



# Devotional Booklet

originally presented for  
*Extraordinary* sermon series  
at Cicero Christian Church  
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*2 Corinthians 5:7 ~ We live by faith, not by sight!*

This eight week devotional booklet is part of the “Extraordinary” sermon series at Cicero Christian Church. **Each week contains 5 devotions**, intended to be read Monday through Friday, however; you may read them when it works for you.

Week 1.....	Extraordinary Faith
Week 2.....	Extraordinary Peace
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# Extraordinary Faith

## Week 1

Day 1

Chad Allen

### **Y**ou gotta have faith

Everyone has someone in their life that they want to please. Maybe it is a parent, a spouse, or a friend. . . on and on the list of options goes and sometimes we find that our list continues to grow with people that we are trying to please. Bill Cosby once said, "I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody." This is true in all areas of life and especially true in our spiritual life.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." God is not primarily concerned with how many friends we have or how much those around us like us; God is concerned with whether or not we are living a life of faith. As we begin our journey towards extraordinary together, let's never forget that it all begins and ends with faith. Without faith we will never be extraordinary.

### **My daily time with God**

**Point to Ponder:** We can only be extraordinary if we have faith.

**Verse of the Day:** And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. ~ Hebrews 11:6

**Question to Consider:** In what ways does my life show extraordinary faith?

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Day 2

Ben Radant

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## Faith in God's words

There was a man in scripture that had such extraordinary faith that Jesus took special notice of him. A Centurion who was a Roman and not a Jew sought Jesus to have Him heal a servant of his. The Centurion tells Jesus, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed." To this Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." Then He said, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour."

It's hard to believe that among God's chosen people, the people of Israel, that there was not one person who had this kind of faith. Sometimes we forget that this is the same God that with a few words created our world and the universe. Jesus, who was with God when the universe was formed, used his words here to heal. God's words are powerful, but for some reason we lack the faith to trust them. Decide today to have an extraordinary faith in God's words like the Centurion and who knows what God will be able to do?

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** God's powerful words deserve extraordinary faith.

**Verse of the Day:** Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour. ~ *Matthew 8:13*

**Question to Consider:** What is holding me back from having extraordinary faith in God's word?

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Day 3

Doug Wiggers

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## Complete faith

As I ponder the life of Christ, I am continually amazed at his faith. When we hear the word “faith”, we reasonably begin thinking about our faith in God. Today, let’s stop and ponder the faith that Christ showed towards the purpose His Father had for Him.

The hymn “My Savior’s Love” begins with these beautiful words:

*“I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene. . .”*

Consider these three scenarios: 1) When I fly on an airplane, I have faith that the pilot knows what he is doing. 2) When I bring my car to the mechanic, I have faith that he will keep my car running. 3) When Christ was hanging on the cross, He had faith that His death would fulfill the purpose His Father had for Him.

Wow. Doesn’t quite compare, does it?

*“How marvelous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be:  
How marvelous! How wonderful is my Savior’s love for me!”*

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Christ had complete faith. So should we.

**Verse of the Day:** I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

~ Galatians 2:20

**Question to Consider:** Think of a time when you have doubted. (It’s not hard, we all have!). How can Christ’s example bring us to complete faith?

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Day 4

Steven Hancock

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## Listen to your emotions

Everyone lives by faith all day long. Since we neither know nor control our future, every one of the hundreds of decisions we make each day we make on the basis of faith. Faith by which we daily operate ultimately rests either in God or ourselves. Our emotions tell us in whom our trust really rests. If we have anxiety, worry, fear or anger, we know we trust ourselves. But peace, joy, contentment—especially in difficult circumstances—come from trusting God.

What the world considers to be “extraordinary” faith is meant to be ordinary for the Christian. This ordinary faith begins with distrust. To trust God properly we must have a proper distrust of our own wisdom. We no longer, “lean on our own understanding.” Only when we distrust our own wisdom are we free to trust God. We know we are really trusting God when we joyfully desire to obey God in every decision and every area of life, “in all our ways.” Anything less than a joyful desire to obey is still self-trust.

A good way to practice our trust in God is to say to God at the top of every day, “I trust You to do what is best for me because You are all-knowing (You always get it right), You are all-powerful (You always deliver) and You are all-loving (You always want my best). I am Yours to obey. Show me Your agenda and will for this day. Thank you for directing my path today.”

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Your emotions reveal who you really trust.

**Verse of the Day:** Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. ~ *Proverbs 3:5-6*

**Questions to Consider:** What are my emotions telling me about who I really trust? How does my obedience reveal I am trusting the Lord with all my heart?

### Standing firm in your faith

Isaiah 7:9b states, “If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”

83% of American adults claim to be Christians but according to the latest George Barna Study<sup>1</sup> 61% of the unchurched also call themselves Christians. I am greatly concerned for the future of Christianity and the future of our country. We live in a time where we see prophecy coming to fulfillment and a great decline in the morality of mankind around us. Our country is losing economic and moral stability and as a nation we are turning farther away from God with every passing year. In the midst of all this chaos, you add to the mix that mankind including many that call themselves Christians no longer fear or respect God.

