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ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

Matthew 19:26 "But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

1. According to Matthew 19:26, what things are possible with God?

All things.

"So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God." For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Mark 11:22-24

2. According to Mark 11:22-24, what must we do to see the impossible come to pass?

Believe, have faith in God.

Faith is supernatural. The phrase in Greek for "faith in God" in Mark 11:22-24 is *pistin theou*, which would make the phrase literally "faith of God" or "faith from God" in the sense of faith given by God for miracles. In other words, we are dependent upon God even to believe. Read the verse and commentary below and discuss how important faith is to answer prayer. Discuss what we can do to receive faith or see our faith grow.

Mark 9:23, "Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "I often think of an old picture taken of me outside of our first church on Kawanee in Metairie. I was standing by our church sign, which had the scripture on it that says, "All things are possible to him that believes." In those early days there was an incredible excitement and expectancy in our services, we knew great things were ahead of us. Our joy and faith were overflowing their banks. Faith is the supernatural ingredient that makes everything come alive, it is the supernatural deposit of God in our hearts. When His faith is present, no problem seems too big, and no challenge seems too extreme. The Lord is sufficient in every circumstance. John Calvin made some interesting observations about faith in his comments on this verse, trying to

get past the old language and enjoy the hidden nuggets in his words.

'If thou canst believe. "You ask me," says he, "to aid you as far as I can; but you will find in me an inexhaustible fountain of power, provided that the faith which you bring be sufficiently large." Hence may be learned a useful doctrine, which will apply equally to all of us, that it is not the Lord that prevents his benefits from flowing to us in large abundance, but that it must be attributed to the narrowness of our faith, that it comes to us only in drops, and that frequently we do not feel even a drop, because unbelief shuts up our heart. It is an idle exercise of ingenuity to prove Christ's meaning to be, that a man can believe of himself: for nothing more was intended than to throw back on men the blame of their poverty, whenever they disparage the power of God by their unbelief. All things are possible to him that believes. Christ undoubtedly intended to teach that the fullness of all blessings has been given to us by the Father, and that every kind of assistance must be expected from him alone in the same manner as we expect it from the hand of God. "Only exercise," says he, "a firm belief, and you will obtain." In what manner faith obtains any thing for us we shall immediately see.'

Thinking back to those services at Kawanee, I think of the supernatural atmosphere that gave birth to so many miracles. I remember the young girl in her pink hot pants that was gloriously saved, the single mom that had a dramatic deliverance from demons in a Sunday morning service, and who could forget the night we sang in the Spirit for hours as people broke into spontaneous interpretive dancing. Those were very special days, so are the ones we live in now. Young women are still being saved, demons are being cast out, and we are still dancing after all of these years. I guess Jesus was right after all, 'All things are possible to him that believes.' (The Bailey Drink, April 22, 2012)

3. Is there anything too hard for the Lord?

Nothing is impossible for our God. He is the God that opened Sarah's womb and quickened Abraham's body in order to bring forth a child. He gave the word of promise to Sarah and it was as good as done. Timing was just the issue. If God said it, then it is done. There truly is nothing too difficult for our God. He is the God that parted the Red Sea. He is the God that raised Lazarus from the dead, that healed blind Bartimaeus, that delivered the Gadarene demoniac, and the list is endless. The Spirit of the Lord will not be restricted from accomplishing His will. Read the verses below and discuss as a group. Also have the group share any testimonies of impossible things the Lord has done.

Genesis 18:14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

Romans 9:9 "For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."

Jeremiah 32:27 "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"

Micah 2:7 "You who are named the house of Jacob: "Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted?"

Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing will be impossible."

Luke 1:48 The Message "God took one good look at me and look what happened, I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!"

4. To whom do we look?

We look to the Promiser.

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, "Look, from faith to the promise and from the promise to the Promiser, and yes, laugh with God as He performs in us His purpose!" If we have our eyes fixed on the impossible circumstance we face, then we may not believe. Peter did fine walking on the water when his eyes were fixed on Jesus. It was only when he began to observe the wind and the waves that he began to sink. There may be times when we cry out like the man in Mark 9:24, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" Let's look at what Hebrews 3:12 says about unbelief and how not to yield to it.

Mark 9:23–24 "Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

Hebrews 3:12 "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "People tend to get a little technical or rigid when dealing with the topic of faith. In this somewhat disturbing scripture we learn that unbelief flows out of an evil heart. At first glance that may seem a little harsh, but is it? Most of us think of unbelief as not any big deal, we just need more faith. The Lord says that unbelief is actually the fruit of a heart separated from God. That's all a lost person can do is disbelieve. Faith is actually the fruit of a clean heart born again with the nature of Christ. Here is how Andrew Murray sees it.

"Ah! there is the lack. I pray you, remember two things. I have not told you to trust the omnipotence of God as a thing, and I have not told you to trust the Word of God as a written book, but I have told you to go to the God of omnipotence and the God of the Word. Deal with God as that nobleman dealt with the living Christ.

Why was he able to believe the word that Christ spoke to him? Because in the very eyes and tones and voice of Jesus, the Son of God, he saw and heard something which made him feel that he could trust Him. And that is what Christ can do for you and me. Do not try to stir and arouse faith from within. How often I have tried to do that, and made a fool of myself! You cannot stir up faith from the depths of your heart. Leave your heart, and look into the face of Christ, and listen to what He tells you about how He will keep you. Look up into the face of your loving Father, and take time every day with Him, and begin a new life with the deep emptiness and poverty of a man who has got nothing, and who wants to get everything from Him—with the deep restfulness of a man who rests on the living God, the omnipotent Jehovah—and try God, and prove Him if He will not open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room to receive it".

Murray has a whole different spin on faith. He sees faith as a direct result of having a deep, personal relationship with The Lord. Think about it, who do you trust in the natural world? Do you trust complete strangers? Of course not. You have faith in the people you really know, the people who have gained your trust through relationship and through their behavior over the years. When we apply this same truth to The Lord, our faith grows out of our relationship with Him. The deeper we move into the life of intimacy, the more our faith is strengthened. So, rather than unbelief flowing out of an evil heart, we have faith flowing out of a pure heart, a heart purified by His blood and renewed by His Spirit. (The Bailey Drink, September 1, 2013)

5. Does anyone have a story of the impossible?

If someone recently received an answer to prayer, have them share the testimony.

As a group, pray for the things. Have the people in your group discuss some of the things they are believing God for.

WHAT IS FAITH?

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Let's look at Hebrews 11:1 in the amplified translation for some additional insight. *"Faith is the substance, the assurance, and the evidence of those things, which cannot be experienced by our physical senses."*

1. Read and discuss the following verse and commentary.

Hebrews 11:1 (Amplified) "Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses]."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "Several years ago I began to alter what I would say is my definition of faith. I used to think faith was based on my response to God's word. Today, I don't think it is quite that simple. There is a little thing called human depravity that seems to get in the way. We all have good intentions. We will just leave it at that. Our good intentions never seem to take us far enough. Today I believe faith is actually initiated in heaven. The Lord opens the eyes of my heart to His glorious grace. Suddenly, I am no longer blind. My eyes can see, my ears can hear, and I can actually respond to His word in faith. Here is how Martin Luther describes this mystery called faith. 'Faith changes people. It makes them see everything in a new light. Their ears hear, their eyes see, and their hearts feel something completely different from what everyone else perceives. Faith is living and powerful. It's not a simpleminded idea. It doesn't float around in the heart like a goose on the water. Rather, it's like water that's been heated. After heating, the water is different. It's still water, but it's warm. The same thing happens when the Holy Spirit gives us faith. Faith transforms the mind and attitudes. It creates an entirely new person. Faith is active, profound, and powerful. If people were to describe faith correctly, they would say it's a process, not a result. In other words, faith changes the heart and mind. Reason tends to concentrate on what is present—the here and now. Faith concerns itself with things that are intangible and, contrary to reason, regards them as actually being present. That is why faith isn't as

common among people as the five senses are. Considering the number of people in the world, there are relatively few believers. Most people concern themselves with what they can see, touch, and handle rather than listening to God's Word.'

Many of the miracles of Jesus deal with our natural senses. He healed the blind and deaf so that they could function in the physical world. In the same way, spiritual blindness and deafness incapacitate us. It is pretty hard to function when you can't see or hear. The grace of God restores our ability to perceive the kingdom of God. This is what faith is. It is the ability to perceive as real the unseen world of the Spirit. So this is how my definition of faith has been changed. I now see faith as the opening up of my ability to perceive as real the kingdom of God. (The Bailey Drink, August 24, 2013)

2. According to Hebrews 11:3 below, by faith we do what?
Understand.

3. Read and discuss the following verse and commentary.

Hebrews 11:3 "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "By faith we understand,' is a powerful description or glimpse into the amazing world of faith. You see faith is not blind but is actually quite the opposite. Faith is the divine influence on our heart that opens our perception of the spiritual realm. Faith actually opens our spiritual eyes so that God's world becomes real to us. Not only does the Lord become real, He becomes quite attractive to us. As King Solomon said, 'He is altogether lovely'. You see, this is the true litmus test, has your heart been affected by the reality of God's kingdom? As Wesley said, has your heart been 'strangely warmed'? Faith actually ignites our passion for God, this becomes the engine that drives our lives. Matthew Henry describes this influence of God upon our soul in his commentary on this passage.

'Faith demonstrates to the eye of the mind the reality of those things that cannot be discerned by the eye of the body. Faith is the firm assent of the soul to the divine revelation and every part of it, and sets to its seal that God is true. It is a full approbation of all that God has revealed as holy, just, and good; it helps the soul to make application of all to itself with suitable affections and endeavors; and so it is designed to serve the believer instead of sight, and to be to the soul all that the senses are to the body.'

The opening of our eyes by faith enables us to actually function in this spiritual world. A man who is naturally blind is hindered in his ability to perform the most basic of tasks. He is extremely limited by his inability to see. Spiritual blindness also impedes our ability to function in this world. As our spiritual perception is awakened by faith, we are able to begin to function and perform in unprecedented ways. Charles Spurgeon says it like this.

