

# HOW WE LIVE

DEVOTIONAL AND READING GUIDE

SOUTH RIDGE CHURCH

FEBRUARY–MARCH 2019



This Reading Guide has been designed for use during “How We Live” Message Series  
South Ridge Church - February — March 2019

## A Note From Pastor Justin:

The Bible is not just a book, but is 66 books written by dozens of different authors and copied from one generation to the next, and the next, and the next, so much so that it’s still the most-printed collection of writings in history. Despite such a rich history, it isn’t hard to find others who say or think, “The Bible is old. It’s outdated. It doesn’t have anything of real value.”

But research continues to show that the number one thing people do to grow, is read the Bible. Yes, eating healthy is helpful. Exercise, too. Even prayer and silence is soothing to the soul. But reading the Bible is the foundation upon which wisdom is built. Not because the Bible *is* God. But because it was given to us *by* God, to reveal to us who we are, how we live, and provide us a glimpse as to what’s next.

Over the next six weeks, South Ridge Church will continue our study through Paul’s letter, 1 Corinthians. These messages will focus on some specific points the Apostle Paul mentioned about how the people of Corinth were to live. But it’s important to note that Paul didn’t just wake up one day and decide to write to the Corinthians. Instead, his letter was a response to a letter he first received from them. In 1 Corinthians 7:1, Paul writes, “Now for the matters you wrote about...” It’s pretty clear that his letter was written to encourage them, to guide them, and when necessary, to reprove them, because they were thinking or behaving in ways that were not setting a good example.

As we begin this new message series, we encourage you to:

- Commit to joining us every week of this series.
- Commit to reading through this Reading Guide, reflecting well on the questions provided within each daily reading.
- Use a good Study Bible and/or other resources as you read through this Reading Guide. Some recommendations include the NLT Study Bible, the NIV Zondervan Study Bible, the ESV Study Bible, among others. Refer to <https://southridgeblog.com/study-bible-info> for more information on many excellent Study Bibles available today.
- Write down questions you have about what you’re reading, and take opportunities to seek out answers to those questions.

# HOW WE LIVE

## DAILY READING EXAMPLE:

### DAY 1: EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE

The left side of each daily reading will contain a brief devotional and question for reflection.

#### READING:

The right side of each daily reading will contain a few Scripture verses to read, and additional questions for reflection. You will most benefit from this study by writing out answers to all of the questions in a notebook. This will help you to pause and reflect on the Scriptures and topics for each reading.

#### F260 READING:

This is an additional Scripture Reading for those who want to read through the foundational passages of Scripture throughout the year. This F260 Reading Plan paired with the H.E.A.R. method for reflection is an excellent way to *Read, Reflect, and Respond* to God's Word, and gain insight into the overall *Story* God has written to us, for us, and within us.

#### PRAYER:

The right side of each daily reading will also contain a brief prayer to read and reflect on.

## MESSAGE SERIES OUTLINE:

WE LIVE TO GLORIFY GOD WITH OUR BODIES

WE LIVE TO MANAGE CONFLICT WELL

WE LIVE TO DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

WE LIVE TO BUILD UP

WE LIVE TO WORSHIP GOD ALONE

WE LIVE IN EQUALITY



# WEEK #1:

## WE LIVE TO GLORIFY GOD WITH OUR BODIES



### DAY 1: EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE

Have you ever had somebody tell you something you couldn't or shouldn't do? Of course you have. Whether it was a parent, a grandparent, a sibling, a teacher, or an employer, we've all had somebody tell us what we couldn't or shouldn't do.

In some of these moments, we immediately recognize the wisdom of the person speaking with us. We know they have our best interests at heart, or at the very least, we recognize their desire to see us succeed. Assuming they have our best interests at heart, we know they truly care for our well-being.

But in other moments, we may think to ourselves, "*Who do they think they are? I'm not doing anything 'wrong'. Who are they to tell me what I should or shouldn't do?*"

Even though the ancient city of Corinth was a very different culture than our own, the people had a similar way of thinking. In fact, a common saying shared on the streets was, "Everything is permissible!" For example, if somebody were to say, "Hey, I'm not sure that's a very good idea," you could respond by saying, "Leave me alone! Everything is permissible!"

As you read today, consider this: Have you ever thought something like, "Everything is permissible?"

### DAY 2: NOT EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL

The Apostle Paul was very familiar with the culture and customs of the Roman Empire. Having grown up as a citizen of the empire, he could recognize the wisdom found in some of the more common teachings. However, he could also recognize foolish teachings. Knowing the people regularly stated, "*Everything is permissible!*" Paul responds with stronger, irrefutable wisdom.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, he acknowledges their philosophy: "*Everything is permissible!*" He responds by saying, "Well, perhaps, but not everything is *beneficial*." He retorts again, "*Everything is permissible!*" "Well, perhaps, but I will not be mastered by anything."

In other words, Paul doesn't refute the Corinthians knowledge of free will or their desire to choose, but he is sure to note that there may be negative consequences to their choices and actions.

Basically, the Corinthians had a culture of, "We can do whatever we want, eat whatever we want, and sleep with whomever we want, whenever we want. Everything is permissible!" But Paul refutes their way of thinking, and does so in a way that continues to ring true today. As you read today, consider this: What are the first thoughts that come to mind as you read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20?

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

How do you think most people would respond to this passage today?