My dear friends, if our country has any hope of restoration then it will come from Christians who choose to stand firm in their faith and proclaim the truth to all mankind. Pay attention to Isaiah 7:9b and you will observe that standing firm in our faith is needed for our country, our communities, our churches, our families, and our lives for without our faith in Christ then we will ultimately fall. Now is the time to stand in your faith!

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** There is only One firm foundation = Standing firm in your faith in Jesus Christ

**Verse of the Day:** If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. ~ *Isaiah 7:9b*

**Question to Consider:** What are the core beliefs of your faith that you will stand for no matter what the cost?

1 Resource: [www.Barna.org](http://www.Barna.org). “Millions of Unchurched Adults are Christians Hurt by Churches But Can Be Healed of the Pain.” April 26, 2010.

# Extraordinary Peace

## Week 2

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Day 1

Chad Allen

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### Peace out of chaos

Many have heard the famous prayer of Saint Francis which says,

*“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light  
Where there is sadness, joy...”*

While many are familiar with this prayer, few live by it. One of the names given to the Messiah in Isaiah nine is “Prince of Peace.” Jesus promises to give us peace (John 14:27). Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of God. While sometimes God calms the storms around us, He is more concerned about the storm within us. The world is watching and wanting to see the peace that surpasses understanding (Philippians 4:7). Will your life show them peace or chaos?

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of God.

**Verse of the Day:** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
~ Philippians 4:7

**Question to Consider:** How does my life show extraordinary peace?

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Day 2

Ben Radant

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## Peaceful bones

Everyone is looking for peace. Today it does not seem easy to come by. Especially when we have so many people telling us how to find it and where to find it. Watch TV for any length of time and you will see a few advertisements trying to sell you a bit of peace. They promise peace in the form of luxurious cars and washers that can do up to 20 pairs of jeans in a load of laundry. If you choose to find peace down this road you will never find it. Proverbs 14:30 says, “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”

It is when we realize that peace comes for God alone that we truly find peace. The pursuit of things is a path that never ends.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** True peace comes from God and not the pursuit of things.

**Verse of the Day:** A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. ~ Proverbs 14:30

**Question to Consider:** What things have I been trying to find peace in other than God?

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Day 3

Doug Wiggers

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## Our fear can end!

*“Enough for me that Jesus saves—This ends my fear and doubt;  
A sinful soul I come to Him—He’ll never cast me out.  
I need no other argument, I need no other plea;  
It is enough that Jesus died, And that He died for me.”*

What is the opposite of peace?

Worry.

What can bring us true peace?

Belief in Jesus Christ.

So often we make life too complicated. Yes, we have difficulties that are too numerous and too hurtful to imagine. And much of the time, worry is brought upon us by someone or something not of our doing! How can peace come out of something we usually can't control?

Jesus Christ. Just as simple as that.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** We are at peace when we are at rest with Jesus Christ.

**Verse of the Day:** We who have believed enter that rest. ~ *Hebrews 4:3*

**Question to Consider:** Is there fear in your life that needs to end?

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Day 4

Steven Hancock

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## Absence of conflict

Peace is more than absence of conflict. Bible peace is inner satisfaction and contentment. Peace is something that everyone seeks, that God offers, and in which we must actively participate. We learn how to live more and more fully in God's peace.

Paul said, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am." Philippians 4:11. The contentment Paul describes is, "the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension" (Philippians 4:7). From his prison cell, Paul explains that people must actively participate in God's peace. "The things you have learned and received and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:7).

God wants us to live in His peace. We participate in that peace through the daily investments we make. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, his body was in prison, but His mind was free. Paul says that to participate in the peace that rises about the confines of our circumstances, we must actively focus on mind on what is true, honorable, right, pure, love, and of good report (Philippians 4:8).

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Peace is something in which we actively participate.

**Verse of the Day:** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. ~ *Philippians 4:9*

**Questions to Consider:** Am I actively making deliberate investments of my mind or am I passively letting events around me control my thought life? What scriptures will I program into my mind this week through deliberate memorization? I suggest Psalm 119:9-11.

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Day 5

Tim Lueking

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## Sustaining peace

“Tell me that God has not left me! Tell me that God is here!” I heard these words uttered at a graveside over ten years ago and I will never forget the sorrow and pain this woman was experiencing, for her pain was my pain too. This woman had lost her husband to a long fight with cancer only a few short months before. Now she was burying her thirty some year old daughter that had died in a car accident. What do you say to a woman like this? What words of comfort can you offer? Can this woman have peace in such a time of extreme grief? The world says “no” but Jesus Christ says: “Come to me all of you who are weary and I will give you rest.” Jesus says: “Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.” Jesus says: “My peace I give you!”

Many in this world long for peace but the peace they seek is not attainable apart from Jesus Christ. Scripture reminds us that He is the Prince of Peace and He will give you His peace. What is the difference between the peace of Jesus and the world’s version of peace? The peace of Jesus Christ will sustain in times of trial and grief while the peace of the world will flee from you. The peace of Jesus will comfort you in the hour you need it the most where the peace of the world will not be found. Seek Jesus and find His peace!