'Faith engages on my side the omnipotence of Jehovah. Faith ensures every attribute of God in my defense. It helps me to defy the hosts of hell. It makes me march triumphant over the necks of my enemies. But without faith how can I receive anything of the Lord? Let not him that wavereth—who is like a wave of the Sea—expect that he will receive anything of God! O, then, Christian, watch well thy faith; for with it thou canst win all things, however poor thou art, but without it thou canst obtain nothing. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.'

"Without faith we are at an extreme disadvantage in life, when our faith is activated by God's grace, everything changes, we actually can begin to operate in the spiritual world as the Lord intended. You enter into the life of Victory that all of our hearts long for."
(The Bailey Drink, March 22, 2012)

4. What must we believe in? What must we have faith in? What must we do?

According to John 6:29 below, we are to believe in Christ. We are to believe that God is able and willing to bring us into a place of faith, into a place of receiving all He has to reveal to us. The only possible way to please God is to have faith in Him.

5. Read and discuss the verse and commentary below.

John 6:28–29 "Then they said to Him, What shall we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "How does someone please God? Hebrews says that without faith it is impossible to please God. That leaves fallen man in quite a dilemma. Faith comes from God, it is impossible for fallen man to display Bible Faith. Faith is a gift. Then how can a lost person be saved? That's where grace comes in. Grace is not a license to sin, far from it. Grace is the effect of God on our heart that begins to awaken faith. That's what makes grace so amazing, it is all of God. Martin Luther lived his life in amazement of God's grace after he was born again. Listen to Luther's powerful description of the work that pleases God.

'If we want to know how to receive God's grace, how to approach him, how to satisfy the penalty for our sins, how to receive forgiveness of sin and escape death, then we must do what God wants and believe in Christ. Faith is the work we must do. Yet faith is also called God's work. Later, Christ tells us how we are able to believe, for no one can believe on his or her own. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44). He also says, "No one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him" (John 6:65).

For faith is a divine work that God asks us to do. But at the same time, God must give us faith, for we can't believe on our own. What an excellent passage this is! Like a lightning bolt, it strikes down all wisdom and righteousness, every law and commandment, even the law of Moses. It lays before us a different work--a work that is above and beyond us. We cannot grasp Christ with our thoughts or our reason. Therefore, faith cannot be our own work. We are drawn to Christ, even though we can neither feel him nor see him.'

Our spiritual journey begins by faith. Every step we make in Christ is also by faith. This faith too is the work of God. Knowing this brings me to my knees, knowing this displays my utter dependency on God. Are you facing challenges and circumstances too big for you? You may think they are also too big for your faith. Here's the good news, we are dependent not on our faith but the faith of God. Today, look to Him, faith and love are found in Christ. His faith will pull you through." (The Bailey Drink, February 06, 2015)

6. How does faith come?

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Faith comes as a gift of God, for He has dealt each a measure of faith. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

7. Read and discuss the following verses. Also discuss practical ways or things we can do to create an atmosphere of faith in our lives.

Romans 1:16-17 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Romans 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."

Hebrews 12:2 "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

8. What kind of life has God called us to live?

God has called us to live a life of faith. Read and discuss the following verses. Have the group discuss what living a life of faith looks like.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

1 Timothy 6:12 "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

Hebrews 4:2 "For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it."

9. How do we receive anything from God?

We believe. It is all by faith. We get saved by faith. We get healed by faith. We get baptized in water and in the Spirit by faith. We get set free by faith. We serve others by faith. All that we do is to be done by faith for the Glory of God. Read and discuss the following verses and commentary. Have the group discuss areas in their lives where God is challenging them to step out in faith. Spend some time praying over those areas.

Matthew 9:22 "But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour."

Matthew 9:29 "Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith let it be to you."

James 2:20 "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

James 1:6-7 "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord."

Mark 11:24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, receive them, and you will have them."

Pastor Frank writes, "Paul called faith a substance. It is actually touching the reality of the unseen world. Don't you realize that there is an invisible world that most people are unaware of? Faith perceives that alternate reality. Faith doesn't bring things into existence, God does. Faith just makes it real to us. We get saved by faith, we are freed from the shackles of sinful behavior by faith, and we can even be delivered from addictions by the power of faith in God. It actually touches the realm of the supernatural, where all things become possible. A. B. Simpson had a great way of describing the realm of faith, check it out.

'Faith is not working up by willpower a sort of certainty that something is coming to pass. Rather, it is seeing as an actual fact that God has said this thing shall come to pass—and that it is true—and then rejoicing to know that it is true. It is simply resting and entering into it because God has said it. Faith turns the promise into a prophecy. While it is merely a promise it is contingent upon our cooperation. It may or may not be. But when faith claims it, it becomes a prophecy and we go forth feeling that it is something that must be done because God cannot lie. Faith is the answer from the throne saying, "It is done." Faith is the echo of God's voice. Let us catch it from on high. Let us repeat it and go out to triumph in its glorious power.

Hear the answer from the throne, Claim the promise, doubting one, God hath spoken, "It is done." Faith hath answered, "It is done;" Prayer is over, praise begun, Hallelujah! It is done.'

I love that statement, 'faith turns promise into a prophecy'. When our faith is awakened, the things hoped for become real to us. Even better, God Himself becomes real to us. Far too often our beliefs are just that, concepts about a spiritual things and a person called God that are just that to us, concepts. When faith comes we understand what Paul meant by his word substance. Heaven is no longer a concept. We have tasted the edge of it. Jesus is no longer a concept, He has become our friend. The Holy Spirit is not

some vague idea about power or revelation; He is the unseen person that is as real to us as the air we breathe. The Bible is not a handbook for success, a series of empowerment slogans, or even a book of principles to live our life by. The Bible is the living breathing word of God. Faith brings His words alive to us; in it The Lord is speaking to us as a Father and a friend." (The Bailey Drink, April 4, 2014)

CONFESS AND BELIEVE

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

Romans 10:9 "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

1. How do we receive salvation and forgiveness of sins?

We must believe. Salvation and forgiveness of our sins come through faith. Read the following verses and discuss how important believing is to our eternal destination. Also discuss what must be believed.

Romans 10:8-11, "But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Colossians 1:13-14, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,"

Acts 16:31, "So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

2. How do we receive righteousness?

We must believe. We receive God's righteousness by faith. Read the following

verses and discuss how we are made righteous and what promises are available to us as a result of the imparted or imputed righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Romans 3:21-22 "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference."

Genesis 15:6 "And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Romans 4:1-8, "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."

Proverbs 12:28, "In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death."

Proverbs 10:6 "Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked."

Psalms 92:12-14 "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing."

3. How do we receive Freedom?

We must believe. Our freedom was purchased by Christ at Calvary. Just like salvation and righteousness, we receive our freedom by faith. Read and discuss the following scriptures and commentary regarding the freedom of God. It is time to take God at His word and receive the freedom that is ours in Christ.

Romans 6:22 "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of

God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life."

2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

John 8:31-32 "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 8:36 "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Galatians 5:1 (NASB) "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

Romans 8:15-16 "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "For years I struggled with the concept of spiritual adoption because I just didn't understand it. Once you taste the reality of adoption it actually becomes precious to us. Many adopted children live in wonderful homes with great parents who take good care of them, but something deep down inside of them wants to know about their biological parents. They want to know where they came from. When I was growing up, one of my best friends was adopted. His parents never told him that he was adopted, but he knew that he was. His parents were fair skinned, Anglo-Saxon people of average height, and my friend had dark skin and dark hair and was about one and a half feet taller than his dad. He had obviously looked at his mom and dad and realized that they weren't his biological parents. It didn't take a genius to figure it out. Nevertheless, they didn't tell him. Even though he knew his parents loved him, my friend always struggled with who he was. He struggled all his life with questions like, "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" and "What is my origin?"

When I would look at God's adoption of us, I thought it was wonderful that He adopted us and gave us a break. But then I realized that a difference exists between adoption in the natural world and adoption in the spiritual world. The Bible says that God sent the "Spirit of adoption" into our hearts. As an adopted child in the natural world, you cannot take on the biological nature of your adoptive parents. You cannot take on their chemistry. They can love you. They can provide for you. They can be your father and your mother in every sense of the word, but biologically you didn't come from them. The

Bible says that when we became children of God, He sent His Seed, His Word, and His Spirit into our hearts, not symbolically but in reality. He planted the essence of God inside of you when you accepted Him as your Savior. He placed the nature of the Holy One within you. A royal seed was planted inside your heart. It's different from what the world has. We are connected with our Heavenly Father by more than just a legal contract in which He has agreed to provide us with food, lodging, work, and eternal life.

I don't want an arrangement like that, where I never get to see the Father, where I just have all my needs cared for. My greatest need isn't my physical provision. My greatest need is to be loved. My greatest need is a relationship. Our Father does much more for us than just meet our physical needs. Out of a thankful heart we cry, "Lord, we love all the gifts that You give us. Lord, we appreciate all that You do for us. Thank You, Lord, for the great job. Thank You, Lord, for the car. Thank You, Lord, for the clothes You have given me. Thank You, Lord, for everything that you have provided. But, Lord, more than anything, I thank You that You have given me Yourself so that I can know You, so that I can walk with You." (The Bailey Drink, May 15, 2015)

4. How are we sanctified?

We must believe. We are sanctified by the Spirit and faith in the truth. We are changed by the working of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word of God. Read and discuss the following scriptures and commentary regarding sanctification.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 "...God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth."

1 Thessalonians 5:23 "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

Romans 6:22 (NASB) "But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life."

Hebrews 7:25 "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

Hebrews 7:25 (Amplified) "Therefore He is able also to save forever (completely, perfectly, for eternity) those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede and intervene on their behalf [with God]."

Regarding Hebrews 7:25 Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "He is able to save us to the uttermost. The greek word is panteles. It has the connotation of perfectly, completely, and perpetually. I love the shades of meaning in this verse in the Amplified Bible. Heb. 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity)... How can Christ do this for us? This verse goes on to say that "He ever liveth to make intercession". He is praying for me and representing me before the Father. He is saving me to the uttermost. Andrew Murray had great insight into this life behind the veil initiated by Christ. Check this out.