Have you ever thought something like, "Everything is permissible?" What was the outcome?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** 2 Kings 17 & 18

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess there have been many times in which I've had the thought, "I'm not doing anything wrong!" I'm continuing to recognize the fallacy of this way of thinking. Whether it's regarding sexual thoughts, finances, marriage, parenting, or race, continue to help me see that this way of thinking does not lead to wisdom, but to ruin.

As I begin a new week, may I regularly reflect on the truth that *not everything is beneficial*. I give You permission to help me see when my thoughts and actions are not beneficial for me or for others. Lead and guide me in everything. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

What are the first thoughts that come to mind as you read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20?

Be honest: What is *at least* one area in life in which you think something similar to, *everything is permissible*? In what ways are your thoughts and/or actions in this area *not* beneficial?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** 2 Kings 19, 20, & 21

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that there are some aspects of this Scripture reading that I don't like. There are times when I think to myself that I should be able to say whatever I want, eat whatever I want, think whatever I want, or even fulfill sexual desires however and whenever I want. Admittedly, this is sometimes a challenging Scripture for me to accept and apply. But I know it comes from You and I acknowledge You are not only wiser than me, but that You also have my best interests at heart. Thank You for always desiring the very best for me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: YOU ARE ONE WITH THE LORD

While we are able to learn a great deal about the Apostle Paul from his letters, there's still a lot about his life we don't know. For example, we don't know if he was ever married, or even engaged to be married. However, we do know that he had a firm understanding of the *oneness* of a marriage relationship that is written about all throughout the Old Testament.

As Paul continues to refute the Corinthians viewpoint of "*Everything is permissible*," he gets rather specific.

In 1 Corinthians 6:16 he writes, "Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.'" The phrase "unites himself" indicates not only physical connection, but a permanent, lasting union. Paul uses this opportunity to refute the Corinthians belief that sex is only a temporary bond by saying that the oneness of that kind of relationship is permanent. Paul continues, "But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit."

The intended meaning is impossible to miss. "You're united with Christ! Permanently! This is significant! Let this be your focus in all things." As you read today, consider this: Do you struggle to see yourself as *permanently* united with Christ?

#### READING:

##### 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

Do you struggle to see yourself as *permanently* united with Christ? Why do you think that is?

In 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Paul outlines some of the most serious consequences for those who engage in sexual immorality. What thoughts do you have about this passage?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** 2 Kings 22 & 23

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that there are times when I don't recognize the wonderful truth that I am united with You. I sometimes see You as, "*The God in the sky*," instead of "*The God who lives within me*." Today, may I remember that because of the trust and faith I have placed in Jesus, You live *within* me. You are *with* me. You desire the *best* for me. And You have already *given* me Your very best. May I rejoice in these truths not only today, but every day. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: GLORIFY GOD WITH YOUR BODY

Having successfully refuted the foolishness of the Corinthians, Paul concludes this section of his letter by saying, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

The first people who heard this letter being read in public would have quickly recognized three key points Paul makes here.

First, God lives within you! The Corinthians would've grown up in a culture in which many gods were worshiped and the myths and legends about them would've been well known. But Christianity didn't *just* believe in one all powerful God. Christianity acknowledged that the Spirit of God lives *within* all who follow Jesus.

Second, you were bought at a price! Paul was sure to note that the God who chose to live within His people did so at a huge cost to Himself: Jesus' death on the cross.

Finally, honor God with your bodies! God is within you, and paid a huge cost to do so. As such, honor Him with your actions. As you read today, consider this: What are 3 steps you will take to honor God with your body over the next week? Month? Year?

#### READING:

##### 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13 & 6:12-20

How would you explain what it means to *honor God with your body* to a friend?

What are 3 steps you will take to honor God with your body over the next week? Month? Year?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Jeremiah 1:1-3:5

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, as this week is nearly at a close, I simply want to use this opportunity to thank You for the truths communicated in these Scripture passages. These passages are as challenging to be lived out now as they were to those who first read them. Nevertheless, they are full of irrefutable wisdom, and I am very grateful that I live in a country in which I can read, study, meditate on, and pray about the wisdom You have provided. May the joy I have about Your Word continue to become apparent to all I interact with on a regular basis. I thank You for all You are, all You've done, and all You'll continue to do in and through me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-24

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about the grace and love of God?

What did you learn about yourself this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Jeremiah 25 & 29

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)



# WEEK #2:

## WE LIVE TO MANAGE CONFLICT WELL



### DAY 1: MANAGING CONFLICT

For decades, research has been pretty clear: The number one area of needed growth for any organization or personal relationship falls into the areas of communication and/or conflict resolution. As such, it shouldn't be surprising that the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians about their need to manage conflict well. Not only was Paul concerned about relational tensions amongst Christians, he was also concerned for how they would handle legal cases against one another.

As an example, lawsuits in Corinth were quite common and decisions were swift and often unfair. If evidence was lacking or non-existent, people of a higher status usually won the case. Additionally, those in minority groups within the city were expected to handle their own cases. Groups who dismissed this cultural norm were heavily criticized by the public. As such, Paul wanted to ensure that the Christians in Corinth followed the cultural standards so they would not be seen as troublemakers by the social elite.

The wisdom Paul provided about handling legal cases well would not have been missed by the Corinthians. As you read today, consider this: What is the most important truth you've learned about communication and conflict resolution?

### DAY 2: BEING A GOOD EXAMPLE

Many philosophers throughout the Roman Empire argued that property didn't matter much, therefore, people were encouraged to forego lawsuits over property. But Paul recognized that this way of thinking wasn't popular with the majority of people, and knew that the Old Testament had much to say to the Jewish population about this as well.

