

SPRING 2024

# YOU



**IT'S ALL  
ABOUT JESUS**

+ + +

**BEING AN  
AUTHENTIC  
CHURCH**

# A PROMISE THAT WILL NEVER BE BROKEN

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It hurts when people break a promise. Some people make promises they have no intention of honoring. Others sincerely mean well, but circumstances interfere and they're unable to do what they said they promised they'd do.

God is not like us. When He makes a promise, He keeps it. Period. He is always faithful to His word. For example, He promises an abundant and eternal life to those who trust in His Son, Jesus Christ.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.... For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:9,13).

But we don't automatically enjoy the benefits of this wonderful promise. We must understand and believe Jesus died on the cross, taking our sin upon Himself, and then rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us. As we believe, we also acknowledge His lordship, turning from sin and surrendering our lives to Him.

God's promise is for you. If you would like a new life in Christ, repent of your sins and put your faith in Him. Admit to God you are a sinner and ask Him to forgive you. Turn from the sin that has kept you from God and accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Express your repentance and faith by praying something like this:

*"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in faith. Be baptized as an expression of your faith.

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## ON THE COVER

Terrica White is pictured on the cover of *YOU*. She is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana and a member of Lakeshore Church.

She is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Church and Community Ministries. She also serves on the president's team as the special assistant to the president for community outreach and strategic initiatives at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

God's calling for her life was clear since her teenage years. Terrica was led towards urban missions, and specifically, right into the heart of New Orleans where she grew up.

She founded "Infinite Blessings NOLA" at the beginning of the pandemic after witnessing the hardships that families and children were facing. Infinite Blessings provides basic necessities like food and clothing to those who needed them most. The endeavor isn't just about meeting physical needs; it is about demonstrating the boundless love and generosity that Christ has shown us.

The *YOU* Bible study will be a vital tool for the ministry of Infinite Blessings. It will serve as a Spirit-led guide to witness and minister to the good news of the gospel to first responders in New Orleans.



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## EDITORIAL

### MARK CROSTON

I love the church. I love the songs that are sung; the prayers that are prayed; the sermons that are preached; the missions that are motivated; the service that is shared; memories that are made; the witness that is watched; the lives that are changed; the believers that are baptized; and the worship that is wonderful. My dad was my first pastor, my mom was my first discipler; my youth group leader was a pivotal mentor; and the members I cared for as Pastor also cared for me in my times of crisis. I love the weekend breakfasts, the potluck dinners, the mission trips, the Sunday school classes, the fellowship of the saints, and the spiritual growth.

This issue of the *YOU* Bible Study will dig into some helpful issues about the church. We will be studying Being Authentic Church; and It's All About Jesus with a special focus study on The Joy of Giving. In addition to these studies, get extra insights and teaching tips from our **YOU Blog** at [you.lifeway.com](http://you.lifeway.com) and listen to our Lifeway *YOU* Podcast on your favorite podcast app.

The **Black Church Leadership and Family Conference** is right around the corner. There is a full program for every member of the family! Join us for this all-in-one, equipping and energizing week, **July 22 through the 26, 2024**. I'm sure this year will be just the time of relaxation, refreshment, and revival we need.

Learn more at [lifeway.com/blackchurchconference](http://lifeway.com/blackchurchconference).

Thanks for joining me in this season of study. Now grab your Bible because you never know how God will speak through YOU!

Be Blessed!

Dr. Mark A. Croston, Sr.

YOU General Editor

National Director of Black Church Ministries

[lifeway.com/BlackChurchLife](http://lifeway.com/BlackChurchLife)

Lifeway **black church**

# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOU

*YOU* is a three-in-one learner and leader resource with inspirational and educational features to enhance Bible study that leads to spiritual maturity and life change. Here is information to help you get the most out of *YOU*.

## LEARNER PAGES

The first half of *YOU* includes pages for personal study. These should be read by the learner and leader prior to group time. Included in each session:

**Memory Verses** encourage filling the mind with the Word of God to strengthen every aspect of spiritual life.

**Keywords** identify and define words or phrases to add clarity to the biblical text.

**Digging Deeper** provides a deeper look at a word, character, or other aspect from the session.

**Did You Know?** provides biblical truths and information to equip learners to boldly defend the truths of God's Word.

**Live It** sums up the session and offers applications points to challenge daily living.

## DAILY READINGS

Included with each session are five devotionals to be read by the learner and leader. The benefits of a daily devotion are innumerable. Their primary purpose in this resource is to focus attention on the biblical content of each session for application of and conformity to the Word of God.