'The great complaint of Christians is that their experience is so changeful the blessed sense of God's love and grace passes away, and that what they know of the keeping, cleansing power of Christ does not last; the sense of nearness to God does not abide continually. It is somehow as if there is a necessity of its being lost. With change of circumstances, alas, comes too often change in the nearness of God and His saving power. Could what Christ does for them at times but be maintained continuously, could it but abide, their joy would be full, their salvation complete. We have here the very promise such Christians need. Because he abideth for ever, because He ever liveth to make intercession, because He is a Priest for ever, who exercises every function of His office in an endless life- power, that never for a moment intermits its action, He is able to save completely. In Himself He has been perfected for evermore, with Himself He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The salvation He has wrought out is a life in the opened sanctuary of God's presence in the power of God's Spirit; all that is needed is that the believer be kept abiding for ever, ever living in this salvation- life which Jesus has opened up. And this he can do, when once he learns to trust to Jesus for it, because he understands that He ever liveth to make intercession.'

How does this teaching affect us in our everyday life? Since Jesus has entered into the Father's presence with His blood to represent me, I can come boldly into the Father's presence. This is not just a one time or an occasional visit, we have been introduced to a new and living way. We now have a new life behind the veil. Whatever areas you have struggled with in the past you now have forgiveness and much more than forgiveness. He is able to save to the uttermost. We are no longer bound by our past but set free into this new and living way, into this life behind the veil." (The Bailey Drink, June 5, 2013)

YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU WELL

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

Jeremiah 30:17 "For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds, says the Lord."

1. What does God's word say concerning health and healing?

Read the following verses aloud in the group and discuss the promises of health and healing that are included here.

Jeremiah 33: "Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth."

Exodus 23:25 "So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you."

Psalms 41:3 "The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed."

Exodus 15:26 "He said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you."

Psalms 107:20-21 "He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Isaiah 53:5 "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

3 *John 2 "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."*

Psalms 103:2-4 "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives

all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies."

Psalm 91:14-16 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

2. Is supernatural healing possible today?

Yes, it is because Jesus has not changed.

Matthew 9:35 "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Pastor Frank writes, "Everywhere Jesus ministered, He ministered healing to the sick and deliverance to those bound by the enemy. The apostles followed in His steps after the Lord's death, signs and wonders were a major part of that first Pentecostal outpouring. In the early twentieth century there was a powerful Pentecostal outpouring often characterized by the healing power found in the name of Jesus. One of the leaders in that revival was George Jeffreys who had numerous healing miracles in his crusades. Here is something Jeffreys said about the healing power of The Lord. "He touches the lifeless limb and the crutch is cast to one side. The bath-chair becomes empty. The spinal carriage is discarded. Healing, ye who are blind. Jesus is passing this way. Healing, ye whose ears are stopped. He is here today to open them. Wipe away your tears, ye sorrowing ones. Rejoice, ye who are sad. He comes, the Prince of Life, the Great Physician. The Bread of Healing. Make your need known unto Him. He is interested in your case, He understands it. Bless Him, He can go to the seat of the trouble and can remove it. He is still touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever – the unchanging One, the Great I Am. He is the center of blessing, the source from which the healing stream flows to suffering humanity. Be not beset by fears that Christ is changed, or that the days of miracles are past and gone forever. As soon as the need of healing arose He met the need."

Jesus is still touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is moved by what moves you. Are you hurting today? Are you suffering from some sickness or injury? Jesus is still the

same today, His power hasn't diminished, His will hasn't changed, His compassions and mercies are still new every morning. As soon as the need of healing arises, Jesus is there to meet the need. How can you receive your healing? It is very simple, come to Him as a child. Look to Him, ask Him to touch you. Seek Him in His word, press into Him in prayer, get in a church where the power of God is welcome and moving; before you know it, you will be experiencing the healing power of The Lord." (The Bailey Drink, July 21, 2013)

3. What role does faith play in receiving healing?

Let's look at the woman with the issue of blood for some insight.

Luke 8:43-48 "Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?" But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

Mark 5:25-28 "Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

She had touched the anointing by faith and received her miracle. Her faith was active. She reached out and touched the hem of his garment, expecting to receive her healing, and power went into her that healed her body. When we find ourselves facing sickness and disease we need to put ourselves near Jesus and reach out and touch him, expecting to receive. For with God, nothing is impossible. We need to say like the woman, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." Healing is His will and is part of our inheritance.

Pastor Frank writes, "Who touched me?" what a strange thing for Jesus to say. The crowds were pushing and shoving, hundreds of people touched Him that day, but there

was something different about this touch. This touch made real contact. Jesus felt the anointing go out of Him. He knew someone had received their miracle. Have you ever touched God? You say you are not sure? Impossible! When you touch Him, I mean really touch Him, you will know for sure. Things change at the touch of God. This touch is actually making contact with the Holy Spirit. This is what our need is, to have a real, intimate relationship with the Living God. This woman needed a physical healing for sure, but she also needed much more than a healing. Her soul was sick, she was tormented by her problems. Just like today, medical issues spill over into the other parts of our lives. This woman's sickness and the resulting bills were affecting everything; she needed a miracle, nothing less would do for her. The lady with the issue of blood experienced life change that day. Not only was her body healed, but her soul was restored. She could never forget the life she experienced every time remembered His words, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace.' Get hungry for the touch of God. Soak yourself in His Word and an atmosphere of worship. Begin to reach out to Him in faith. Before long, you may experience the life changing power of His Presence. You may hear His words, 'Daughter(son), your faith has made you whole. Go in peace'." (The Bailey Drink, October 21, 2010)

3. What role does understanding authority and faith for healing play in receiving our healing?

Let's look at the story of the faith of the Roman Centurion for some insight.

Matthew 8:5-10,13 "Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour."

Pastor Frank writes, "Christ displayed this authority over creation during His earthly ministry. Matthew Henry points out how a Roman centurion recognized this authority in Christ.

"The centurion's faith in the power of Christ he here illustrates by the dominion he had, as a centurion, over his soldiers, as a master over his servants; he says to one, Go, and he goes, They were all at his beck and command, so as that he could by them execute things at a distance; his word was a law to them; well-disciplined soldiers know that the commands of their officers are not to be disputed, but obeyed. Thus could Christ speak, and it is done; such a power had he over all bodily diseases. The centurion had this command over his soldiers, though he was himself a man under authority; not a commander-in-chief, but a subaltern officer; much more had Christ this power, who is the supreme and sovereign Lord of all. The centurion's servants were very obsequious, would go and come at every the least intimation of their master's mind."

This centurion understood authority. He commanded his soldiers by delegated authority from Rome. He recognized the spiritual authority when He was confronted with Christ. He knew that sickness and disease had to obey His powerful words. What kind of challenge are you facing today? Are you struggling with sickness? Does it seem everything is against you? Like the centurion, it is time to come bow down before Jesus. Recognize the power and authority in His word. Call out to Him. Don't be surprised when you hear Him respond, 'I will come and heal you'." (The Bailey Drink, July 11, 2014)

5. Who is our healer?

Christ is our Healer.

Healing is provided for in the wounds of Christ. We were healed as a result of the beatings that Christ suffered. See 1 Peter 2:24. We can be healed by faith in His name.

See Acts 3:16. Our bodies can be quickened by the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead.

See Romans 8:11. A river of life, the Spirit of God, proceeds from Christ that has healing power for us.

See Revelations 22:1-2. There is healing virtue that radiates from Christ. Complete healing and wholeness is available for us in Christ. He wants to heal your spirit, soul, and body.

See Malachi 4:2.

1 Peter 2:24 "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died

to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”

Acts 3:16 “And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”

Romans 8:11 “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

Revelation 22:1–2 “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

Malachi 4:2 “But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; And you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.”

Pastor Frank writes, "This is one of the beautiful prophetic pictures of Christ in the Old Testament. Actually it is the last picture from the last chapter of the last book in the Old Testament. It gives us a glimpse of the incredible healing virtue that flows from Jesus. The word translated beams in this verse is a descriptive hebrew word *kanaph* which refers to a bird's wings but in this passage is describing the wings or beams radiating from the messiah. Jonathan Edwards preached a message entitled 'Christ Our Spiritual Son'. In it, he describes the centrality of the sun to the solar system and the centrality of Christ in our lives. Jesus is the Sun of righteousness and there is healing in His 'beams'. Here is some of what Edwards said about Christ our spiritual sun.

'The beams of this spiritual Sun don't only refresh but restore the souls of believers. Thus it is said that the Sun of righteousness {shall arise} with healing {in his wings}. These beams heal the souls of believers. As we often see that when the trees or plants of the earth are wounded, the beams of the sun will heal the wound and by degrees restore the plant, so the sweet beams of the Sun of righteousness heal the wounds of believers' souls. When they have been wounded by sin and have labored under the pain of wounds of conscience, the rays of this Sun heal the wounds of conscience. When they have been wounded by temptation and made to fall to their hurt, those benign beams, when they come to shine on the wounded soul, restore and heal the hurt that has been received. The sick soul by these beams is restored, as plants that have grown in shady

and cold places appear sickly and languishing, if the shade be removed and the sunbeams come to shine down upon them, will revive and flourish; or as the clear shining of the sun after the rain.'

All of us have been wounded and damaged by the effects of sin. From the original sin nature that has crippled our will, to our own personal sinful behavior that has wounded us in so many ways; we all stand in dire need of the healing beams of Jesus to flow over us. I often think of what it might have been like to be in one of the Lord's services. I imagine myself pushing through the crowd to get closer to the warmth of His healing presence. Basking in His presence, healing would flow through my whole being; my spirit, soul, and body would receive those healing rays. Here is the good news! Christ is still the Sun of Righteousness, He is seated at the right hand of the Father, His healing beams are flowing out today to whosoever will. Maybe it's time to bask in the Sun for a little while". (The Bailey Drink, March 22, 2015)

6. How can the power of death be overcome?

The power of death can even be overcome by faith. See the story of Lazarus in John 11. Notice John 11:40. It was the faith of Christ that raised Lazarus from the dead. With God, truly all things are possible.