As noted in yesterday's reading, one of Paul's greatest concerns was that the Christians in Corinth would set a good example. Legal matters could be settled internally, including disputes about property. Paul also noted that some disputes didn't even need to be settled internally. In fact, it's quite possible Paul had Jesus' teaching in Luke 6:29-30 in mind as he wrote to the Corinthians.

Again, all of this falls back on the importance of setting a good example, which was a common theme throughout Paul's letters. For example, Paul wrote in Ephesians, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us." As you read today, consider this: In what ways are Christians today setting a good example locally? Nationally?

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11

What is the most important truth you've learned about communication and conflict resolution?

Is there anything in today's reading that affirms this truth? Is there another Scripture passage that affirms it?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Jeremiah 31:31-40, 32, & 33

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I confess that while I've learned some valuable lessons in the areas of communication and conflict resolution, I have room for continual growth. Beginning a new week, I pray that You will reveal to me some specific growth areas for me, not only in how I communicate with others, but also in how I think about communicating with others. May the words I speak, share, and think be words of encouragement. May You provide me wisdom to think well of myself and of others, and to respond to conflict in a way that is godly and pure. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

#### LUKE 6:29-30, EPHESIANS 4:31-5:2

In what ways are Christians today setting a good example locally? Nationally?

In what areas are Christians today *not* setting a good example?

How can Christians respond to concerns such as these in a positive way?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Jeremiah 52, 2 Kings 24 & 25

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, it's far too easy for me to think about how I and/or other Christians are *not* setting a good example for others. As this week continues, I pray that You would use me in ways far greater than I have ever imagined, and that the work You will continue to do *within* me will mold and shape me into the person You have made me to be. Indeed, may I get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling and slander, being compassionate to others and forgiving them as You have forgiven me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KINGDOM

It's difficult for us to think about what life would have been like for those living within the Roman Empire. At this point in history, God's chosen people had been given the land of Israel, only to later be conquered by the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires. Now they've been absorbed into the Roman Empire, and God's people believed that He would be providing them with a new Kingdom. They believed this new Kingdom would be one ruled by God, so they would no longer be subject to other nations.

In his wisdom, Paul brings up the Kingdom of God. Earlier in the letter, he noted that, "the kingdom is not a matter of talk, but of power (4:20)." He wanted to remind the Corinthians that the kingdom of God wasn't *just* something to think or talk about, but it was something real, and was very much something to be excited about.

All in all, there's a lot to think about in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11, but much of it comes down to (1) setting a good example, (2) keeping our eyes on the future kingdom, and finally (3) the importance of remembering who we are. As you read today, consider this: Do you take intentional opportunities to think about the kingdom of God? Why do you think that is?

### DAY 4: REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

While it may be difficult for us to think about what it would be like to live in the Roman Empire, it's easy for us to forget (or at least to not regularly think about) just how much we're loved by God.

Recently, I (Pastor Justin) read through a series of books in which the three main characters, all siblings, were attending school in a country that was not their own. As such, they had a really hard time making friends and fitting in. But every day when their mother dropped them off, her final words to them were, "Remember who you are."

The author is a Christian musician and writer, and these words are an excellent reflection of what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:11. Having noted who will *not* inherit the Kingdom of God, Paul writes, "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." It's another way of saying, "Remember who you are. In the eyes of God, you are clean. You are holy. You are innocent. Don't ever forget who you are."

As you read today, consider this: Do you struggle to remember who you are in the eyes of God? If so, what steps can you take to regularly remind yourself who you are?

### DAY 5: READING: COLOSSIANS 3:1-3

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about the grace and love of God?

What did you learn about yourself this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Daniel 3 & 4

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11, 4:20

Do you take intentional opportunities to think about the Kingdom of God? Why do you think that is?

In what ways could thinking more about God as your King help you to be a good example in your thoughts and actions?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Ezekiel 1:1-3, 36:16-38, & 37

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I don't regularly think about the Kingdom of God I will inherit in the future. I think about some of my past experiences, my day to day to do list, and dozens of other things throughout the day. But Your Kingdom isn't something that regularly comes to mind. Today, may Your Kingdom be present on my mind. May I remember You as my King, as a warrior who fights for me, a judge who sees me innocently, and a friend who sees me lovingly and will never leave my side. May I remember these truths not only today, but every day. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11, 1 JOHN 3:1-2

Do you struggle to remember who you are in the eyes of God? If so, what steps can you take to regularly remind yourself who you are?

Is there somebody else you struggle to see through the eyes of God? Take the opportunity today to thank God for them.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Daniel 1 & 2

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, there are times when I wake up and look in the mirror and completely forget who *You* say I am. For reasons I may not always understand, I remember who *others* say I am, often in the most negative ways possible. But today I am reminded that I am not who others say or think that I am. Instead, I am who *You* say I am. I am clean. I am holy. I am innocent. May these truths continue to be with me in all of my thoughts and actions today. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



# WEEK #3:

## WE LIVE TO DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD



### DAY 1: HOLINESS FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

If you read through all of the Apostle Paul's letters in the New Testament, you'll come across *lists* of unhealthy, even unholy decisions or behaviors people were making. Sexual immorality was something he brought up quite frequently.

As such, there were some other teachers at the time who preached sexual abstinence, even for those married. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul refutes this teaching. He writes, "...each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband."

This was Paul's way of saying, "Yes, there's sexual immorality, and it's in your best interest to remove that from your lives. But sex itself isn't immoral. In fact, it's a good thing! And couples who are married have tremendous freedom to enjoy it."