## LEADER PAGES

The second half of *YOU* includes pages to guide the teaching of each session. Leaders can use the leader pages to guide learners through the passage and its key emphases as detailed on the learner pages. Here are suggestions on how to teach:

- Prior to the session, read and study the Bible passage, keywords, and learner pages.
- Plan teaching using the leader pages. Keep in mind that because of time, it may not be possible to use every teaching suggestion. Also the teaching suggestions are in sequential order for easy use.
- Features to use when teaching include: The Point, which is readily recognizable on the learner and leader pages; The Question at the top of the first page of each learner session; Keywords on the Scripture pages; "Digging Deeper"; "Did You Know?"; Pack Items\* (see next page); "Object Lessons"; and Commentary at the end of each session on leader pages.
- Refine your teaching plans when necessary.

Get more teaching help at [you.lifeway.com](http://you.lifeway.com).

## PRAY

Because the Holy Spirit is the guide for your study, invite Him to show you how to "rightly divide the word of truth" as you teach your group. Read the Bible passage several times, asking the Holy Spirit to show you its meaning and application.



# FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GO DEEPER



The **Advanced Bible Study** is written for group members who desire more extensive commentary. It includes exposition of each session's Scripture passage, an examination of keywords, an introduction to the setting of the passage and biblical life and times, questions to guide the study, and interactive responses to help readers apply God's truths to their lives today.

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The **Herschel Hobbs Commentary** is designed specifically for leaders and provides a comprehensive exposition of each session's Scripture passage. Specific attention is called to items in the biblical text that readers would miss without a commentary. This commentary is based on the King James Version but interacts with all major English translations.

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The **YOU Leader Pack** is a collection of teaching aids designed to help leaders provide a visual and interactive experience for learners. Each pack contains posters, charts, maps, and handouts that can add another layer to teaching and engender needed variety that makes learning more interesting.

The YOU Leader Pack is located at [lifeway.com/YOU](http://lifeway.com/YOU)

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**Social Media:** Connect with a community of *YOU* users.

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- Learn more about *YOU* and link to great blog content at **YOU.lifeway.com**
- Shop *YOU* at **www.lifeway.com/YOU**

# YOU DISCIPLESHIP PLAN

## The Pathway of Discipleship

Growing in Christ is a journey—a lifelong journey—but what does that look like? Lifeway’s research reveals eight markers consistently present in the lives of believers who are growing spiritually. Each year, Bible Studies for Life engages all eight of these areas. Following this intentional plan for discipleship ensures progress on the pathway to becoming more like Christ.

Visit [BibleStudiesforLife.com](https://BibleStudiesforLife.com) for a fuller picture of this discipleship plan through 2024.

8 SIGNPOSTS	Fall 2023	Winter 2023-24	Spring 2024	Summer 2024
<b>Live Unashamed</b>	Staying True in a World Far from God			
<b>Share Christ</b>	Confident in the Face of Hard Questions			
<b>Seek God</b>		A Name Like No Other		
<b>Exercise Faith</b>		Owning a Faith That Matters		
<b>Obey God and Deny Self</b>			<b>It’s All About Jesus</b>	
<b>Serve God and Others</b>			<b>Being an Authentic Church</b>	
<b>Engage with Scripture</b>				Promises We Can Count On
<b>Build Relationships</b>				More Than a Sidekick: Serving Alongside Others



# STUDY 1 IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

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## INTRODUCTION

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### **Obey God and Deny Self.**

As we examine the life and work of Jesus, we are called to respond to who He is by denying ourselves, trusting Him, and following Him daily.

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## Writer Bio

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### **Michael Kelley**

has served in local churches in Texas and Tennessee, as well as Lifeway Christian Resources. He is currently the Executive Director of the Nashville Baptist Association. He is the author of several books and lives in Brentwood, Tennessee, with his wife and three children.