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Sustaining Peace is only found in Jesus Christ

**Verse of the Day:** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. ~ John 14:27

**Questions to Consider:** Where do you need peace in your life? Are you seeking God’s definition of peace?

# Extraordinary Grace

## Week 3

Day 1

Chad Allen

### Turn out the lights, the party's over

Grace is getting what you do not deserve. In Luke 15 we read the story of the prodigal son. This story is about a man who had two sons. The younger son asks his father for his share of the inheritance. In the first-century Jewish culture, this was an extremely insulting and offensive request. It was as if the son was saying, "Dad, I wish you were dead."

The story goes that the son squanders his share of the inheritance on wild living. As soon as the money is gone, the party is over and the son is left all alone. The son finds himself alone, starving and in despair. So he decides to return home and beg his father to hire him as a servant.

As the son is walking home, the father sees the son a long way off and begins running towards his son. The father throws his arms around his son and tells his servants to throw a party for his son was lost and now is found. The older brother became bitter at the father's lavish display of grace. As the story ends we have no idea what happens with the older brother. However; in this story we find three types of people: those who need grace, those who give grace and those who withhold grace. Which type are you?

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** You are a recipient of God's grace and He expects you to be a distributor.

**Verse of the Day:** Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. ~ Proverbs 3:27

**Question to Consider:** How does my life show extraordinary grace?

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Day 2

Ben Radant

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## A fishy perspective

I'm sure you have heard the story of Jonah before. You know that God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to the people there. Jonah refused and ran away. On his journey he was caught in a violent storm at sea. Then Jonah was thrown overboard to stop the storm and he was swallowed by a great fish.

Jonah stayed in the fish for three days and nights and I'm sure he had quite a bit of time to think about his situation. Jonah prays to God and in that prayer thanks God for saving him and recommit to following God. Here are some of his words... "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the Lord."

It shouldn't have to take us being at the bottom of the ocean in the belly of a stinky fish to understand what grace really means. It means that God offers all of us salvation. We are all in need of saving because of our ugly and detestable sin.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** We should feel the gravity of God's grace at all times and in whatever circumstances.

**Verse of the Day:** Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. ~ *Jonah 2:8*

**Question to Consider:** How can you remind yourself of God's grace during the times you feel you need it less?

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Day 3

Doug Wiggers

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## Grace for *me*? Really?

In the hymn “I Know Whom I Have Believed” the author Daniel W. Whittle penned these words at the beginning of each stanza:

***“I know not why...”***

Maybe you are like me and sometimes question why God would extend grace to me, a sinner. We certainly do not deserve it! After all the things I’ve done, all the things I’ve thought...”why, God?” Not only that, God continues to extend grace to us even when we doubt his authority over our lives! Unmistakably, undoubtedly, unreservedly, grace is ours!

Whittle’s chorus continues...

*“But I know whom I have believed,  
and am persuaded that He is able  
To keep that which I’ve committed  
Unto Him against that day.”*

With courage and conviction, be assured of God’s grace as we commit ourselves to Him completely.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** God’s grace is sufficient for all our needs.

**Verse of the Day:** That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

~ 2 Timothy 1:12

**Question to Consider:** Even in our struggles, are we completely trusting all things to our faithful God?

### God is unfair

Are you amazed at God's extraordinary grace? Extraordinary grace is more than, "God's Riches at Christ's Expense (GRACE)." It is more than getting better than we deserve. Extraordinary grace is the getting the very opposite of what we deserve. Extraordinary grace is, "favor bestowed when wrath is owed."

There are only two possible ways to relate to God, law and grace. Law says, "Keep the rules and escape the punishment; break the rule and suffer the punishment." Law is entirely just and fair. But grace is entirely unfair. Grace says, "Break the rules and escape the punishment; keep the rules and suffer the punishment." Because Jesus kept the rules and suffered the punishment, we who break the rules can escape the punishment.

Because Jesus kept the law, we get the grace, the opposite of what we deserve. The cross shows us that Christ has taken our punishment upon Himself. The cross shows us the punishment we deserve. Through the cross we trade places with Christ. He takes the punishment that is our due and we receive the righteous standing that is His due. Extraordinary grace is entirely unfair. God's grace is truly amazing because it is getting the exact opposite of what we deserve.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** We understand what grace provides for us in proportion to our growth in understanding of what we truly deserve.

**Verse of the Day:** God made Him Who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

~ 2 Corinthians 5:21

**Questions to Consider:** Do I really feel like I deserve the punishment revealed by the cross? Sunday, look at the picture of the cross portrayed at the Lord's Supper and pray, "Show me what I truly deserve so I can exult in Your extraordinary grace."

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Day 5

Tim Lueking

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## May His grace be with you

*1 Corinthians 16:23* – The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

I am completely humbled by the principle and reality of God's Grace. Mankind has sought to define grace in many ways. We try to define it in words, images, or even pictures but there is no definition that competes with how God defines grace. Go to the Word of God and you will see that grace is not limited to one definition or a set of words but it defined by love and sacrifice. God loves you so much that he sent His one and only Son to die on the cross for your sins so that you could be free from the entanglement of both sin and death.