What Paul doesn't address here, however, is how an individual or couple can best respond if one of them has experienced sexual abuse or other trauma earlier in life. That's a completely different topic. Instead, he's simply acknowledging that sex itself is *not* immoral, but is *holy* and pure and good within marriage. As you read today, consider this: Do you struggle to think of sex as *holy*, bringing glory to a marriage and to God?

### DAY 2: HOLINESS FOR YOUR FAMILY

As Paul continues writing about the wonders of marriage, he addresses another concern for the people of Corinth - how ought we respond to situations in which one spouse is a believer, and the other is not? The Corinthians worshiped all kinds of Greek/Roman gods, so this type of scenario likely unfolded more and more as the Christian church began to spread.

Paul responds well, and says that the believing spouse brings sanctity to the *whole* marriage, and even the children of this marriage are to be seen as *holy*. It may not be easy to comprehend, but Paul says if just one person in a marriage is a Christian, and everybody else in the family is OK with that, then it's *good* for that one individual to continue practicing their faith as it has a positive impact on the whole of the family unit.

This is yet another way Paul encouraged the people of Corinth to live holy and pure lives. Many people of Corinth would divorce their spouse with little or no notice. This had lasting consequences for the individuals, the families, and even the society as a whole. So Paul encouraged the Christians to put this kind of practice to a stop, and to remember just how much of an impact one individual within a family could make. As you read today, consider this: In what ways can one person positively impact their whole family?

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-9, PROVERBS 5:19

Do you struggle to think of sex as *holy*, bringing glory to a marriage and to God?

Fill in the blank: Sex is \_\_\_\_\_. What are the first 3 words that come to your mind? Are these based more on your own life experiences, or what the Scriptures teach?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Daniel 5 & 6

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I thank You for those in my life who provide me a safe place to talk about subjects such as sex and marriage. I confess that my thoughts about what sex is are not always based on Your Word. Help me to see this area of life in the way You created it to be. Healthy. Pure. And holy. I also pray that my thoughts and actions about sex will lead to more knowledge of who You are, and that this knowledge of You will be evident to all I interact with on a regular basis. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 7:10-16, MATTHEW 19:1-6

In what ways can one person positively impact their whole family?

Who do you know that is both a Christian and married, but is married to somebody who is not a believer? What can you share with them to encourage them this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Daniel 9, 10, & 12

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, our culture today is full of step families and blended families, as well as those who are mixed in their faith beliefs. Today, I'm gratefully reminded that if only *one* person in a marriage is trusting and following You, this will have tremendous benefits for their spouse and their children. So today, I pray for all I know (and even those I don't know) who are wrestling with this in their marriage. Provide them with strength, courage, and peace. May they know that their marriage to You is the relationship that matters most, and may their trust in You ever increase. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: HOLINESS FOR THE UNMARRIED

Admittedly, churches talk about marriage, parenting, relationships, and other topics quite frequently. Why? Because topics such as these often hit upon the majority of the people listening. For the most part, churches in the west have more people who are married and/or parents in attendance than they have people who are single.

But Paul wants to be sure to write to those who are single, too. He basically says, "Don't be frustrated that you're single - embrace it! And if you are engaged to be married - embrace that, too! Don't see your marriage as something that completely defines who you are, and don't let your singleness completely define who you are. You are who God says you are. Remember, that's who you are!"

Some churches today do recognize the importance of speaking about singleness. For example, in his book *The Meaning of Marriage*, Timothy Keller writes, "...if singles learn to rest in and rejoice in their marriage to Christ, that means they will be able to handle single life without a devastating sense of being unfulfilled and unformed." Whether married, divorced, widowed, or single, it's our relationship with Christ that brings fulfillment to our lives. As you read today, consider this: What can you share with a friend who is single that would be encouraging for them to hear?

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-40

What can you share with a friend who is single that would be encouraging for them to hear?

Is it difficult for you to think that you are *married* with Christ? In what ways does using this kind of verbiage impact or change how you view your relationship with God?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Ezra 1 & 2

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, in the same way that ancient cultures taught their children that marriage was essential, we too often communicate the same. But today I'm reminded that while there is tremendous good in marriage, there is also tremendous good in singleness. Marriage doesn't define who we are. Being a parent doesn't define who we are. Our job doesn't define who we are. Only You define who we are. May I remember this truth today and every day; I am who You say I am. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: HOLINESS FOR LIFE

If you were to read 1 Corinthians 7 straight through, many verses would likely jump off the page and give you something to think about. But one verse seems to summarize much of what Paul is trying to communicate in this section of his letter. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:17, "... each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them."

The simplicity of this verse cannot be missed. Are you married? Live as a believer in your marriage. Are you divorced? Live as a believer in your divorce. Are you single? Live as a believer in your singleness. Are you widowed? Live as a believer. You can just picture a few hundred people gathered around listening to this letter being read out loud, many of whom were probably thinking to themselves, "Oh, Paul is just telling us to live as followers of Jesus. The more I know Jesus, the more I'll live the life I'm called to live. So maybe if I get to know Jesus better, I'll better know how to live in whatever circumstance I may experience."

As you read today, consider this: On a scale of 1-10, how well are you getting to know Jesus? In what ways may He be inviting you to get to know Him better?

### READING:

#### 1 PETER 1:15-16, PHILIPPIANS 1:6

On a scale of 1-10, how well are you getting to know Jesus?

In what ways may He be inviting you to get to know Him better?