### **Ron Lindo, Jr.**

adapted this study for the YOU audience. He is the Chief Academic Officer at Jackson Theological Seminary in Little Rock, Ar. He received his PhD from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also the author of *Literary Allusions in Esther* (Peter Lang, 2023) and is currently working on the Jeremiah volume of the *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary Series* (Lexham Press, forthcoming).

### **Jackie Blackwell**

wrote the Daily Readings for this study. She serves at Little Zion Baptist Church in Smithfield, Virginia alongside her husband, Dr. Melvin T. Blackwell, Senior Pastor. They have four adult children: Alexandria, Melvin II, Marcus, and Nijeria.



## A STUDY ABOUT THE LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS

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The reality of Jesus's existence has massive implications for our daily lives. These implications were felt from the very beginning. The apostles, and the early disciples who supported them, were inspired to provide future generations of Christians with an accurate representation of Jesus. However, Jesus is such a complex figure that a one-dimensional view would not do Him justice. Instead, each of the four Gospels has been intentionally designed to show us Jesus in ways that complement, fill out, and build upon the others. As you study these sessions, you will consider various passages in the Gospel of Luke that will empower you to:

- Align your actions and current situation with Jesus's mission.
- Share your faith in new ways as the Spirit prompts you to reflect on Jesus's ministry.
- Identify with people from all walks of life

because of Jesus's death.

- Endeavor for holiness as you consider the impact of Jesus's resurrection.

These are just a sampling of the many principles covered in Luke's Gospel. Luke invites us to see fascinating details about Jesus that nuance what can be seen elsewhere, tying concepts together into an "orderly account" that will cause us to meditate on the Word. Jesus's life and mission should change and shape our lives. As such, Luke invites us to be "on mission" regardless of our circumstances. The many individuals mentioned in his Gospel provide examples of how we should respond to Jesus during the best and worst times. Let us choose to engage and proclaim "repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Acts 24:47), and let everyone around us know that it is all about Jesus.

SESSION 1

# THE MISSION OF JESUS

Leader pages on pp. 100-103

**THE POINT:**  
JESUS CAME TO DELIVER  
THE GOOD NEWS OF  
SALVATION FOR ALL PEOPLE.

## LUKE 3:1-6; 4:14-21

<sup>3:1</sup> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, God's word came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

<sup>3</sup> He went into all the vicinity of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight!

<sup>5</sup> **Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low; the crooked will become straight, the rough ways smooth, <sup>6</sup> and everyone will see the salvation of God.**

MEMORY VERSE

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.....  
<sup>4:14</sup> Then Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread throughout the entire vicinity. <sup>15</sup> He was teaching in their synagogues, being praised by everyone. <sup>16</sup> He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written: <sup>18</sup> The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

.....  
<sup>20</sup> He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him.

<sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled."

KEYWORDS

**Fifteenth year . . . Tiberius Caesar (v. 1)**—This dates John the Baptist's ministry beginning around AD 27.

**Proclaiming (v. 3)**—This word communicates an authoritative message from another. John was proclaiming God's message of repentance.

**Because he has anointed me (v. 18)**—In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil to represent the Holy Spirit's guiding presence with them. The Messiah (Anointed One) would be the person in whom God's Spirit fully dwelt.

# WHY DID JESUS COME?

One day some soldiers found a little package in a clover field south of Frederick, Maryland, on September 13, 1862. It was a roll of paper wrapped around three cigars. Though they were initially excited to find the cigars, the real excitement came when they read the paper. It was a copy of Robert E. Lee's Special Orders No. 191, and it detailed the general's plan of attack to invade Maryland. The paper made its way through the chain of command and was instrumental in the Battle of Antietam, which ended Lee's first invasion of the North. Talk about being at the right place at the right time!

Those soldiers demonstrated their faithfulness by putting away the cigars and reporting what they had found. However, the soldiers were fortunate. They had not been assigned the task of locating Lee's plan of attack. A serendipitous circumstance is much different than a specific mission. The former is about chance; the latter is about intentionality. The former is a lucky confluence; the latter is about orchestrated design. When it comes to Jesus and His mission, we find someone more qualified to thwart the enemy's plans. Jesus did not come to simply stumble around looking for random lost individuals, but He came prepared to fulfill a perfectly orchestrated and intentional mission for God.