Next time you want to define grace then point to Jesus Christ. Jesus died for you to give you and eternal freedom. It is a fact that you and I did not deserve this gift of love that was wrapped in sacrifice. It was given freely and because of this gift we know what grace is all about. It is receiving that which we do not deserve because we are so highly loved by our Creator. My prayer is that the grace of the Lord will be with you this day!

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Grace is More Than Forgiveness, It is Salvation through Christ Alone

**Verse of the Day:** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

~ *1 Corinthians 16:23*

**Question to Consider:** How would you describe God's grace to another person?

# Extraordinary Love

## Week 4

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### ...the greatest is love

To love is to give life. What is it that you find yourself pouring your life into? I have friends that pour their lives into their careers. I have other friends that pour their lives into their families. I even know some that pour their life into their hobbies. For example, I have one friend who literally lives for golf. So what is it that you live for? What is it that constantly preoccupies your mind? What would your closest friends say you live for?

1 John 4:20-21 says, "If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother." Most Christians I know will quickly say they love God and will even say they love everyone, but their actions speak differently. They rarely serve at church and cannot even tell you their neighbors' names. (Ok, well maybe their names, but they're not pouring their life into others.) Remember, if we cannot love those we have seen, we cannot love God, whom we have not seen.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** The extent we love others is the extent we love God.

**Verse of the Day:** If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

~ 1 John 4:20-21

**Question to Consider:** How does my life show extraordinary love?

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Day 2

Ben Radant

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## Love is patient

Jacob was in love with Rachel. So much so that he said that he would work a total of fourteen years for the right to marry her. He worked seven before marrying her and seven after. Those first seven years “seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.”

In a world that is geared toward having everything right now we often forget a thing like patience. We may have it, but it’s so short that it doesn’t have time to work properly. We desire something and we expect it to be ours in a matter of minutes. Waiting days or years does not appeal to us.

Love is worth being patient for. Jacob knew that and kept focus on who he loved. We all have people that we love. We need to take a cue from Jacob and be patient with them or even for them. That’s what Extraordinary love does.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Extraordinary love is extraordinarily patient.

**Verse of the Day:** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:3

**Question to Consider:** In what ways can I show more patients to the ones I love?

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Day 3

Doug Wiggers

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## We're being watched

Growing up we used to sing a song in church that seemed very cheesy to me. The minor key was strange and it used so much repetition – maybe it would've been better suited around a campfire than a church sanctuary.

My thinking has changed.

Our love for one another – no better descriptor exists for evidence of our love for Christ. Do you want to know immediately how people feel about those they are supposed to love – friends, family? Observe their actions. Listen to their words. Do you want to know how non-believers observe those who say they are Christians? You guessed it...

Observe their actions. Listen to their words.

*We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord...  
And we pray that all unity may one day restored:  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.*

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Together we can spread the good news about God and His love.

**Verse of the Day:** By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. ~ *John 13:35*

**Question to Consider:** How does a non-believer view your true love for Christ?

### God's love is unique

The entire Bible is about one supreme idea, love. God loves us and so we are to love—God and all people. According to Jesus, the entire Bible rests on the two love commands (Matthew 22:40). First, we love God with all our being. Then, we love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). Love is the motive behind every command from God and every obedience from us.

Bible love is truly extraordinary. Christ demonstrated extraordinary love because He died for His enemies. Romans 5:7 says, "...perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die." This might be considered by some as ordinary love. But God's love goes beyond ordinary love. In verse 8, Paul adds, "But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." For "sinners," substitute, "enemies," according to verse 10. God loved us while we were still His enemies.

Since God loves His enemies, Jesus commands us to do the same in order that we may be sons of our Father (Matthew 5:44-45). No human religion has this developed a concept of love. And no human religion has access to the spiritual power we have in order to love as we ought. God has given us the Holy Spirit to pour out His love in our hearts (Romans 5:5). We have everything we need to love others with the love God supplies.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** You can love your enemies because love supplies you His love.

**Verse of the Day:** God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit Whom He has given us. ~ Romans 5:5

**Questions to Consider:** How am I feeling about those with whom I disagree or who want to harm me? Who really needs extraordinary love today?

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Day 5

Tim Lueking

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## Defining love

*1 John 4:8* – Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

I once had a young Christian come to me while they were in the midst of an emotional crisis. I will never forget what this Christian said to me: “I do not know if I am capable of loving anymore.” My heart was instantly grieved for this young person. Why? It was not because of their downtrodden emotional level or that they were experiencing a level of depression but my heart grieved because of the fact that they had no idea of the true definition of love.

How do you define love? The world defines it in many different ways: Passion, Lust, Beauty, Sex, Money, Power, and the list goes on. Pay attention to how God defines love. He is the author, creator, perfecter, and giver of Love. When you authentically love your neighbor, love your enemy, love your family, then you are truly being filled with the love of God. The Greek term that is used in 1 John 4:8 for love is “*agape*” which literally means: brotherly love, affection, good will, or benevolence. God defines love in this manner and declares that this is true love because this is the same sacrificial love that makes up who God is. God is love!

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Love is a gift from God not a gift from mankind.  
God is Love.

**Verse of the Day:** Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ~ *1 John 4:8*

**Question to Consider:** How do you define love? How do you children or grandchildren define love? How does God define love?