Which *one* of these ways can you immediately begin to put into practice on a regular basis? If possible, ask somebody else to help you.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Ezra 3 & 4

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I am reminded that You haven't only called me to *be* holy, but have already declared that I *am* holy. What a wonderful God You are! But I confess that I don't always *feel* holy. Instead I sometimes feel less-than. No good. A failure. I recognize these thoughts don't come from You, so I commit my day to remembering that You are good, that You love me, that You've given me a purpose, and that You've given me a future. Truly, there is nothing else more I need than You. May I rest in these truths today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-40

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about the grace and love of God?

What did you learn about yourself this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Ezra 5 & 6

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)



## WEEK #4:

## WE LIVE TO BUILD UP



### DAY 1: POSITIVE INFLUENCE PART I

It's easy to read through parts of the Bible and think, "I wish so-and-so would read this passage. If *they* would just apply this one passage in their life, then my life would be better, too." More rarely do we read through parts of the Bible and think, "Sexual immorality? Yes, that's important for some people. But my thoughts and actions aren't *that* unhealthy for my life." Or, "Love everybody? Wow, it'd be great for so-and-so to read this and apply it, because I don't feel loved by them at all!"

But this way of reading through the Scriptures isn't best. Instead, it's best to read it, understand it's meaning to those in that culture, and then think through how to apply it in our own lives. We serve a very personal God and we need to read and grasp His Word personally in our own lives.

This way of reading the Bible is crucial for 1 Corinthians 8. Why? Because on the surface, 1 Corinthians 8 doesn't seem very applicable to our lives. For example, have you eaten any food that was sacrificed on behalf of Poseidon or Neptune recently? In our culture, most certainly not. But stick with us this week, as 1 Corinthians 8 is full of wisdom. As you read today, consider this: How well do you read the Bible with the thought of, "What is this passage really about, and how can I apply it in my own life?"

### DAY 2: POSITIVE INFLUENCE PART II

Throughout many cultures in the Old Testament, people would sacrifice food to their god(s), and would even leave some of the food in front of small, carved idols in order to give food and drink to their gods. They treated their gods well, believing that if the gods were happy, they would be blessed.

This custom passed down to the Greco-Roman world as well, but the people would not only give food and drink to their gods, but would then also eat the same food themselves so that the food would not spoil.

Apparently, this custom created a large brouhaha within Christianity. If a business partner invited somebody over for dinner, should they eat the food prepared for them, even if it was sacrificed to an idol? Should somebody poor go hungry at a large banquet because the food prepared for them was sacrificed to an idol?

To respond, Paul sticks to his tried and true philosophy of unity and being a positive influence within the community. He basically says, if your decision causes anybody else to waiver in their faith, don't do it. Instead, do whatever you can to build one another up. As you read today, consider this: Think of at least one person who could use a word of encouragement - go and encourage them today.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13, PROVERBS 8:10-11

How well do you read the Bible with the thought of, "What is this passage really about, and how can I apply it in my own life?"

Have you found a specific bible study or journaling method that works well for you? In what ways has it been most helpful?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Zechariah 1:1-6, 2, & 12

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today's reading helps me to see that whether I read the Bible regularly, or very little, there is *much* I can learn from Your Word. I confess there are times when I read or hear something and think to myself, "I really wish so-and-so would apply this in their life!" but I really want my desires to change so that I focus more time and energy on growing myself. This week, lead and guide me to draw a circle around myself, and to keep my focus on everything *inside* that circle. May what I read, pray, and write about help *me* to grow. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13

Who are the three people who have been the most positive influence in your own life? Think about it: What did they do that had such a strong, lasting impact in your life?

Think of at least one person who could use a word of encouragement - go and encourage them today.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Ezra 7 & 8

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, our culture today is quite different than that in the Greco-Roman world, but I also recognize it may not be *as* different as I sometimes make it out to be. The people who lived then were still people. They struggled with the same thoughts and behaviors I often struggle with. They struggled with unity among one another in the same way I struggle with unity with others. Today, help me to keep my focus on the things that matter most. May my thoughts, actions, and words be an encouragement to all. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: POSITIVE INFLUENCE PART III

How do we apply passages like 1 Corinthians 8 today? Perhaps the best way to look at it is to think about a topic that is (1) not an essential teaching within Christianity, and (2) may cause divisiveness among believers.

One such conversation revolves around the consumption of alcohol. Some questions or statements that come up about this topic include:

- Is it *sinful* to consume alcohol?
- It's just a glass of wine with dinner. It's not like I'm getting drunk. That's not a bad thing, is it?
- My grandfather died of liver disease. There's absolutely no good that comes from drinking alcohol.

'Round and 'round the conversation goes. Sometimes, one may even point to a specific scripture passage to make their point, while another will point to a different one to make theirs.

This is *one way* to think about 1 Corinthians 8, though there are likely many, many more. How did Paul respond? In verse 9 he writes, "Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak." As you read today, consider this: What are some other topics in which your *rights* could be a stumbling block for others?

### DAY 4: POSITIVE INFLUENCE PART IV

Throughout this week, we've looked into 1 Corinthians 8 and tried to evaluate it in context of who it was originally written to, and how it would apply to us in our culture today. One final aspect of 1 Corinthians 8 is to recognize that Paul's concern wasn't *just* for a 'weaker' individual. Instead, Paul's concern was how situations could impact the whole of the church, and even the larger society.

For example, if Person A would happen to eat food sacrificed to idols and Person B (who may be 'weaker' in the faith) would happen to see them and stumble as a result, they themselves may do something that would cause another individual to stumble. This pattern may continue over and over again. In fact, this pattern *was* happening in many ways over and over again throughout the church in Corinth, which is why Paul wrote such a lengthy letter to them to begin with!