John 11:40 "Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"

7. What should be a Christian's response when they find themselves or someone else sick?

- Know that God's will is healing.
- Stand on the Word of God.
- Hold fast to His Promises.
- Confess the Word of God.
- Lay hands on the sick and anoint them with oil.

8. See the verses below. Take some time to pray for anyone who is sick in the group, anointing them with oil. If no one in the group is sick, pray for those they know of that are sick.

James 5:14-15 "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he

will be forgiven."

Mark 16:17-18 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

THAT YOU MAY PROSPER

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

3 John 2 "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."

1. What is God's will concerning provision?

According to 3 John 2, God's will for us is that we would prosper in all things just as our soul prospers. It is God's desire for us not to live in a perpetual state of lack. He wants His children to have what they need and more. Read Matthew 6:25–34. According to this passage, God does not want us anxious about our basic needs. He wants us to trust Him, to seek Him and His Righteousness first, before all else. As a result, all of our needs shall be provided for. Read Psalm 34:9 and Psalm 84:11 and discuss the promise contained in them. If we are His children, that seek Him first, that walk uprightly, that have a healthy fear of the Lord, then God promises that we shall not want, for God will not withhold any good thing. This is the Word of the Lord to you.

Matthew 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Psalm 34:9 "Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him."

Psalm 84:11 "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."

2. Is poverty God's will for our lives?

Poverty is not God's will for our lives. It is not a religious virtue. Taking a vow of poverty is not a biblical principle. Poverty entered into the world as a result of sin. See Genesis 3:17–19 which shows the curse pronounced as a result of disobedience. The ground now produces thorns and thistles and man has to toil and sweat for his basic needs. The good news is that we have been redeemed from the curse by the work of Christ.

See Galatians 3:13–14. The crown of thorns placed on his head speaks to us that he has taken our poverty upon Himself. Not only has He died for our sins and sicknesses, but

He has redeemed us from the curse of poverty.

3. Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 8:9 and Romans 8:32.

Genesis 3:17-19 "Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

Galatians 3:13-14 "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

2 Corinthians 8:9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

Romans 8:32 "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

4. What does God say about money?

Is money the root of all evil or is the love of money the root of all evil? How we handle our money reveals what is going on in our heart. Read the scriptures below and discuss what they say regarding money and our heart.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Luke 16:10-13 "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will you commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not

been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Deuteronomy 8:18 "And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."

Money is simply a tool that is used to acquire things. It is not evil or good. Our heart is either evil or made good in Christ. God wants to bless us so we can be a blessing. Money is required to live and to advance the Kingdom of God in this life. It is needed. God is able to amply supply all our needs. The issue is not if we have money and lots of it, the issue is if the "money has us." We cannot serve both God and money. He wants to bless His children but He also does not want us to be controlled by money. The more faithful we are with His provision, the more He will increase us. How do I know if I am being faithful with His Provision of finances and talents? Faithfulness with finances and talents involves: not going into debt and living beyond your means, giving to your local church the tithe (10%) of all your income (increase), giving to God-honoring causes (missions, restorations centers, bible translations, etc.) offerings as the Lord directs you, and being hard working at your job. If we do these things, you will have more than enough for you, your household, and every good work. Since God's will for our life is to be blessed, why do so many believers live in lack?

Things that hinder God's provision in our lives: Not being a tither Not being generous Not caring for the poor Not working hard Not honoring God with our possessions Living beyond our means - accumulating debt.

5. How do we receive God's provision and prosperity?

We trust and honor God. When we give, we demonstrate our faith in God and His word concerning our finances. We work hard, doing all things as unto the Lord. We work to bring Him glory. We work to advance His kingdom when we are tithers and givers of offerings. Read the following verses and discuss what they say concerning trusting God. Have someone share a testimony of how they trusted God for His provision.

Proverbs 28:25-26 "He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the Lord will be prospered. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely

will be delivered."

Proverbs 3:5-10 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine."

Proverbs 10:4 "He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."

6. What are God's principles of increase? How does God prosper His children?

As you look at the following scriptures and commentary you will notice that his promises of provision and prosperity are conditional in nature. In other words, a condition must be met in order for us to receive the promise. All of these conditions are demonstrations of our faith. They show God, us, and others that we believe. What we say alone concerning what we believe is not as important as what our actions say about what we believe. Read and discuss the scriptures below.

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Proverbs 11:24-25 "There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself."

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through

many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Genesis 8:22 "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease."

Malachi 3:10-12 "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the Lord of hosts; "And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," Says the Lord of hosts."

Tithing is an important part of a Christian's walk with God. In the same way that Christians are expected to pray, read our Bible, and attend church we are also expected to tithe. According to Leviticus 27:30, the tithe belongs to the Lord and it is holy. That is why in Malachi, God says that His children were robbing Him. The tithe belonged to God, but they were keeping it for themselves and thus robbed Him. The origin of the tithe pre-dates the Law and is first seen in Genesis 14:18-20 when Abraham gives a tithe to Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High. The literal definition of the word tithe is "a tenth part."

Genesis 14:18-20 "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all."

Hebrews 7:1-2 "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace."

As we are in financial partnership with God, there are significant benefits that become

ours. Look at the blessings of obedience listed below in Deuteronomy 28:2-13.

Deuteronomy 28:2-13 "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God: "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. "Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. "The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. "The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. "The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them."

Philippians 4:15; 17-19 "Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

According to a word study done on the word "supply" in Philippians 4:19 by Evangelist Dick Mills, if I am in financial partnership with God, He will "cram a net for you, fill up the hallow or empty spaces, fill up every deficiency that you have, satiate you, fill you to the full, give you more than enough, cause you to be fully satisfied, bestow upon you in a lavish, magnificent way, cause you to abound, fully supply, liberally supply, amply supply, gloriously supply, and give you all that you need."

7. Read and discuss the following additional promises for us to hold onto as we trust God for His provision and His prosperity.

Proverbs 11:24-25 "There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself."

Proverbs 28:27 "He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses."

Proverbs 13:22 "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous."

Proverbs 8:18-21 Riches and honor are with me, enduring riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice, that I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, that I may fill their treasuries."

Proverbs 10:22 "The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it."

Psalms 37:25 "I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread."

PRAYING AND BELIEVING

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

Philippians 4:6-7 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

1. What are Christians called to?

As Christians, we are called to a life of prayer, a life of communion and intimacy with God. In the memory verse for this week, the Word of God tells us not to be anxious but to pray. The Word of God goes on to tell us to pray and not lose heart, to pray always, and to pray without ceasing. If the will of God for us is prayer, then we must ask like the disciples in Luke 11:1, "Teach us to pray."

2. Look at the verses below.

Luke 18:1 "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart."

Ephesians 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

1 Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray without ceasing."

Colossians 4:2 "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."

James 4:8 "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Luke 11:1 "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "Jesus taught His disciples to pray. According to today's verse, John taught his disciples to pray. Leading people into a lifestyle of prayer has been a huge part of mentoring since time began. Instructing individuals about how to

make contact with the Living God is the greatest of all lessons. I learned about prayer through daily life as well as in classroom instruction.

My first mentor lived next-door to me at our Bible school. I learned about prayer through his early-morning prayer sessions (it helped that all of the windows were open). I also learned about prayer from a prayer seminar called "Change the World School of Prayer" with Dick Eastmond. I am forever grateful for those two vehicles that helped me to make continual contact with the Lord. Matthew Henry also taught his followers about prayer in his book 'A Way to Pray'. Here is a short excerpt from his first chapter. 'Let me rouse myself to take hold of God, to seek his face, and to ascribe to him the glory due his name. Unto you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Let me now with confidence enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for me through the curtain, that is, through his flesh. Let me now attend to the Lord with undivided devotion, and let not my heart be far from him when I draw near to him with my mouth and honor him with my lips. Let me now worship God, who is spirit, in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. Address God with reverence and awe, having thus engaged my heart to approach God. I must solemnly address myself to that infinitely great and glorious Being with whom I have to do, as one who is possessed with a full belief of his presence and a holy awe and reverence of his Majesty, which may be done in such expressions as these: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! O you whose name is the LORD, who alone are the Most High over all the earth!' We really can enter His gates with thanksgiving and enter His courts with praise. As Henry pointed out, we come into His presence by faith in His blood. That is where we rest, that is where we worship, that is where we find restoration. (The Bailey Drink, November 7, 2014)

3. Since we know that the will of God for us is prayer, does it matter how we pray?

Read the following verses and discuss this question in light of the verses.

Hebrews 10:19-23 "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

1 John 3:21-23 "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that

we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment."

Mark 11:22-24 "So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

1 John 5:14-15 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

John 16:23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."

John 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

Matthew 7:7-11 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

John 14:13-15 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

We enter through the blood of Jesus. We come boldly, confidently, and with a sincere or true heart to the One who is faithful. We come in faith. We come in His Name, the name of Jesus. We believe in God. We pray the Word. We must believe that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. We are to seek Him in prayer with all of our heart.

Matthew 6:9-13 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, Jesus was "giving his disciples a model prayer for their prayer life. A. B. Simpson shared some powerful thoughts about this prayer and the Lord's call to prayer. 'This wonderful prayer was dictated by our Lord in reply to the question on the part of His disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray." His answer was to bid them pray. This is the only way we shall ever learn to pray, by just beginning to do it. And as the babbling child learns the art of speech by speaking, and the lark mounts up to the heights of the sky by beating its little wings again and again upon the air, so prayer will teach us how to pray; and the more we pray, the more shall we learn the mysteries and heights and depths of prayer. And the more we pray, the more we shall realize the incomparable fullness and completeness of this unequalled prayer, the prayer of universal Christendom, the common liturgy of the Church of God, the earliest and holiest recollection of every Christian child, and the latest utterance often of the departing soul. We who have used it most have come to feel that there is no want which it does not interpret and no holy aspiration which it may not express. There is nothing else in the Holy Scriptures which more fully evolves the great principles that underlie the divine philosophy of prayer.'