# Extraordinary Youth

## Week 5

Day 1

Chad Allen

### Looking up to YOUth

Just recently, I was at a small group meeting for senior high school students, and at the close we had prayer request time. As we shared our prayer requests, I asked the students to pray specifically for me and for a meeting that I was having because adults older than me were looking for answers that I didn't have. One of the students said, "Just be honest and tell them you don't have the answer." That was great advice from an unlikely source. (I mean, how often do we ask teenagers for words of wisdom?)

Have you ever received words of wisdom from an unlikely source? We serve a God that transforms the ordinary into extraordinary. He loves to do immeasurably more than what we expect. He likes to use unlikely resources to be sources of life and wisdom to others. Paul told the young Timothy, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12).

As you continue on your journey to extraordinary, do not let anyone stop you. May you relentlessly pursue to live as a child of God and may He make you extraordinary.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** God loves to use unlikely resources.

**Verse of the Day:** Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. ~ 1 Timothy 4:12

**Question to Consider:** In what ways does my life set an extraordinary example for others?

Day 2

Ben Radant

## The child king

My wife is a third grade teacher and when she gets home I'll ask her how her day was. Usually at some point she tells me about the latest drama and dilemmas surrounding her classroom. Trouble at recess, drama in the cafeteria, attention problem in the classroom are all common themes in our conversation. Third grade is crazy time in the life of any eight year old.

So imagine having a third grader running the country. That's exactly what happened to Israel when Josiah became king. Josiah was a good king, and "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord." So even at an early age he knew that following God was the way to be a great king. In the eighteenth year of his reign he began the repair of God's temple. When he did they found God's law and it disturbed him greatly because his fathers did not obey God's law. He got rid of all the idols and taught the people God's ways and laws. In return God spared Josiah from seeing the punishment God had for the nation.

Our children may not become kings, but they might one day be our leaders in the church and beyond. They can be capable of great things if they are brought up in God's ways. What can you do to help them?

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** I can influence the next generation for the kingdom of God.

**Verse of the Day:** He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.  
~ 2 Kings 22:2

**Question to Consider:** What am I doing to help bring up the next generation? How Can I help?

Day 3

Doug Wiggers

## Just give it a try

Back many moons ago, I helped lead a youth ministry at my church. I got along with the kids very well. One day, we were riding in my car to an event and some teen wanted to listen to country music. *Country music? Are you kidding me?* (Can you sense the pain heading to my ears?). I informed them in no uncertain words that I did not care for country music. They responded with five words.

“Just give it a try.”

I did...for a week. And became absolutely hooked.

I cannot begin to count the education I have received from youth. For some reason, they seem to know a lot (!!!) and my life has greatly benefited from it. I hope and pray that I am never one to dismiss the great purpose God places upon the youth of our communities...and the role we have in engaging with them as they seek out that purpose.

They never got me interested in rap, though. Thank goodness!

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** No matter our age, we can all learn from the younger generations.

**Verse of the Day:** Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity.  
~ 1 Timothy 4:12

**Question to Consider:** How has your life been influenced by someone much younger than you? Are you assisting them in seeking God's purpose for their life?

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Day 4

Steven Hancock

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## Become more you

In one sense we are all youth. When we think of “youth,” we think of one not yet fully mature, yet full of potential. Every one of us has been created by God with great potential to mature into a unique creation. But it takes a life-long process for God to lead us to experience all the potential that He put within us when He first created us.

As God leads us into full potential, He does not make us less like ourselves, but more. We notice this in the word “youth.” When we see “youth,” we notice the word, “you.” As God leads you into maturity, you become more “you.” As John Ortberg says, you become “you-ier.”

In the Bible redemption always involves renewing the original creation. God does not make anything and then decide to throw it away. God liked what He originally created when He made you. In Christ He merely wants to remove the corruption so you can return to the original plan to enter into your full potential to reflect His glory.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Am I fully content with the potential and limitations in gifts and talents which God gave me when He created me His special person?

**Verse of the Day:** I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. ~ *Psalm 139:14*

**Questions to Consider:** Are you striving to become someone you were never created to be? Are you experiencing the freedom and joy of becoming the unique person God intended you to become?

## God's message to our youth

*2 Timothy 2:22* – Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Approximately 9% of American adults have a Biblical worldview and 58% of Mosaics (18-25 year olds) do not even recognize Easter as a religious holiday at all (Barna.org). This may not shock many of you but it sends a very strong message to me as a Christian. It is time for us to begin reading the Bible more and spending less time on the internet or watching television. Our youth are in danger and we as adults have a great responsibility to step up and begin training our children up in godliness as well as training them how to respond to the counterfeit religions and philosophies that will bombard them in their college years and beyond.