## Jesus Had a Mission // Luke 3:1-6

These verses begin with a colorful and influential character in the Gospels—John the Baptist. But his uniqueness began long before the moment he began to preach and call people to repentance; it began even before he was born. His mother and father, Zechariah and Elizabeth, loved the Lord and yet were without a child, which in that culture was often seen as a sign of divine displeasure. Then there came the day when Zechariah, a priest who, in the middle of his priestly duties, received a visit from an angel who told him that despite his and his wife's ages, they were going to have a son. The angel said many things about the boy—that he was going to be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, that people everywhere would rejoice at his birth, and that he would go before the Lord as someone

responsible for turning people back to God. The angel said that this child would be great in the sight of the Lord (Luke 1:5-20).

Skip forward several years, and we find that, as a prophet, the Word of God came to John, and his seeming eccentricities multiplied. He moved out into the middle of the desert. He lived as a hermit, he wore clothes made out of camel hair, and ate locusts. He had a certain wildness about him and preached a message of judgment and repentance. He even went so far as to insult people of great importance in his day. He called the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the time, broods of snakes



## THE POINT: JESUS CAME TO DELIVER THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION FOR ALL PEOPLE.

and other worse things. Later, he publicly rebuked the ruler of the region for marrying his brother's wife, which got him thrown in prison, eventually being executed for his commitment to God's law (Mark 6:14-29).

Though some considered him strange and maybe even crazy, John was very clear about his purpose in life. He was born, and lived, for one reason alone—to prepare the way for Jesus. This was the overarching theme of John's whole life, and in this, he shows us how we might live according to God's mission as well:

- **Our mission is formed by God's Word.** John did not search until he found a cause that grabbed his attention and captured his imagination; his mission was firmly rooted in the unchanging Word of God. The same must be true of us. In a culture in which it seems that everyone has a purpose that's important to them, we have the wonderful opportunity to align ourselves with the only mission that is unchanging, and the only mission with true, eternal significance.
- **Our mission is understood in light of Jesus's mission.** John understood and accepted that his life was subject to Jesus's life, and his mission was, therefore, only a smaller component of Jesus's mission. We must do the same. We must not trick ourselves into thinking that we can somehow live with passion and meaning in a way that does not fall in line with who Jesus is and what He came to do. Indeed, the pathway to true significance is only found in the shadow of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection.

### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS GOD PREPARED YOUR HEART TO HEAR ABOUT JESUS?

#### Jesus Had a Message // Luke 4:14-19

With the way prepared by John, Jesus began His public ministry, and in so doing, He created quite a stir due to the miracles He performed and the authority of His teaching. When we come to Luke 4, we find that Jesus's pathway has led Him back to His hometown of Nazareth.

Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah, a messianic prophecy found in Isaiah 61:1-2, and one the people would have been familiar with. It was one of the promises they had clung to about God's coming chosen one through all the years of oppression, through the destruction of the temple, and through the occupation by the Romans. It was a passage of hope, one that talked about giving sight to the blind, freedom to the captives, and bringing in the year of the Lord's favor.



### DIGGING DEEPER OBSTACLES TO FAITH

John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy found in Isaiah 40:3-5 and called on his audience to live out its message. The imagery in this passage focuses on obstacles that can keep people from seeing "the way of the Lord." Valleys that allow people to walk through low places are filled up. Mountains meant to allow people to see things from above are made low. Crooked paths that would warp the sight of various individuals are made straight. And even rough paths are smoothed out. All of this is done so that everyone, all flesh, could see the salvation of God. Regardless of their location, God ensured that anything obscuring a person's view would be removed. Similarly, John the Baptist explains that genuine acts of righteousness undergird true repentance (Luke 3:7-9). John dealt with three different groups and the obstacles that keep them from expressing true repentance. The crowds need to share more (Luke 3:10-11), the tax collectors need to be fair (Luke 3:12-13), and the soldiers need to avoid using their position for their own advantage (Luke 3:14).