So let's revisit the Lord's prayer, it is impossible to improve upon it. In it you will find intimacy, worship, intercession, petition, forgiveness, and declarations of faith; you will also find Jesus, after all, that's what His prayer is all about." (The Bailey Drink, June 27, 2012)

4. Does God really hear us when we pray?

YES.

Jeremiah 29:12-13 "Then you will call upon Me and and go pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

Proverbs 15:29 "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."

5. What do you do when you are not sure what or how to pray?

6. Read and discuss Romans 8:26-27.

7. How do you enter the rest?

See Romans 8:34.

Rest in the knowledge that God is praying for you. God hears himself, he prays according to His own will, and he answers His prayers over your life. Our job is to yield and give vent to His prayers through the prayer language. The Lord wants to fill the whole earth with His glory. He will do this through our prayers.

Romans 8:26–27 “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Romans 8:34 “Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "Intercessory prayer is quite amazing. Bringing someone before the Lord in prayer is a key part of our ministry as priests to the Lord. Intercession is supernatural from start to finish. First, the Lord puts something or someone on our heart. You may think it is just concern or even worry, when it is actually the compassion and mercy of the Lord. As we yield to these urgings and begin to pray, the Lord anoints us on what and how to pray. We obviously only know in part, especially when it comes to the heart and circumstances of someone else. As we pour our heart out in this intercession, the Father hears our cry and responds. He initiated the desire to pray, He formulated the prayer itself in our yielded heart, and He heard and answered the prayer. A.B. Simpson spoke about the prayer of the Holy Spirit, check out his words. 'The Holy Spirit lays upon the heart wherein He dwells the special burden of prayer. We often read in the old prophetic Scriptures of the burden of the Lord. And so still the Lord lays His burden on His consecrated messengers. This is the meaning of the strong language of our text, 'The Spirit maketh intercession within us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' Sometimes this burden is inarticulate and unintelligible even to the supplicant himself. Perhaps some heavy shadow rests upon the soul, some deep depression, some crushing weight under which we can only groan. With it there may come the definite thought of some personal need, some apprehended evil that overhangs us, or some dear one who is brought to our spirit as somehow connected with this pressure. As we pray for this special person or thing, light seems to open upon the heart, and an assurance of having met the will of God in our prayer; or sometimes the burden is not understood; and yet, as it presses heavily upon us and we hold it up to Him who does understand, we are conscious that our prayer is not in vain; but that He who knows its meaning and prompts its cry, is granting what He sees to be best under the circumstances for us or others, as the burden may apply.' Understanding this

precious role of our ministry as priests unto our God will change the way we think about the worries and concerns for others that flood our hearts. Instead of worrying, view these urgings as the leading of the Lord. His compassions never fail and they are being poured out abundantly into our hearts." (The Bailey Drink, March 7, 2012)

1 Corinthians 14:13-15 "Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding."

Jude 1:20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "This short verse is powerful, it reminds us that effective prayer is birthed and energized by the Spirit. All of us have been bored and disillusioned by what we may call prayer, but many times, what we call prayer, has been just an exercise in human futility. All sorts of people pray, the Buddhist prays, the Hindu prays, the Muslim prays, and even new age groups engage in some form of prayer. This may sound narrow minded to some, but all of those prayers are a waste of time. Why are they a waste of time? They are just men trying to reach God in their own wisdom and effort. True prayer has to be birthed by the wisdom and the power of God. Effective prayer is based on the word of God and empowered by the Spirit of God. John Calvin spoke about praying in the Holy Ghost. Check out his powerful words.

'Praying in the Holy Ghost. The way of persevering is, when we are endued with the power of God. Hence whenever the question is respecting the constancy of faith, we must flee to prayer. And as we commonly pray in a formal manner, he adds, In the Spirit; as though he had said, that such is our sloth, and that such is the coldness of our flesh, that no one can pray aright except he be roused by the Spirit of God; and that we are also so inclined to diffidence (hesitancy) and trembling, that no one dares to call God his Father, except through the teaching of the same Spirit; for from him is solicitude (caring), from him is ardor and vehemence, from him is alacrity (cheerful eagerness), from him is confidence in obtaining what we ask; in short, from him are those unutterable groanings mentioned by Paul (Romans 8:26.) It is not, then, without reason that Jude teaches us, that no one can pray as he ought without having the Spirit as his guide.'

What an amazing truth. The Lord wants to be involved in every part of our lives, even when we pray to our Father in heaven, we pray in the name of Jesus and we pray through the power of the Holy Spirit. Even when we are calling out to him in our desperation, He becomes involved in our prayer. If you look carefully at what the

Apostle Jude was saying, he said we would be built up spiritually by praying these Spirit energized prayers. The word he used meant to build a house. The house is our body. We are being strengthened by praying in the Spirit to provide a house, a habitation, for the shekinah glory of God to dwell. Think about it, we start to pray because of a need, when we do, the Spirit comes and strengthens us and energizes our prayer. What are the results? Christ is formed in us and our prayers are answered. As usual, God is glorified through this interaction and I am satisfied with answered prayer and an intimacy with Him." (The Bailey Drink, March 3, 2012)

8. What is the Prayer of Agreement in Matthew 18:19-20?

Matthew 18:19-20 "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "He was not only talking about praying for something together, He was speaking of a spiritual bond or harmony that would bring tremendous results. Dick Mills brings more clarity with his definition of this word agreement that Jesus spoke about. 'agree, sumphoneo (soom-foe-neh-oh); Strong's #4856: From sum, "together," and phoneo, "to sound." Sumphoneo is to sound together, be in accord, be in harmony. The word "symphony" comes from sumphoneo. Metaphorically, the word means to agree together in prayer that is concordant. That is powerful, the word agree comes from the greek word symphoneo. Obviously it is a musical term describing many musical instruments playing different parts harmonizing in one beautiful song. There is a place of agreement and harmony in the Spirit that produces unlimited results. These results consist in several things. The first is answered prayer. Harmony produces selfless, kingdom prayers that will surely come to pass. Secondly, bondages are broken. There is power over all the works of the enemy in our harmonious prayer. Finally, and best of all, Christ is present in that kind of prayer. That is what Pentecost was, 120 people in spiritual agreement, the results was the power of His presence and the heavenly song." (The Bailey Drink, April 17, 2015)

9. Does prayer change things?

Yes, prayer is effective. Prayer changes things in the natural world and prayer changes us.

James 5:16-18 "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it

did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit."

Psalm 138:3 "In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul."

Mark 11:25–26 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

10. What does prayer display?

Prayer displays our total dependency upon God. We wait on God in prayer.

Psalm 62:1 "Truly my soul silently waits for God; From Him comes my salvation."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "At the end of the day, prayer can be reduced to waiting on God. After we get past all of our requests and troubles we find ourselves in the place of total dependency. Total dependency, I like the sound of that. It takes matters out of my hands and places them where they belong, in the hands of God. If you think about it, why does the Lord need my prayers? He knows everything that is going on, even my secret thoughts. Prayer is for my benefit. Prayer recognizes total dependency and opens me up to the greatest of all answered prayers; intimacy with God Himself. Here are some thoughts from Andrew Murray on waiting upon God. 'Waiting becomes then the only way to the experience of a full salvation, the only way, truly, to know God as the God of our salvation. All the difficulties that are brought forward as keeping us back from full salvation, have their cause in this one thing: the defective knowledge and practice of waiting upon God. All that the Church and its members need for the manifestation of the mighty power of God in the world, is the return to our true place, the place that belongs to us, both in creation and redemption, the place of absolute and unceasing dependence upon God. Let us strive to see what the elements are that make up this most blessed and needful waiting upon God: it may help us to discover the reasons why this grace is so little cultivated, and to feel how infinitely desirable it is that the Church, that we ourselves, should at any price learn its blessed secret.' Murray used a term, full salvation. He connected that to knowing God intimately. Could it be that at the bottom of God's instructions for us to pray is His desire to fellowship with us and our need to know Him? I think that is exactly why we are instructed to wait upon God. God is amazing! We seek Him in prayer for our greatest dilemmas and He not only answers our prayers but He Himself shows up in our lives. I like this full salvation thing, it is what we were born for. After everything is said and done, the very trouble that brought you to

your knees becomes God's path to bring you into this full salvation." (The Bailey Drink, November 13, 2015)

THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

WEEK MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

Jude 1:20 "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit."

1. According to Jude 1:20, what happens when you pray in the Holy Spirit?

You are built up in the faith. You are edified. You are strengthened. So when you find yourself feeling weak or in need of strength, the Lord has a way for you to obtain strength and the help you need. Pray in your heavenly language. It is the gift of God that was given to endue us with power from on high, which is supernatural and endless in nature.

Pastor Frank writes: "Praying in the Spirit has really fallen out of popularity in our modern world. The tragedy is this, we are spiritual beings living in a spiritual world. Being able to perceive and operate in the spiritual realm is vital in this darkened world we live in. Our prayer language is critical in being able to live as a spiritual being in a spiritual world. Our prayer language helps build ourselves up in our most holy faith. Bible faith is the supernatural ability given to us by the Spirit of God to perceive the things of the Spirit. Just as we have the five senses in the natural world: taste, hearing, sight, touch, and smell: we have spiritual senses as well. The ability to experience the spiritual realm was destroyed by the fall of man; however, this ability to perceive God was restored by the cross and the outpouring of the Spirit. We take advantage of this benefit as we yield to the Spirit and pray in tongues. As we spend time praying in the Holy Ghost, our faith is strengthened. Our awareness of God becomes stronger. We hear His voice when we read the Word. We see His glory displayed in His creation. We feel His presence falling upon us. This is the realm of faith. Often times, we think of faith as "blind faith". Actually faith is not blind at all. Faith is when the things of the unseen world become real to you. The unseen world of the Spirit is tangible. It is very real and becomes more and more perceptible to us as we spend time in the Spirit. The prayer language is given to us by God to access this unseen world. The more you pray in tongues, the more real heavenly things become to you.