God's message to our youth is simple. "Prepare yourself now for the battle that lies ahead. Turn to the Lord and pursue Him alone in this great hour in which your faith will either be strengthened or weakened." All of you parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles out there, stand up and begin teaching our youth about the Living God. Now could be the greatest hour of our lives as we train up the next generation of Christians.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Seek God and Flee from Sin

**Verse of the Day:** Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ~ *2 Timothy 2:22*

**Question to Consider:** What can you do to help train up the next generation of Christians?

# Extraordinary Worship

## Week 6

Day 1

Chad Allen

### Sing a song

In the book of Exodus we read the story of God freeing His people, the Israelites, from the mighty grip of Pharaoh. We read about the ten plagues and how God continually shows His power over the Egyptian gods. Each plague was not only to be a burden to Pharaoh, but was an attack on the gods that the Egyptians worshiped. As the Israelites are fleeing Egypt they come to the Red Sea. Moses raises his staff, the water parts, and the people walk through on dry land. Moments later the Egyptian army pursues and begins crossing the Red Sea just as the Israelites had done. Moses stretches his hand out again and the waters recede whipping out the entire army.

You can just imagine what the Israelites were thinking as they stood on the bank overlooking the shore that is filled with the bodies of the Egyptian army. The Bible says, “And when the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in Him. . . Then Moses and the Israelites sang to the Lord: ‘I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea’” (Exodus 14:31-15:1).

The people delivered by God’s power and were led to worship. May God’s mighty power continue to lead you to extraordinary worship.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** God’s mighty works are meant to lead us to worship.

**Verse of the Day:** Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”  
~ Exodus 15:11

**Question to Consider:** How does my life show extraordinary worship?

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Day 2

Ben Radant

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## Undignified

When you think of an example of worship in the bible, it's hard not to think of David. He was known for harp playing that could cheer up kings, writing beautiful psalms, and being a man after God's own heart. He is also known for dancing in his underwear for God.

The ark of the covenant had not been in Jerusalem for some time and was taken back from the Philistines. When it was entering back into the city David was so excited that he was dancing before the Lord in his underwear. Michal who was Saul's daughter despised David in her heart. She confronted David and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" To this David replied, "It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord's people Israel—I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

The next time you worship our great God think about how David did, not the underwear part, but how he danced and worshiped for God and for God alone. It didn't matter what other people thought. It shouldn't matter to you.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Worship is for God alone and not for others. Don't let other people dictate how you worship.

**Verse of the Day:** ...I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. ~ 2 Samuel 6:21-22

**Question to Consider:** What holds me back from worshipping God the way He deserves?

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Day 3

Doug Wiggers

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## Just like 7-11...24 hours!

When we think of “worship,” what comes to mind? Like many people, we may tend to think of the place we go to on a Sunday morning. The building. The church. The sanctuary.

That’s all well and good, but not necessarily correct. In order for our time of corporate worship (in the building, the church, the sanctuary) to be inspiring and God-honoring, our private time of worship must be the same, if not more so.

My definition of worship is as follows: “Responding to who God is with all that we have.” Are we following that definition on a daily basis? Is everything we do an act of worship towards our God?

*O worship the King, all glorious above,  
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;  
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,  
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.*

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** We worship something daily whether we know it or not.

**Verse of the Day:** Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.

~ Psalm 48:1a

**Question to Consider:** Is everything we do an act of worship towards our God?

### Study to improve worship

Do you want to improve your worship? Study. The more you learn about God, the better you worship Him. Worship is an automatic internal response to what we are thinking. Thinking brings feelings about God's worth (M.E. "*worth schip*.") The more complete our thinking about God, the stronger and more accurate our feelings and therefore, worship.

It is important to distinguish worship from worship acts. Worship takes place between the ears. Worship acts are outward actions people take in response to what is happening internally (unless they are merely performing perfunctory ceremonial routines with their minds not engaged). Worship acts are not the worship, but the result of worship.

In the same way the Lord's Supper is not the elements. We can partake of the elements without engaging in the Lord's Supper. The Corinthians certainly did (I Corinthians 11:20). The Supper must take place between the ears. It requires thinking correctly about the body of Christ. The elements can help direct our thinking but they are not the Lord's Supper.

To develop our worship, we improve our thinking about God. To improve our thinking, we gather information. The most helpful information comes from studying our Bible. To the extent we understand God better, our worship automatically improves. From our improved understanding our hearts automatically have new feelings and values and we are better worshipers.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** If you want to improve your worship, study the Bible.

**Verse of the Day:** God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. ~ *John 4:24*

**Question to Consider:** Do I enjoy a freedom to perform worship acts that exhibit the strong feelings that are developing within?

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Day 5

Tim Leeking

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## Experience God

Have you ever just walked into a sanctuary, a church, or even a service and just felt the presence of God? I have. I feel that way on a regular basis because I have come to understand that my great desire when it comes to worship is to both encounter and experience God.