**What obstacles in your life keep you from seeing Jesus clearly?**



This is Jesus, and this is His mission. Foretold hundreds of years earlier, Jesus was now here, fulfilling those ancient words. He was chosen by God, set apart for this specific and sacred purpose. His mission was indeed to:

- **Proclaim freedom for the prisoners.** Every human is a prisoner of sin and death, incapable of freeing themselves. We all need a rescuer who can break the chains of our own making and bring us into glorious freedom as the children of God.
- **Give sight to the blind.** We have all been blinded by our sin, each of us convinced that our own way is good and right. We need our eyes opened to the truth of our rebellion and God's great mercy by which we can be forgiven for our sin and be restored to him.
- **Set the oppressed free.** True freedom is not doing whatever our sinful nature desires; this is the insidious nature of sin, tricking us into believing that slavery is actually freedom. True freedom means living rightly with God and each other, free to love and serve God with our whole hearts.
- **Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.** At long last, the Messiah had come. And is there any greater favor God could show on the earth than providing the way of reconciliation to Him? Despite our sin and rebellion, God's great favor rests on us in that He has bridged the gap back to Him.

**WHICH OF THE METAPHORS IN THIS PASSAGE BEST REPRESENTS HOW GOD SAVED YOU?**

## Jesus Had a Mandate //

Luke 4:20-21

Having read Isaiah 61:1-2, Jesus continued, a true "drop the mic" kind of moment, "Today this passage has been fulfilled in your presence." In other words, I am Him. I'm the one you have waited for. And you are bearing witness to the fulfillment of these very words.

The Book of Isaiah was written approximately 750 years before Jesus stood in the synagogue of Nazareth. Those 750 years represent several generations of expectations, each dying off without seeing the fulfillment of God's promise. But no matter how much time passes, God's faithfulness never changes. To say God is faithful, is to say that He always keeps His word. True enough, things might not happen in the timing or the fashion that we expect, but He keeps His word, nevertheless. Because we cannot always comprehend the actions of God, we should humble ourselves as we encounter different events. In hindsight, God's actions are always fulfilled in expected and unexpected ways.

- **Jesus is the expected Messiah.** The crowd in the synagogue that day loved the pronouncement. Of course, they did—they were bearing witness to that which generations had waited for. Here, finally, was the promised one of God, the Messiah, and even better, He had come from their own small town of Nazareth. But amazingly, if we continue to read the chapter, we see that the crowd's attitude began to change. Though they began with excitement and joy, they ended with anger and violence, even attempting to throw Jesus to His death from a hilltop outside of town. We might wonder what exactly happened. How could the attitude change so dramatically if Jesus truly was the expected Messiah?
- **Jesus is the unexpected Messiah.** The reason the crowd shifted so abruptly and dramatically is because even though they expected the Messiah, they did not expect this kind of Messiah. The crowd in Nazareth assumed many things about Jesus and His mission. They assumed He would be a political leader. They assumed He was the Savior of Israel, and correspondingly, He was the

## THE POINT:

### JESUS CAME TO DELIVER THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION FOR ALL PEOPLE.

conqueror of their enemies. But Jesus is the Savior that challenges our assumptions.

As the passage continues, we see that Jesus references instances from the Old Testament in which God worked not in Israel but outside of it. He focused on the people's faith regardless of their bloodline. This, it seems, is not exactly what the people had in mind for their Savior. When they came to that realization, slowly at first, but then all together as a mob, they are absolutely livid. Angry enough to kill. The same crowd that only moments before was filled with pride and approval was suddenly bent on death and destruction. These people didn't want a Savior like this—not a Savior who would be as much for "those other people" as He was for them. They wanted a Savior who would put "those other people" in their place and who would commend them for their righteousness and faithfulness.

When we encounter Jesus, we cannot try and bend Him into the type of Savior that is more to our liking. Instead, all our assumptions, preferences, and desires must be brought under His lordship.

### HOW CAN WE PREPARE THE WAY FOR OTHERS TO BELIEVE IN JESUS AS CHRIST?

## DID YOU KNOW?

The list of names found in Luke 3:1-2a might easily be glossed over. Still, this information provides us with several important details. First, with it, we can identify the historical context of the events of John the Baptist's ministry to have taken place around 27-29 AD. Second, Luke introduces John the Baptist according to the normal prophetic introduction. "In the [x] year of [name] . . . God's word came to [prophet]" (Jer. 1:1-4; Ezek. 1:1-3, Hos 1:1, etc.). Third, the seven highly esteemed political figures mentioned here (Tiberius, Pilate, Herod, etc.) do not bring "salvation" to their regions. As Luke unfolds the story of Jesus's life and ministry, five of them disappear. When two of them do reappear (Pilate and Herod), they use their office for sinful purposes instead of for the good of their citizens (3:19; 13:1; 23:1-52).