But in his wisdom, Paul was *always* thinking about the bigger picture. What kind of people must Christians be in order to be a positive example? What kind of decisions must Christians make in order to show they're thinking through things well? How must Christians live in order to show they're living full, abundant lives? As you read today, consider this: In what ways is Christianity having a positive influence on our culture and society?

### DAY 5: READING: PSALM 86:10-13

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about the grace and love of God?

What did you learn about yourself this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Esther 3 & 4

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### READING:

**1 TIMOTHY 5:23, ECCLESIASTES 9:7, EPHESIANS 5:18, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-24**

What do you think Paul meant when he wrote, "Be careful, that the exercise of your 'rights' does not become a stumbling block to the 'weak?'"

What are some other topics in which your *rights* could be a stumbling block for others?

What other questions come to mind as you think through today's reading?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Ezra 9 & 10

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that today's reading has given me much to think about. I recognize that I've gotten hung-up on topics that are not central to the Christian faith, and have the potential to cause division among myself and others. But Father, I don't want to be a person of division. My desire is to be a person of unity. Continue to help me be a person of peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

**1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13**

In what ways is Christianity having a positive influence on our culture and society?

Do you feel like Christians, in general, are truly focused on having a positive influence on our culture and society?

What is one thing *you* can be doing in our own community to have more of a positive influence?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Esther 1 & 2

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I'm not sure I can recall a time in which I've questioned whether the food somebody was putting on the table had been sacrificed to an idol. But I've been in many situations that impact how others see me, my family, or my church. Today, I simply pray that I will recognize and live out the full, abundant life You've provided me. And may I do so in a way that will build others up, not tear them down. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



# WEEK #5:

## WE LIVE TO WORSHIP GOD ALONE



### DAY 1: MORE THAN MISTAKES

At this point in time, Paul had addressed a number of important topics in his letter to the people of Corinth. He wrote about glorifying God with our bodies, managing conflict within the church, marital obligations, and more. Now, Paul focuses on the ancient history of the people of Israel, and how they failed to worship God alone.

While it is likely that the people of Israel knew their history and heritage well, Paul takes the time to draw out some specifics. He writes that the people of Israel in the Old Testament didn't just make minor mistakes, but instead, they made intentional decisions against God. They drank and indulged in revelry (10:7). They committed sexual immorality (10:8). They tested God (10:9). They grumbled against God (10:10). And the consequences they experienced due to these decisions were quite severe.

Finally, knowing that the people of Corinth lived in a society in which followers of Christ would be tempted to commit these same acts against God, he encourages them as strongly as he can by writing, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common for mankind...but God will provide a way out for you (vv. 12-13)." As you read today, consider this: Think of a time when you were tempted in one of the ways mentioned above.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

Think of a time when you were tempted in one of the ways mentioned in today's reading (10:7-10). Were you tempted in any of these ways recently? In what way did God provide a way out for you (10:12-13)?

What are 3-4 things you've learned from your own family history?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Esther 5, 6, & 7

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I recognize that I live in a world and culture in which temptations regularly come my way. I'm tempted to give-in to behaviors that numb me from reality. I'm tempted to think or give-in to sexual immorality. I'm tempted to indulge, to test You, to grumble against You, and more. I pray for wisdom in how to best respond to these temptations, that the *way out* is clear for me. Bring to my mind all the things that distract me from better knowing You and keeping my focus on You. Help me to see how to best remove these distractions from my life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 2: PARTICIPATING WITH GOD

When Paul wrote this letter to the people of Corinth, there was a Greek translation of the Old Testament that was publicly used for reading and teaching. Within this Greek translation, terms such as *idols* or *false gods* in the Old Testament were translated as *demons*. Similarly, the other Greek and Roman gods that were regularly worshiped by the people were also referred to as *demons*. Knowing this, Paul addresses the topic of *participation*. For example, Paul writes In 1 Corinthians 10:20, "...I do not want you to be participants with demons."

This term *participation* is quite strong. It means to have a close association or fellowship with someone, or something. It's much deeper than simply having an *affiliation* with something. Instead, to *participate* is to be united with the beliefs, goals, objectives, etc.

In other words, this was Paul's way of saying, "You can participate in the gospel, and be in fellowship (participation) with Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:9). Or you can be in participation with false gods, idols, or demons. But what you cannot do, is be in participation with both. So ask yourselves, with whom or what are you most participating (experiencing fellowship)? With God, or with God's enemy?" As you read today, consider this question in your own life.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 10:14-22

How often do you pause to think about how well you're *participating* with God or with God's *enemy*?

With whom or what are you most participating (experiencing fellowship)? With God, or with God's enemy?

How will you choose to be in participation with God this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Esther 8, 9, & 10

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I don't regularly view my life as whether I'm *participating* with You or *participating* with Your enemy. I'm grateful that Your word makes it clear that I can only do one or the other: be with You, or against You. While I recognize I will occasionally fail, the lifeline choice I'm making is to be *with* You because You have done everything in Your power to be *with* me. Today, provide me the wisdom to see how I can better participate in life with You. Help me to see that I can participate with You in every part of my life. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: HERE WE GO AGAIN

Try to imagine what it would've been like for the people of Corinth to hear Paul's letter being read out loud from beginning to end. That's how it would've been done. There were no chapters or verses in Paul's letter. Just one long scroll that would've been publicly read from beginning to end.