Many people have the expectation that they will come to church on Sunday, sing some songs, take communion, listen to a sermon and they will have done their part as a Christian for the week. Yet, many may not understand why many times they don't feel the presence of God in their life. The answer is because they are just going through the motions. Remind yourself of this fact on a daily basis, especially Sunday: **God is alive and active!** He wants you to encounter and experience Him but that begins way before a Sunday morning service. It starts with your attitude and devotion toward Him. This week seek God through prayer, the Word of God, and most certainly through Worship. Seek Him and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Seek God with all your Heart and you will find Him

**Verse of the Day:** And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. ~ *Hebrews 11:6*

**Question to Consider:** How would you define encountering or experiencing God in worship?

# Extraordinary Leadership

## Week 7

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Day 1 Chad Allen

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### **F**ollow the leader

The bush burned. The bright glow of the flames caught the attention of this shepherd and suddenly his life was changed. The call of Moses is most definitely unique. The Lord appeared to Moses from within a burning bush. In this intriguing experience the Lord tells Moses that He has seen the misery of His people, the Israelites, and the harsh mistreatment they have endured under the hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Lord then tells Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand the Israelites freedom. Moses responds, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" God does not answer Moses' question, but simply says, "I will be with you." (Exodus 3:11-12)

God's people have never seen another leader like Moses, faithful in every way; however, the key to Moses' leadership was that God was with Him. If you want to be an extraordinary leader that is used in amazing ways by God, then it must all begin and end with God. Extraordinary leadership is complete followership.

### **My daily time with God**

**Point to Ponder:** Extraordinary leadership is complete followership

**Verse of the Day:** If God is for us, who can be against us?

~ Romans 8:31b

**Question to Consider:** In what ways does my life show extraordinary leadership?

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Day 2

Ben Radant

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## Leaders who listen

Moses is one of the best examples of a leader that we can find in scripture. Any man who can successfully heard and organize thousands of people as they wander a desert deserves as many accolades as he can get. However for all of Moses' experience and success, he took time to listen to wise council.

You see Moses would sit as a judge and people would come to him from sun up to sun down to ask of God's will and for him to make judgments. Moses might have figured that since he was the leader that everything should pass through him. When Moses' father-in-law Jethro saw this he knew that this was not good for Moses and it wasn't good for the people. He then told Moses to delegate his responsibilities.

Moses could have put Jethro in his place. He could have bragged about how he stood against the most powerful man on the planet in Pharaoh or rattled off an impressive resume. Thus, putting Jethro in his place. Instead Moses knew that an extraordinary leader listens to wise council. Moses implemented his father-in-laws plan and it worked for the betterment of Moses and the nation of Israel.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Extraordinary leadership listens to wise council.

**Verse of the Day:** The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. ~ *Proverbs 12:15*

**Questions to Consider:** Am I surrounding myself with wise council?  
Am I listening to it?

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Day 3

Doug Wiggers

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## Follow the leader?

It's easy to think of extraordinary leadership being modeled by a successful business person or corporate CEO. We often measure leadership by the results brought in at the end of the day, whether that be money earned or tasks completed. Too often we only think of the one leading, not those who are following.

I find it interesting that scripture places so much emphasis on what our responsibility is as followers, especially as it relates to being led by Christ. In order to be led, we must humble ourselves, recognizing that "he will be our guide."

Fanny Crosby ends the first verse of "All the Way My Savior Leads Me" with these profound words:

*"For I know whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well."*

Extraordinary leadership is found when those who follow submit to the one leading. Christ earned that quality through His own self-sacrifice. May we strive to earn the same.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Extraordinary leadership is earned, not given.

**Verse of the Day:** For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end. ~ *Psalm 48:14*

**Question to Consider:** What areas of your life find you as a Leader or a Follower? Are you earning it, with God's guidance?

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Day 4

Steven Hancock

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## Servant leadership

Brad Stevens of Butler University is a successful leader. At age 33 he led his Bulldogs to the 2010 NCAA national basketball championship game, something most coaches do not achieve in a lifetime. His team came within 6 inches, literally, of winning the national championship title on April 5. Eight days later, while speaking at DePaw University, his alma mater, Stevens said that the most important class he took at DePaw was a course on servant leadership. In regard to servant leadership Stevens said, "The best way to lead is to step up and do something for somebody else."

Stevens is a successful leader because he is following the legacy of Jesus, who said, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27). Jesus said this while in the very act of leading by serving. He was washing the feet of His disciples. He told them he was teaching them a lesson. Jesus was showing and teaching the disciples the nature of servant leadership. A servant leader seeks to make someone else successful. A servant leader measures success by his ability to help others to achieve their goals.

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** A servant leader enjoys helping others succeed in reaching their goals.

**Verse of the Day:** I am among you as one who serves. ~ Luke 22:27

**Questions to Consider:** Am I asking God to show me how to serve someone today? Do I enjoy making other people successful?

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Day 5

Tim Lueking

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## Lead like Jesus

As Christians, we are all leaders. We are all leading others by our example, attitude, and words. The Apostle Paul continually reminded each Christian of the great importance of “training yourself up” in godliness for he knew that this was essential to being a leader for God’s glory. He would often encourage each Christian to run the race of life in such way that you would finish well and win the prize. This is essential advice for every leader to follow in order to sustain themselves through the course of their leadership.

*1 Corinthians 9:25* – Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

No matter who you are or where you are at in your walk with the Lord, you need to hear and heed these words written by the Apostle Paul. Live this life as a Christian of integrity but live this life ultimately for the glory of God. If you do this, you set an amazing example of leadership for everyone around you and you will receive the crown of life that last forever.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Lead like Jesus even if Others are Not!

