrendered people care and development to the world. Leading with education and institutional doctrines, can also make the Church seem calloused and judgmental. The world is sensitive to the broken people, but solutions of the world are often validation and permission, instead of redemption and healing. Even doing good, in God's power, can bring backlash from the world. Paul and Silas faced a beating and jail for doing good that was perceived to have done harm to the livelihood of the business people.
3. The Church should be on the front lines of engaging the culture with love and compassion, and caring for people beyond what the world does. Even with a high risk of backlash, it is better for the Church to be deployed everywhere (otherwise how would the jailor have come to faith in Jesus?). God accomplishes His purpose through the Church when we are willing to be anywhere – even imprisoned and beaten – and surrender our desire for survival and safety to our trust in God's purposes and plans.
4. Lydia continued to run her business and provide for the local body of believers, as well as the mission of the Kingdom. The Jailor continued as a jailor as far as we know. And many others continued in their trade or profession, as they carried out their Kingdom purposes. Paul and Silas did not hold any assumptions about where people should serve Jesus, they developed them and then deployed them where GOD PREPARED. Sometimes that was a new direction, but most of the time it was right where they already were. We need to RELEASE our expectations of what ministry, church, and discipleship look like and see how God deploys HIS Church everywhere people are.

Devotional topics/scriptures for Week 5:

- All Believers – I Pet 2:4-12
- By Design – Ephs 2:10; I Cor 12:1-31
- Gospel Saturation – Matt 28:18-20
- GO – Luke 9:1-20
- Beyond the Camp – John 4:1-42; Luke 8:26-39; Acts 9:15
- Embrace Kingdom – Gal 2:1-10
- Trust the Spirit – Gal 3:1-14

Sermon Week 6 – 2 Corinthians 9

Key Thought: Maturity as a disciple brings generosity toward every occasion, as well as Thanksgiving to God. The Corinthians who were mature were eager to help, and their example excited others to be generous. But they still needed help and encouragement to prepare to give cheerfully. Sowing generously into those who are being deployed as disciples takes preparation and intentionality. It also requires trust in God's power to bring the results He intends.

We are expected to invest in others, with a "no strings attached" mindset. That investment is more than just finances. It may involve empowering, interceding, coaching, encouraging, and more. It may also be outside our comfort zone, take risks, or be very sacrificial. When we are stretched by generosity, we are tempted to take control.

We need to remember, putting conditions on giving or the use of the gift, expresses a lack of trust in God and His work through those we are deploying. We may also miss the bigger picture of how that generosity encourages the rest of the Body, brings thanks and praise to God, and opens the eyes of those who do not yet believe.

Key Points:

1. The Corinthians who were mature were eager to help, and their example excited others to be generous as they matured. They needed help and encouragement to prepare to be generous so they could give cheerfully. Sowing generously into those who are being deployed as disciples takes preparation and intentionality. It also takes a trust that God has provided what we have, and will provide all that we need – that He really owns it all. When that is settled, then our giving becomes an act of worship and joining God in what He is doing, rather than a duty or obligation.
2. We are expected to invest in others, with a "no strings attached" mindset. That investment is more than just finances. Verse 11 even says we will, "...be enriched in every way, so that we can be generous on every occasion..." Generosity may include all kinds of ways of investing in others.
3. Generosity invests in the development and deployment toward the Kingdom impact you are designed for, and in the impact of others you are called to help deploy. When we model God's generosity, especially in regard to planting seeds of the Kingdom, greater unity and support in the Body of Christ happens, greater generosity and willingness to trust God grows in the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God grows, and God gets the glory and honor. Verse 14 says, "...in prayer they will yearn for you..." or "...their hearts will go out to you..." The Greek word there is "epipothounton" meaning "to long for, to deeply desire" and in this context it may be understood that the deep desire is for God to bless the Corinthians and fill up any area of need in them – because of their willingness to be so generous to meet the needs of others. We don't give to get, but generosity brings greater generosity and boldness for disciples to be on mission WITH Jesus.

Devotional topics/scriptures for Week 5:

- Empower – Acts 2:1-33; Acts 19:1-22
- Stand in the Gap – Philemon
- Coach – Luke 10:1-20
- Troubleshoot – Titus 2 & 3
- Catalyze – 2 Tim 2:1-13
- Resist Division – Gal 2:11-21; 1 Cor 3; 2 Tim 2:14-26
- All In – Romans 12

- Bringing It All Together - Phil 2:1 through 4:13