As they're listening, Paul once again uses a phrase that would've been familiar for all listening. "'I have the right to do anything,' you say—but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'—but not everything is constructive."

Hearing this, one man turns to the person next to him and whispers, "Didn't he just read that a few minutes ago?" "Shhhhh," his neighbor responds. "I'm trying to listen!"

But yes, indeed, Paul did write with these same words back in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. It was a common style in Paul's day to repeat the same phrases to emphasize a point. Apparently, this was a point Paul *really* wanted to make. It's as if Paul uses this opportunity to say, "I'm here to teach you, but what I most want to teach you is to *think*. Stop saying, 'Everything is permissible,' because if you pause to think, you'll come to see that not everything is beneficial." As you read today, consider this: How often do you think through the outcome of your thoughts/actions?

### DAY 4: DO EVERYTHING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

"Think about the things that are tempting you to sin against God. Think about the truth that you can either *participate* with God, or *participate* with God's enemy. Think about the truth that you cannot do both. Think about your life choices. Think about your decisions. Think everything through."

This is summary of what Paul has written throughout 1 Corinthians chapter 10. And now as he gets to the conclusion of this part of the letter, he writes, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (10:31)."

If the people of Corinth were wondering, "How do we live?" Paul doesn't leave them any wiggle room in his response. "You eat. You drink. You commit to your spouse. You handle conflict well. You be a positive influence. You speak encouraging words. You do *everything* for the glory of God." Elsewhere, Paul writes that God's followers were created by God and for His glory (Colossians 1:16). So in essence, Paul is simply encouraging the people of Corinth to be the people God has already made them to be. And by *being* who God made them to be, they'll naturally *do* everything that is good and holy. It starts with *who we are*, and the outcome of that is *how we live*. As you read today, consider this: What do you think it means that you were created for the glory of God?

### DAY 5: READING: PSALM 139:23-24

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about the grace and love of God?

What did you learn about yourself this week? What did you learn about yourself this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 5 & 6

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-11:1

How often do you pause to think through the outcome of your actions? Your words? Your thoughts?

What would it look like for you to pause more regularly to think of the possible outcomes of your actions, words and/or thoughts?

How would pausing to think through the outcome of your actions, words, and/or thoughts draw you closer to God?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 1 & 2

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I'm grateful that Paul didn't just *once* write the phrase, "...not everything is beneficial," but he instead repeated it to help me recognize that just because I *can* do something, doesn't mean it's *good* for me to do so. Today, I pray for Your wisdom in how to better think through all areas of life. Help me to see the negative consequences of my worldly thoughts and actions, and the positive outcomes of my godly thoughts and actions, so that I may continue to grow into the person You've made me to be. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-11:1, COLOSSIANS 1:16

What do you think it means that you were created for the glory of God?

In what ways does this lead you to be able to do *everything* for the glory of God?

What questions, if any, do you have from the reading this week? How will you find answers to those questions?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 3 & 4

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, as I read through Your Word, it's easy for me to get caught up thinking about what I need *to do* instead of first focusing on who You've made me *to be*. But my desire is *to be* the person You've made me to be, so that I may *live* in the way You desire me *to live*. Today, may I rejoice in the truth that I was created for Your glory. And because I was created for Your glory, may I continue to live the life You've called me to live. Thank You for the wisdom You offer to help me live this life well. In Jesus' name. Amen.



## WEEK #6:

## WE LIVE IN EQUALITY



### DAY 1: BE MODEST

If you were to be a world traveler, you would take the opportunity to research the countries and cities in which you'd be traveling. You'd read about the sites to see, the foods they eat, and the clothes they wear. Upon arrival, you would most likely have plans in place, including where to shop, where to eat, and what to wear.

In the Greco-Roman world, one of the appropriate dress styles of the day for women was to wear head coverings. Similar to dress in the Middle-East today, whereas women wear hijab's, women in Corinth would wear a head-covering to show that they were married. Women who chose not to do so were considered promiscuous and immodest.

While we don't focus much attention on head coverings in our culture, we still have cultural ideals about modesty.

This is the very subject Paul addresses early in 1 Corinthians 11. He's not addressing inequality between men and women. Instead, he's writing to encourage both men and women to be modest in their appearance and actions, so as to not draw any negative attention to themselves or the church in Corinth. As you read today, consider this: What are 3-4 ways Christians today can set an appropriate example regarding modesty?

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

What are 3-4 ways Christians today can set an appropriate example regarding modesty?

What would be the best way for Christians today to communicate about the importance of modesty?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 7 & 8

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, it's apparent to me that people within our culture today have very different thoughts and ideas about what it means to be modest. What I may perceive to be of modest appearance may differ from what others perceive to be of modest appearance. As such, I simply pray for wisdom as to how I may be able to live a more modest lifestyle. May my actions and my appearance be a godly example to others. And may my words, actions and appearance be an encouragement to others, so that You use me to strengthen Your people, and not tear them down. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 2: BE HONORABLE

Take the opportunity once again to think about what it would've been like to live in ancient times. As you walk through the market, you were likely to see hundreds of men with short hair or shaved heads, as was the norm. The few you may have seen with long hair were likely prostitutes in pagan temples. Similarly, you would see hundreds of women with long hair, as was the norm. The few you may have seen with short hair were likely prostitutes in and around the pagan temples. This, of course, is a completely foreign idea for us. But it does make 1 Corinthians 11 much easier to understand.

In the same way Paul was addressing the importance of head coverings, he took the opportunity to address the length of men and women's hair. But his concern had nothing to do with their hair, and had everything to do with ensuring that they were seen as honorable individuals throughout the community.