**Verse of the Day:** Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

~ *1 Corinthians 9:24*

**Question to Consider:** How are you leading others for the glory of God? How can your family lead like Jesus?

# Extraordinary Legacy

## Week 1

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Day 1 C had A llen

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### Pass it on

There is no fun in a funeral. However, there is nothing more meaningful. I have been to hundreds of funeral services. While this sounds harsh, there are only a few services that I really remember. The services that I remember are the ones in which the deceased intentionally left a legacy. They lived their lives with purpose. Their legacy lives on, even when they are gone.

The reality of your life is that one day you will die. The question is not when will I die, but am I living for something worth dying for? If not, you are not going to leave a legacy.

May you leave an extraordinary legacy of faith that inspires generations to come!

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** An extraordinary legacy begins by living for something worth dying for.

**Verse of the Day:** One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. ~ *Psalms 145:4*

**Question to Consider:** In what ways is my life building an extraordinary legacy?

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Day 2

Ben Radant

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## A building or a valley?

Take a walk around a nations' capital or a sports stadium and you will see buildings and streets named for men and women and for what they have done. Generations that follow will be able to know of the significant contributions were made by those before them.

Unfortunately not everyone leaves behind that kind of legacy. Achan left behind an undesirable legacy to the people of Israel. After Israel defeated Jericho, they were given orders to put the gold and silver into God's treasury. Achan chose to take some gold and silver for himself and his family. As a result of his action Israel lost a battle that they should have won.

When it was found out what Achan had done, he, his family, the silver, the robe, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had into a valley and killed them and burned them. That valley was then named the Valley of Achor, (which means Trouble).

You get to choose your own legacy. What will they name after you?

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** You get to choose your own legacy.

**Verse of the Day:** Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.

~ Joshua 7:26

**Question to Consider:** What will they name after you, a building or a valley? Why?

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Day 3

Doug Wiggers

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## C Committed to the end

We often hear the word “legacy” used when we talk about athletes or powerful politicians or business leaders. “What will be their legacy?, commentators ask. “What will they leave behind?”

*“Only this hour is mine, Lord – May it be used for Thee;  
 May ev’ry passing moment count for eternity  
 Souls all about are dying, dying in sin and shame;  
 Help me bring them the message of Calv’ry’s redemption in Thy glorious  
 name.*

Those words from the hymn “Only One Life” portray a true legacy. If we are extraordinary in our pursuit of a legacy, it should only be for the cause of Christ and bringing souls around us to Him. Nothing else matters.

We’ve been given one life. One tongue. One heart. As the hymnwriter suggests, may be yield it “fully to Thee.”

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** Live your life for eternity.

**Verse of the Day:** Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ~ *Matthew 10:39*

**Question to Consider:** Are we more concerned with what people will think of us when we pass away...or what they think of Christ?

## Leave the best legacy

Many historians consider John Winthrop to be second in stature only to George Washington. Historian Philip Johnson calls Winthrop “the first great American.” Winthrop established, financed and governed the Massachusetts Bay Colony from its beginning in 1630 until his death 19 years later, with only a 2 year hiatus. The first large scale settling of America, the Colony left a legacy for generations.

As an evangelical Christian, Winthrop knew his priority was to leave a legacy and he asked everyone in the colony to do the same. On ship on his way to America, he said, “[We] shall be like a City upon a Hill; the eyes of all people are on us.” In that famous sermon he proposed the legacy he wanted them to leave, a colony that was Bible based in every practice of its life with love reigning supreme.

Winthrop left Americans a legacy about leaving a legacy. His first priority was for his own children. He also realized that a legacy is what we do, not just what we profess. Also, our actions should be based on the Bible in every area of our life.

Everyone leaves a legacy of some kind, whether good or bad. We do well to think about the legacy we want to leave for those who come behind us. Jesus wants us to see ourselves as a city set on a hill, giving light for all to see (Matthew 5:14). Jesus calls us to be people of influence who intend to leave a life changing legacy.

## My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** A legacy is left through who you are and what you do.

**Verse of the Day:** For I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I am persuaded, now lives in you also. ~ II Timothy 1:5

**Questions to Consider:** What legacy are my actions leaving today? Are my children and grandchildren my first priority? Is my walk with Christ setting the proper pace for those following behind me?

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Day 5

Tim Lueking

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## A legacy worth leaving

As a father, I often reflect on the legacy that I am leaving behind for my children and someday my grandchildren. I have failed in certain areas of being a father and being a husband but I continue to try to improve on a daily basis, praying that my love for my family far outweighs my shortcomings.

My deepest desire is that at the end of my life people not remember that I was a man that loved the Lord, loved his family, and served mankind with the humility for God's glory. I have tried to impress upon my children that same kind of love and attitude for I know that when it is all said and done, the only legacy that matters is the one that I have lived and left behind for the glory of God. May we have this same attitude and count it a privilege to have served the Living God!

### My daily time with God

**Point to Ponder:** The greatest legacy is loving others as Christ has loved you.

**Verse of the Day:** However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

~ Acts 20:24

**Question to Consider:** What is the legacy that you want to be remembered for? What are you doing to make that become a reality?



# Extraordinary

This devotional booklet was prepared by the  
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visit [www.CiceroChristianChurch.org](http://www.CiceroChristianChurch.org)  
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