Brothers and sisters, build yourselves up in the most holy faith praying in the Holy Ghost. We live in a dangerous world, riddled with unbelief. Our protection from this unbelief is the tangible presence of God. As we pray in tongues our faith is strengthened, we begin

to hear His voice, see His glory, and feel the touch of His hand upon our lives. (PF blog dated March 17, 2015)

2. Discuss the connection between the prayer language and faith. Have the group discuss times when they found themselves filled with faith as a result of praying in their heavenly language.

3. What other benefits come as a result of praying in the Spirit?

As each of the benefits is examined below, allow time for discussion to take place on how people have received from God as a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

A. POWER FOR MINISTRY

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 10:38 "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

B. POWER TO LIVE FOR CHRIST AND WALKING IN THE LOVE OF GOD

Galatians 5:16 "I say then: walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Jude 1:20-21 "but you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of god, looking for the mercy of our lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

C. POWER FOR PRAYER

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication."

Romans 8:26-27 "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what

the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

D. INTIMACY WITH GOD

1 Corinthians 14:2 (NKJV) "For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries."

1 Corinthians 14:2 (The Message) "If you praise him in the private language of tongues, God understands you but no one else does, for you are sharing intimacies just between you and him."

E. GUIDANCE INTO TRUTH, GLORIFICATION OF CHRIST, AND REVELATION OF THE WILL OF GOD

John 16:13-15 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you". (NKJV)

4. Is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues only for those in the Bible or is it for us also today? Is it God's will for all believers to pray in the heavenly language?

The answer to the first questions can be found in determining who does the baptizing. According to Luke 3:16 below, Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 13:8 goes on to say that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, if he was the baptizer in the Holy Spirit during the time of the book of Acts, Christ is still the baptizer with the Holy Spirit today. Our God has not changed.

Luke 3:16 "John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

The answer to the second question is "Yes." God's wants all believers to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Why would He not, in light of the benefits listed above? The promise is to you and to your children. He is pouring out His Spirit on

all flesh. Paul tells the church in Ephesus not to be drunk with wine but to be filled with the Spirit.

Acts 2:38-39 "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Acts 2:16-17 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams."

Ephesians 5:18 "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."

5. Does being baptized with the Holy Spirit, result in speaking in tongues?

When we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we will receive the Bible evidence of speaking in tongues.

A. ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, THE 120 BELIEVERS WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPOKE IN OTHER TONGUES. (ACTS 2:4)

Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

"All" believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and "all" spoke in other tongues. The New Testament record clearly shows that being baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues are connected together.

B. EIGHT YEARS AFTER PENTECOST, THE NEW CONVERTS IN SAMARIA RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT BY THE LAYING ON OF HANDS (ACTS 8:12-19). ALTHOUGH TONGUES ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED, SIMON SAW SUPERNATURAL EVIDENCE THAT THE NEW CONVERTS HAD RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT.

C. THREE DAYS AFTER PAUL WAS BORN AGAIN, HE RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT BY THE LAYING ON OF HANDS (ACTS 9:17). ALTHOUGH TONGUES ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED, WE KNOW CLEARLY FROM SCRIPTURE THAT HE DID SPEAK IN TONGUES (1 CORINTHIANS 14:18)

D. TEN YEARS AFTER PENTECOST, CORNELIUS AND THE GENTILES RECEIVED THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT BY HEARING THE PREACHING OF THE WORD, AND THEY SPOKE IN TONGUES. (ACTS 10:44-46)

E. TWENTY YEARS AFTER PENTECOST, THE BELIEVERS IN EPHESUS RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF HANDS, AND THEY SPOKE IN TONGUES AND PROPHESED (ACTS 19:1-6).

"But I thought I received all I needed when I got saved." Salvation and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit are two distinct experiences. When we are born again, Christ comes to live inside of us by His Spirit. The believer does, in effect, become "spirit-filled." That's what happened in John 20:19-23. However, Jesus tells these same disciples in Acts 1:4-5 that there was more. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. These born-again, "spirit-filled" believers were told there was more to receive. They began to receive on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. There are also accounts listed below of those that had already repented but had not yet received the baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

6. Read and discuss the scriptures below to foster a greater understanding of the need for the Spirit Baptism.

John 20:19-23 "Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Acts 1:4-5 "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Acts 2:1-4 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them

divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 8:14-17 "Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (NKJV)

Acts 19:1-6 "And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

When was the last time you were filled with the Holy Spirit? When was the last time you prayed in the heavenly language? The Lord wants to fill you today. He wants to immerse you into his wonderful Spirit. He wants you to experience continual infillings of the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18-19 "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

7. See the scriptural examples below for how the Lord baptized the apostles and other disciples multiple times with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them

utterance."

Acts 4:8 "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel."

Acts 4:29-31 "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

Galatians 3:5 "Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "This is a beautiful verse of scripture describing the abundant and continual nature of the provision of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Paul is describing a continual flow of the Spirit that is poured out on thirsty Christians. Too often we tend to be dependent on past infusions of the Spirit in our life while there is a continuous, outpouring of His Spirit available for us. Let's face it, we have challenges, needs, temptations, and decisions that are frankly too big for us on a daily basis. The good news is that we don't have to soldier on in our own strength, He is daily supplying the Spirit to us. His supply is more than sufficient for every dilemma. Here is an incredible quote by Dick Mills on this verse. Don't gloss over it. Dig in and enjoy!

'In this verse the word supplies is the Greek word choregeo. The history of this word is both illuminating and inspiring. It comes from the Greek word choros which referred to the ring in which round dances were held (hence our word chorus). It came to be both a noun meaning "a choral leader" and a verb meaning "to lead a chorus of singers". Later it was applied to the act of furnishing the chorus at one's own expense, to supplying everything for the entire production. At the community level, it became a position of honor and importance to choregeo any "function", because of the great personal expense involved. The word suggests an abundant supply, both materially and spiritually. So we could translate this phrase: "...He who lavishes the Spirit on you...," or "...the One Who is constantly supplying the Spirit to you in bountiful measure..." Paul is not writing to these people of one single isolated incident of God's provision in their lives. Rather, he is referring to a continuous flood tide of answered prayers, miracles, healing, and deliverances.' I love this beautiful word study. His supply is both abundant and continual. He is supplying the Spirit lavishly and continually in your life. There is

plenty not only to satisfy your thirst, but empowerment and enlightenment for every challenge." (The Bailey Drink, February 27, 2015)

8. How does a believer get filled with the Holy Spirit?

BY FAITH; YOU MUST ASK!

Galatians 3:2 "This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Luke 11:13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

STEPS TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. We repent and acknowledge Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

B. We ask Jesus to baptize us with the Holy Spirit.

C. We believe we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit because we ask in faith.

D. As an act of faith, we open our mouths and start speaking out the new language that God gives us. Provide an opportunity in your group for individuals to pray in their heavenly language.

9. Pray for those in the group that have not yet received their heavenly language.

LEADING OTHERS TO BELIEVE

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

1 John 4:14 "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world."

1. What does John say about believers in the memory verse?

That we have seen and testify. We must first believe. Once we see Christ for who He is, we must testify and tell others who He is. Once we believe, God wants us to lead others to believe. Read the scriptures below and discuss what God's will is for those that believe. Once He has reconciled us to Himself, he makes and anoints us to be ambassadors for Christ that are ministers of reconciliation. We are called to implore others to be reconciled to God. We are salt and light. He who wins souls is wise.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."

Matthew 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Proverbs 11:30 "...he who wins souls is wise."

Matthew 10:7-8 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."

Mark 16:15-18 "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." 2} How can we fulfill God's commission to preach the gospel? We must believe. We must be anointed with the Holy Spirit. We must "go" by stepping out in faith. Read the following verses and discuss how we can fulfill God's commission. What practical things can we do as individuals to lead others to believe."

John 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 10:38 "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

2. What do the following scriptures say regarding the harvest?

The harvest is great and plentiful and ready to reap.

3. What does the Lord say about the laborers required to perform the reaping of the harvest?

They are few.

4. What must we do then?

We must pray for laborers. Have someone in the group pray right now for the Lord to provide laborers in our church to reap the harvest. Also ask the Lord for the nations. Ask him for the souls of those in our region that are lost and come from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. It is our inheritance. They belong to us, to those that believe.

Luke 10:2 "Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

John 4:35 "Do you not say, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, your eyes are opened and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

Psalm 2:8 "Lift up Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession."

Psalm 22:27 "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "In the summer of 1976 Parris and I returned to New Orleans. We had no idea the adventure that would unfold for us in the years to come. We were driving into the city, crossing the Bonnet Carre Spillway, when the Lord spoke to me from His written word. It was John 4:35 and it was bursting with life and expectancy. From that day I knew that the Lord had called me back to this city to share with others the incredible beauty I had found in Christ. This was to be our life work, proclaiming Christ through all means possible in our beloved New Orleans. Stick in your sickle and reap, the fields are white for harvest. Here are some thoughts about today's scripture from Charles Spurgeon. "Turn your eyes to Calvary. Behold the Lord of Life nailed to a cross, with the thorn-crown about his brow, with bleeding head, and hands, and feet. What! Can you look upon this miracle of miracles, the death of the Son of God, without feeling within your bosom a marvelous adoration that language never can express? And when you feel the blood applied to your conscience, and know that he has blotted out your sins, you are not a man unless you start from your knees and cry, Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. Can you bow before the Crucified in loving homage, and not wish to see your Monarch master of the world? Out on you if you can pretend to love your Prince, and desire not to see him the universal ruler. Your piety is worthless unless it leads you to wish that the same mercy which has been extended to you may bless the whole world. Lord, it is harvest-time, put in thy sickle and reap.' Have you felt the pull of the Lord to win souls recently? I distinctly feel we are moving into a time of prophetic fulfillment in our world today. It's time for the laborers to come into the fields. It's time for this next generation to step up and enter into this time of harvest. Don't say harvest is still somewhere in the future, the fields are ripe. Today is the day. Today is your day!" (The Bailey Drink, September 25, 2015) Believe 55 4 Does God really want to use you to win souls today? YES Read the following passage and discuss how this story relates to you.

Luke 5:1-11 "So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him."