This follows many of the themes expressed throughout Paul's letter: have strong marriages, be united, build one another up, remove all kinds of immorality, worship God alone. These themes are shared over and over again throughout Paul's letter. Those who heard this letter being read in public would've recognized the value of Paul's wisdom. As you read today, consider this: In what ways are Christians today not setting an example of honorable living?

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

In what ways are Christians today not setting an example of honorable living?

How can Christians today set a better example of honorable living?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 9

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, Your Word reveals so much about the wonders of who You are; Your loving, compassionate nature. Today I simply pray that I will continue to know You, and that I may grow into the person You have made me to be. You have made me to be loving towards others, and I want to be more loving. You have made me to be gracious towards others, and I want to be more gracious. You have made me to forgive others, and I want to be more forgiving. You have made me to be united with others, and I want to be more united. You have made me to be honorable, and I want to be more honorable. Today, Father, my desire is to rest in You in everything. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: BE UNITED

According to a 2017 study, 1% of the world's population has 50% of the world's wealth. Other statistics indicate that just 6% of the world's population has 72% of the world's wealth.

This is not to say that every one of the world's wealthiest individuals are immoral. But it does show that, overall, the world's richest individuals likely have a different view of lower class society than those who have little wealth. Similarly, those with little wealth likely have a different view of upper class society than those who have tremendous wealth.

In the ancient city of Corinth, the wealthy and the poor struggled with this dynamic as well, even within the church. Wealthy church members were continuing to have large dinner gatherings with their friends, while poor church members were going hungry. Upon learning of this, Paul was enraged. He writes, "What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter (11:22)!"

Instead, Paul encouraged *all* Christians, whether rich or poor, men or women, to come together for the Lord's Supper. He desired each individual to examine him/herself, to identify any ungodly thoughts or actions they may have about wealth or gender. As you read today, consider this: How regularly do you examine your thoughts and actions regarding those of a different wealth? Gender? Race?

### DAY 4: BE EQUAL

Did you know that only 500 words make up over 90% of our everyday language? It's true. While our vocabulary is vast, we generally rely on a minority of words to communicate the majority of our speech.

One word that is not one of the most commonly used words in our culture is *equality*. Not only is it not one of the 500 most commonly used words, it's not even in the top 1,000.

While it's impossible to know how regularly words like '*equal*' or '*equality*' were used in ancient Corinth, it's clearly one of the themes Paul presents in his writings. But Paul doesn't just say, "Live in equality." He goes one step further. Whether writing to the people of Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, or other cities, Paul emphasized that Christians already *are* equal. It doesn't matter if you're male or female, rich or poor, black or white, married or unmarried. What matters is Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, and following Him. Jesus didn't discriminate based on sex, status, or wealth, and one of the marks of Christianity is to be followers of Jesus, becoming more and more like Him each and every day. As you read today, consider this: How would you define *equality*?

### DAY 5: READING: PROVERBS 22:2

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about the grace and love of God?

What did you learn about yourself this week?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 12

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-33

How regularly do you examine your thoughts and actions regarding those of a different wealth? Gender? Race?

How may God be inviting you to give more time and attention to thinking about wealth, gender, or race? Be specific.

Who can you ask to help you follow through on how you answered the above question?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 10

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, Your Word is clear in communicating the importance of unity among Your people. I confess there are times when unity is hard for me. There are times when I get frustrated with a fellow Christian. There are times when I get frustrated about things that are outside my control. Today, I'm simply reminded that most of life is outside my control. But one thing inside my control is how well I follow You, and how well I choose to be united with others. Continue to provide me with wisdom in how I may live in unity with others. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### READING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-33, MARK 2:13-17

How would you define *equality*?

On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think Christians today are setting a godly example regarding equality?

How may God be inviting you to better share with others what His Word says regarding equality?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Nehemiah 11

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that the topic of *equality* sometimes leads to tense conversations, as there are many different thoughts and opinions about what it means to live in equality. Today I pray that I would not fear conversations about equality, but I would instead embrace them. I pray that You would help me better listen to those who have a different perspective. That You would give me wisdom to learn from these other perspectives. And that You would bring to light any ungodly thoughts I may have about inequality of wealth, gender, or race. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



# H.E.A.R.

## BIBLE STUDY METHOD



### HIGHLIGHT:

After reading 1-2 Chapters of Scripture, *Highlight* the verses that speak to you by writing out the following:

- ❖ Write down the name of the book.
- ❖ Write down the Chapter and verses.
- ❖ Write down a 1-3 word title (eg. Why does this passage speak to me?)

### EXPLAIN:

Engage with the text and wrestle with its meaning. Some *possible* questions to consider include:

- ❖ Who was the passage written to?
- ❖ Why was it written?
- ❖ How does it fit in with surrounding verses?
- ❖ What may God be communicating through this passage?

### APPLY:

Consider how you may be able to apply the text in *Real Life*. Some *possible* questions to consider include:

- ❖ How can this passage help me?
- ❖ How can I apply this passage in my life today?
- ❖ What is God saying to me?

### RESPOND:

Finally, *respond* to God. This can be done in any number of ways, but make it sincere.

- ❖ Write out a prayer (eg. Ask God to help you become more loving, or grace-filled, or content, etc.)
- ❖ Sing, write a poem, paint, sketch, take a photo, or find some other creative way to respond to God.
- ❖ Commit to a certain action.
- ❖ Who is God inviting me to be?
- ❖ What's my next step in becoming that person?