**Biblical Truth:** Those committed to living by the "way of the Lord" engage people with the message of salvation and righteous living.

**How can you become properly engaged with bringing the message of salvation to your neighborhood?**

## LIVE IT

### How are your actions and choices related to the mission of Jesus?

Jesus came with a specific purpose and mission. As a Christian, our life should be lived to support that mission. We must be intentional to live the gospel with and be ready to share the good news when the opportunity is given. No conversation or encounter is haphazard or coincidental. Just as Jesus was God's plan for redemption, we are part of that plan to bring His redemption to others.

+ + +

- **Assess Your Thinking.** Are there any groups of people you consider to be "off limits" from the message of the gospel? If so, pray and repent of those attitudes.
- **Align Your Mission.** Consider your personal gifts, talents, and ambitions. Are they in alignment with Christ? Remember, our mission must fall in the shadow of Jesus's mission.
- **Share the Message.** Write out a summary of the gospel and read it a few times each day. Ask God for an opportunity to verbally share it with someone else.

# DAILY READINGS

## 1. GET READY! // LUKE 3:3-6

There is nothing like witnessing someone live out their passion, but more rewarding, their God-given passion. It is one thing to see this with your own eyes, but equally compelling is to hear it with your own ears. The reaction is catching, and contagious. It is like living with an ever-conscious mission or joining in with the hymnist and declaring, "A charge to keep I have, an eternal God to glory." John the Baptist was sent with a charge to prepare all those around the Jordan for God's coming and His mission to save. Just like John, as believers we also have a charge. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

**Christ's commission is for every believer and we all have a Jordan mission field. Are you ready?**

## 2. GOT POWER? // LUKE 4:14-15

Sometimes, we feel energized and enjoy tackling to-do lists, but more often than we care to admit, much of the time, we do not. This may not be laziness, but the lack of will or strength to follow through. The popular saying "Where there is a will, there is a way," does not apply to all situations. God often sends challenging situations or leads us into unwanted places to strengthen and empower us to accomplish His mission. That places us in the perfect position for us to be used—totally dependent on Him. In our weakness, His power is perfected (2 Cor. 12:9). He is the Omnipotent God. He gives us the will, power and depth to accomplish our assigned mission. On our own we can do nothing, but will God all things are possible.

**When we are at our lowest, the power of God is at its greatest.**

## 3. GOT PURPOSE? // LUKE 4:16-21

Do you have a purpose? Yes, of course, you do. We all have a purpose. So, the easy answer is "Yes." However, the difficulty with that question comes

with the obvious follow-up question of "What is my purpose?" Knowing your purpose is the gateway to a fulfilling and God-glorifying life. Notice that I said the gateway. To live in purpose, you must embrace it. The best way to do that is follow the leader. He knew who He was, His purpose and mission in life. In Christ, we come to know our purpose and mission for life. Our identity is in Him and we bear fruit, when we abide in Him (John 15:5).

**I am who I am because Jesus knew and fulfilled His purpose and mission.**

## 4. LIFE AS YOU SHOULD KNOW IT // JOHN 10:10

People live based on many experiences: personal, others' experiences, hard knocks, the streets, etc. In John 10:10, Jesus clearly distinguishes between the enemy's mission of life destruction and His mission of life more abundantly. He told those following Him that if they stayed in a relationship with Him, they would be His disciples. Then they would have what they needed—the truth of life, which is only found in God. He also told them, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). An abundant and free life in Christ is the goal of every disciple.

**Christ's mission was a ministry of compassion and kingdom works that connected us with the Father.**

## 5. HOW'S YOUR LOVE LIFE? // MARK 12:28-31

How is your love life? Before you answer, allow me to explain that the question is God-focused because there must be a broader approach to answering the question. Just think about the number of relationships you have. Should love be found within them? Yes, I know there are different kinds of love, but love is love. Speaking of relationships, the Word of God tells us that the most important commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second is: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The mission and ministry of God are clearly love.

**It is His way of being, and so it should be ours. Again, "how's your love life?"**