The Lord wants us to launch out into the deep and let down our nets for a catch. He has called us all to be fishers of men. He wants us to stop coming up with excuses and say like Peter did, "nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." We know what God's Word says. We know what He values. He values souls. Discuss in your small group what your group can do as a way to win souls the next time you meet. Maybe it will be a potluck, maybe a BBQ at someone's house, maybe a picnic at the park, and the list goes on. It's time to do what might seem foolish to the natural man and let down the net for a boat-sinking load of fish. The harvest is plentiful and people are ready. Let's believe and go!

BY THIS IS MY FATHER GLORIFIED

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

John 15:8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

1. According to our memory verse for this week, how is our Father glorified?

Our Father is glorified when we bear much fruit. One of the main ways in which we bear fruit, is by making disciples. One of the last things Jesus did before ascending into heaven was to give His disciples some instructions, a mission, commonly referred to as the Great Commission. Read Matthew 28:18–20 below and discuss the Lord's direction. Has His mission changed? No. Does His mission apply to us today? Yes. If we are His disciples, then He has called us to make disciples. We were called to bear fruit. Our Father is glorified when we bear fruit. Our Father is glorified when we make disciples. The church's mission is to make disciples.

2. Read and discuss the verses below.

Matthew 28:18–20 "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

Romans 7:4 "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."

Acts 14:21–22 "And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the

disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

3. What is a disciple?

Before we can even ask, "How then can we make disciples? or How then can we accomplish this mission," we must know what a disciple is. A disciple is a learner, follower of Jesus Christ. He is one who learns under discipline. He is a person who seeks to become like the Master in every part of his life. One does not have to look very hard at the words "disciple" and "discipline" to see that they are interconnected and very much related. If we are to be a disciple and follower of Jesus, then we must allow ourselves to be subjected to the discipline of the Lord. God's ultimate desire for every believer can be found in Romans 8:29. Read it below. The Father desires us to be conformed to the image of His Son. We are to look like Jesus. This, of course, is not referring to His physical appearance but his actions and attitudes. Read and discuss the scripture verses below. In Acts 4:13, what made the Pharisees realize that Peter and John were disciples of Jesus? They were "looking" like Him. Would anyone be saying the same thing of us?

Romans 8:29 "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Matthew 10:25 "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master."

Acts 4:13 "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."

4. How do we make disciples?

We must believe.

a. First, we must be a disciple ourselves by believing. Then part of our own discipleship is learning that that we are to believe or know that Jesus commanded us to make disciples. We must believe that our Father is glorified by bearing fruit. In order to make disciples, we must be abiding in the vine. We must actually have spent and continue to spend time with Jesus. We must be relationally connected to Him. If I am, the fruit will happen naturally. The more we are connected to Christ, the more we put ourselves in an atmosphere that is conducive for fruit bearing. An atmosphere of regularly reading and confessing the scriptures and saturating in His manifest presence is the

atmosphere that will produce much fruit as I relate to others. Read the following verses and discuss this first critical step of how we make disciples. Discuss how this happens and what it looks like on a daily and weekly basis.

John 15:4-5 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

Acts 4:13 "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."

b. Secondly, we must be relationally connected to others in order to disciple them. Read the verses below. Discuss them and the following questions and statements in light of the verses provided.

5. Why are close personal relationships important to making disciples?

1 John 4:21 "And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

6. In what two ways was Timothy to teach the Christian life to others?
In word and in conduct.

1 Timothy 4:11-12 "These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

7. How did Paul teach other people to be disciples? Imitate him or follow his example.

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

Philippians 4:9 "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. Relationships involve accountability."

Ephesians 5:21 "Submitting to one another in the fear of God."

Paul instructed Timothy to multiply himself by making disciples. In the following verse, we see four generations of disciples: Paul, Timothy, faithful men, and others.

2 Timothy 2:2 "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

8. How important is discipleship to you?

How has discipleship affected your life?

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "Discipleship was a major part of the life and ministry of Jesus. One of His first acts, when He began his ministry was to select twelve men to spend time with for the purpose of discipleship. Discipleship is not the same as teaching. Of course making disciples involves teaching. Discipleship is not just receiving instruction, but taking on the beliefs and lifestyle of your teacher. The disciples of Jesus learned from observation. They watched Jesus as he prayed, taught and preached the word of God, healed the sick, and cast out devils. They were with Jesus constantly for three years. They learned about life and ministry by observing and mimicking the life of Jesus. All of us learn about life from those we love and respect. The discipleship process begins shortly after birth as we learn about life from observing our parents and brothers and sisters. The first phase of our discipleship takes place in that first "small group" called family that we are a part of. As we grow older and begin to make decisions on our own, other people replace our parents and become our teachers. The Lord has used three different men in a very significant way to become an instructor and model in my life. Each one came at a different phase in my life and became influential in my spiritual growth. Who is impacting your life? Whose teachings and lifestyle are you embracing? What are others learning as they observe you? Of course Jesus is the disciple maker. He has determined to use human vessels to accomplish this incredible task." (The Bailey Drink, August 26, 2010) Discuss these questions and spend time praying about your involvement in the discipleship and fruit bearing process.

THE BASIS OF OUR FAITH

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

2 Timothy 1:12 "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."

1. Do you know God? Do you know in whom you have believed? Are you convinced that he is able to keep what you have committed into His hands?

Knowing God is the basis of our faith.

2. Read the following verses in your group and discuss what they say concerning what happens when we know God.

Daniel 11:32 "But the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

1 John 4:16 "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

The more we know God, the more we trust Him. We know Him to be faithful, trustworthy, sovereign, all-powerful, all knowing, and always present. When we meditate on who God is, our hearts are encouraged and faith to believe comes alive. Let's look at just a few of the characteristics of God in order to enter the rest that comes as a result of knowing Him.

3. Is God sovereign?

God is sovereign. He exercises power over creation and rules as a sovereign King. He sustains and carries creation along by the word of His power. He upholds, maintains, guides, and propels our lives. He has our whole life in His hand and we can rest in Him. Nothing surprises Him. He is directing all things including our own steps to fulfill His purposes. He is working things out for our good and for His glory. Read the following verses and discuss the comfort we can find as we know Him as the Sovereign Lord.

Hebrews 1:3 (Amplified) "He is the sole expression of the glory of God [the Light-being, the out-raying or radiance of the divine], and He is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power. When He had by offering Himself accomplished our cleansing of sins and riddance of guilt, He sat down at the right hand of the divine Majesty on high."

Psalms 103:19 "The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all."

Psalms 148:5-10 (Amplified) Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away [He fixed their bounds which cannot be passed over]. Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps! You lightning, hail, fog, and frost, you stormy wind fulfilling His orders! Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars! 10Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!"

Galatians 1:15 "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace."

Psalms 115:3 "But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases."

Genesis 50:20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Proverbs 4:11 "I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths."

Ephesians 1:11 "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will."

4. Is God all-powerful?

God is all-powerful or omnipotent. God is able to do all of His holy will. His power is infinite. There is nothing too difficult for Him to do. His power is supernatural in nature. His power was displayed at the resurrection and glorification of Jesus

and is directed toward us. His power is also at work in us. His power is displayed in the gospel. His power is poured out in spirit baptism. We can rest in his keeping power. Read the following verses and discuss the faith and hope we can find as we know Him as the Omnipotent Lord.

Genesis 18:14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

Jeremiah 32:27 "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"

Revelation 19:6 "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

Ephesians 1:17-23 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Ephesians 3:20 "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."

Romans 1:16-17 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

5. Does God really know all things?

God is all knowing or omniscient. God fully knows Himself. He knows all things as they really are. Nothing is beyond His knowledge. He knows all things past, present, future. He knows our lives, how we were created and what makes us tick. His knowledge of all things enables Him to make perfect choices. Read the following verses and discuss the faith and hope we can find as we know Him as the Omniscient Lord.

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."

Hebrews 4:13 "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

Isaiah 42:8-9 "I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Isaiah 46:9-10 "Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.'"

Psalms 139:1-4, 16 "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."

1 John 3:20 "For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things."

Romans 11:33-36 "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

6. Is God really always present?

God is always present or omnipresent. He does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with His whole being, yet God manifests differently in different places. The fact that God is the Lord of space and cannot be limited by space is evident from the fact that He created it. Nothing in creation can contain Him. God is present everywhere. Discuss the difference between the omnipresence of God and the manifest presence of God. Read the following verses and discuss the faith and hope we can find as we know Him as the Omnipresent Lord.

Psalms 139 1-12 "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You."

Acts 17:28 "For in Him we live and move and have our being."

1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!"

Isaiah 66:1-2 "Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."

Acts 7:48-50 "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?"

Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

Psalms 27:4 "One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple."

David longed to be in the presence of the Lord. Although God is indeed present everywhere at the same time, he is not always manifest in a tangible way everywhere. The question becomes, "Am I aware of His Presence?" God is looking to manifest His Presence in our lives and in our church.

7. Read Acts 15:16-17

Acts 15:16-17 "After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "The Apostle James quoted from the Prophet Amos in his discourse in Acts 15. James applied this word about the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David to the apostolic church planting ministry of the Apostle Paul. Paul's ministry ushered in the second phase of God's plan for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon all flesh. In the Old Testament the Lord dwelt in a building or a tent, in the new He would reveal Himself in His Church, not in the building itself but in the gathering together of His sons and daughters from every ethnic group on earth. This prophesy about the Tabernacle of David is very significant in our day. The uniqueness of David's tent was this, there was no veil of separation and God's Shekinah Glory was there. In today's church the veil of separation has been removed by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Through His blood we can all come into His presence. Secondly, the Lord intends His church today to be the place where the Shekinah Glory is welcome and present. This presence is what people need and long for, this presence is the uniqueness of Christianity. There are plenty of churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues in our

world today. What would make any one of them stand out from all the rest? In the Old Testament the difference was the Glory in the temple. If we listen carefully to the prophecies in the book of Acts we will come to the same conclusion, the church is intended to be the place of His manifest presence." (The Bailey Drink, March 17, 2012)

BELIEVE PRECIOUS PROMISES

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

2 Peter 1:3-4 "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

According to 2 Peter 1:3-4, we have been given exceedingly great and precious promises. Read the verses below and discuss what they also say concerning our God's promises. He is able to perform His promises. He who promised is faithful. We inherit the promises through faith and patience. His promises are yes and amen. As a result of receiving the promise, we allow God to change us. We are Abraham's seed. God cannot lie. We are joint heirs with Christ. Discuss how these truths affect or should affect how you live your life.

Romans 4:21 "And being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."

Hebrews 10:23 "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

Hebrews 6:12 "That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

2 Corinthians 1:20 "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."

2 Corinthians 7:1 "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Galatians 3:16 "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ."

Galatians 3:29 "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

Romans 8:16-17 "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

1. What are these exceedingly great and precious promises and where can I find them?

To find these great and precious promises we must dig in the word of God. In this lesson and part of the next, we shall explore just a few areas of promise that God has for His children. Read and discuss each area of promise with the corresponding scriptural support.

A. AREA OF PROMISE: PROTECTION

Psalm 34:7 "The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them."

Proverbs 2:7-8 "He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints."

Proverbs 18:10 "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe."

Proverbs 30:5 "He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."

Isaiah 54:17 "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," Says the Lord."

Deuteronomy 33:12 "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, who shelters him all the day long; And he shall dwell between His shoulders."

Isaiah 59:19 "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."

1 Peter 1:5 "Who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Psalms 91:1-4 "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler."

Deuteronomy 1:30 "The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you."

B. AREA OF PROMISE: SALVATION FOR OUR FAMILY

Acts 16:31 "so they said, believe on the lord jesus christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Acts 2:39 "for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the lord our god will call."

Proverbs 22:6 "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

C. AREA OF PROMISE: PEACE

John 14:27 "peace i leave with you, my peace i give to you; not as the world gives do i give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

John 16:33 "these things i have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, i have overcome the world."

Ephesians 2:14 "for he himself is our peace....."

1 corinthians 14:33 "for god is not the author of confusion but of peace."

Romans 5:1 "therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with god through our lord jesus christ."

Isaiah 9:6-7 "for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty god, everlasting father, prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end."

Isaiah 26:3 "you will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."

Colossians 3:15 "and let the peace of god rule in your hearts....."

Romans 15:13 "now may the god of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy spirit."

2 thessalonians 3:16 "now may the lord of peace himself give you peace always in every way. The lord be with you all."

D. AREA OF PROMISE: SLEEP

Psalm 4:8 "I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

Proverbs 19:23 (NASB) "The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil."

Psalm 127:2b (NASB) "For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep."

Proverbs 3:21,24 "My son, let them not depart from your eyes—Keep sound wisdom and discretion; When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet."

E. AREA OF PROMISE: COMFORT

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted."

Isaiah 51:12 "I, even I, am He who comforts you. God."

Isaiah 66:13 "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

2 Corinthians 7:6 "Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us..."

Isaiah 51:3 "For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; Joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

Psalms 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

Jeremiah 31:13 "For I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow."

John 14:16 Amplified Bible "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor- Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), to be with you forever."

F. AREA OF PROMISE: DIRECTION AND GUIDANCE

Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB) "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

Proverbs 19:21 "There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand. Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Proverbs 16:9 "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps."

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Isaiah 45:13 "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways."

Isaiah 58:11 "The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail."

John 16:13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

G. AREA OF PROMISE: FAITHFULNESS

1 Thessalonians 5:24 "He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."

1 Peter 4:19 "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."

2 Thessalonians 3:3 "But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one."

Hebrews 10:23 "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

2 Timothy 2:11-13 "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

1 Timothy 1:12 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

Luke 16:10-12 "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"

2. Encourage the people to pray these scriptures over their life and the lives of their loved ones. Take time during the group to pray the appropriate scriptures over the needs represented by the people in the group.

HE WHO PROMISED IS FAITHFUL

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

Hebrews 10:23 "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

1. In the previous lesson, what type of promises did we discuss?

We discussed some of the exceedingly great and precious promises (2 Peter 1:3-4) that we have been given. We began to explore a few areas of promise that God has for His children. We will begin this week by continuing to look at some additional promises and concluding our study with looking again at He who is faithful so that we may run our race well. Read and discuss each area of promise below with the corresponding scriptural support.

A. AREA OF PROMISE: HOPE

Psalm 71:5 "For You are my hope, O Lord GOD; You are my trust from my youth."

Proverbs 23:18 "For surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off."

Romans 8:24-25 "For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."

Romans 15:4 "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

Romans 15:13 "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

B. AREA OF PROMISE: JOY

Psalm 16:11 "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

1 John 1:4 "And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."

John 17:13 "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

Proverbs 12:20 "But counselors of peace have joy."

Nehemiah 8:10 "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Romans 14:17 "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

C. AREA OF PROMISE: LOVE

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Romans 5:5 "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Ephesians 3:17-19 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Romans 8:35,38-39 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

2 Thessalonians 3:5 "Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."

D. AREA OF PROMISE: STRENGTH

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Psalm 29:11 "The Lord will give strength to His people; The Lord will bless His people with peace."

Psalm 28:7 "The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped..."

Ephesians 3:16 "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man."

Colossians 1:11 "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy."

Psalm 27:14 "Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!"

Isaiah 40:29-31 "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, 31 but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

2. What does our memory verse for this week tell us to do?

Hebrews 10:23 exhorts us to hold fast our confession of hope without wavering. We hold fast to Christ, for he is the very Word of God. He who promised is indeed faithful. Read and discuss the verse and commentary below.

Hebrews 12:1-2 "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "This passage paints an incredible picture of our Christian life. Paul compares our life as a marathon race finishing in the Olympic Stadium with the faithful men of God watching and cheering us on. He sees there lives as forerunners for each of us. Their testimony encourages us. Check out this picture painted from this passage from Gill's Commentary. 'The stadium, or race plot, in which the Christian race

is run, is this world; the prize run for is the heavenly glory; the mark to direct in it, is Christ; many are the runners, yet none but the overcomers have the prize; which being held by Christ, is given to them: this race is "set before" the saints; that is, by God; the way in which they are to run is marked out by him in his word; the troubles they shall meet with in it are appointed for them by him, in his counsels and purposes; the mark to direct them is set before them in the Gospel, even Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, whom they are to look unto; the length of their race is fixed for them, or how far, and how long they shall run; and the prize is determined for them, and will be given them, and which is held out for their encouragement, to have respect unto: and it becomes all the saints, and belongs to each, and everyone of them, to "run" this race; which includes both doing and suffering for Christ... Of course this passage in Hebrews follows up the great faith chapter in Hebrews. You know the one, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Paul had seen his life as a race by faith. "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. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." Have you seen it yet? If you have, run. Run with all your strength. The reward will be greater than we can ever imagine." (The Bailey Drink, November 14, 2015)

Pastor Frank Bailey continues, "Our Christian life is a race to the finish line. Christ is waiting for each of us with outstretched arms at the line, the saints who have gone before are standing and shouting us on. It's our turn; it's our turn to run. The race itself is supernatural. He has called us to the race. He has equipped us and trained us to win. He has marked out the course and put it in our hearts. He strengthens us as we go. He encourages and picks us up when we stumble. It's our job to just keep running, we just have to stay in the race. Here are some comments from Gill's Commentary on this great scripture verse. "...and it becomes all the saints, and belongs to each, and everyone of them, to "run" this race; which includes both doing and suffering for Christ; it is a motion forward, a pressing towards the mark for the prize, a going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; and to it swiftness and agility are necessary; and when it is performed aright, it is with readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness: it requires strength and courage, and a removal of all impediments, and should be done "with patience"; which is very necessary, because of the many exercises in the way; and because of the length of the race; and on account of the prize to be enjoyed, which is very desirable: the examples of the saints, and especially Christ, the forerunner, should move and animate unto it.' We must ask ourselves the question, "Am

I even in the race?" Paul refers to the race as our chosen purpose in this Christian life. The Lord has a track for each of us to run. It involves surrender, commitment, diligence, and perseverance. If you haven't figured it out yet, this race involves your part in ministry to others. The work of the ministry is for all Christians. The work of ministers is to equip Christians for this work. The second question is this; "am I disqualifying myself by my choices?" Paul told us to run this race to win. The reward is eternal and the race is final. So if you have stumbled, get back up. Get back in the race. There is not much time. How do I know? The roar from the stadium is almost deafening." (The Bailey Drink, November 15, 2015)

3. How shall we run our race?

We shall run our race well, we shall run by faith, and we shall finish strong. This earth is not our home. There is more, so much more. Read and discuss the verse and commentary below.

Hebrews 11:13 "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "It's really easy to get overly attached to this world. It sometimes seems that this is all there is. But something deep inside of all of us knows there must be more. Is life really just about houses and cars and vacations? Is there more to life than careers and football and even family? In our current world it seems that family holds the pinnacle of importance but is that really all there is? Could it be that there is an unseen world and we are just pilgrims and strangers passing through? The apostle Paul actually said that our true citizenship is in heaven. That means that I am ultimately allegiant to the Kingdom of God above even my earthly country. Jonathan Edwards spoke about the reality of heaven and how that affected everything. Here are some of his thoughts. 'In heaven alone is attainment of our highest good. God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper happiness, and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here: better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean. Therefore, it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking of our highest end, and proper good, the whole work of our lives; and we should subordinate all the other concerns of life to it. Why should we labor for

anything else, or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness?'

Actually, this is one of my favorite and often quoted quotes. To me, it captures the essence of heaven and the temporary nature of this life. All we experience here is really a shadow of the heavenly experience our heart really longs for. To know Christ is to know life. To taste this life starts our heart down the journey that brings us to the heavenly kingdom. Like the saints that have gone before us, we are just passing through." (The Bailey Drink, March 29, 2015)

WE END THIS STUDY THE SAME WAY WE BEGAN, IN MATTHEW 19:26,
"WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE." WE LOOK TO JESUS AS THE
AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH AND WE BELIEVE!