

**YOUR 1ST FORTY
DAYS AS A
CHRISTIAN!!**

You Made the Right Decision

(Especially for new Christians)

by Thomas A. Jones

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10

My new Christian friend, this is written especially for you to help you understand what you have done and what you have become. Some time ago, you did what few in this world ever do. You made a decision that few have the courage to make. You left one life behind and burst into a new life, whose architect and designer is God. You turned your back on the “wisdom of this world,” on that which you had been taught for years, on that which had become such a part of you that you didn’t know for a very long time that there was any other way to be, and you reached out and embraced the wisdom of God. You did what few have the integrity and the guts to do.

Not even those who skydive or climb mountains or race into battle do something as daring as you did. You left the familiar, the normal, the traditional and the expected and you cast your lot with a radical. You didn’t do it to be a rebel, because He didn’t do what He did to be a rebel. You did it because it is right. You did it because He is right. You did it because you came to your senses. You did it because your eyes were opened. You did it because you saw that it is not in man to direct his own steps. You did it because you saw and understood that apart from God we can do nothing. You gave yourself to Jesus Christ. You stood before others and you said for all to hear, “Jesus is Lord.” Those words of yours echoed all the way to the corners of glory *and* into the dungeons of demons, because you stood face to face with the truth about God, the truth about yourself and the truth about this world, and you had the heart and the humility to admit how much you needed Him.

My friend, you did the right thing. You put your faith in the right person. You committed to the right cause. And you will not be sorry.

From Old to New

Oh, yes, you were a sinner. You were dead in your trespasses and sins. You followed the ways of the world and, yes, even the evil one who rules the dominion of darkness. You gratified the cravings of your sinful nature. You followed its desires and thoughts. And you will never be able to look down on anyone and say, “Well, at least I wasn’t that bad.” You were bad and you must never forget that. Your need for a savior was no less than the child-killer you read about in the newspaper or the sorry-looking figure you see in handcuffs on the evening news. Oh, your mother may have told you how nice you were and friends may have said you were wonderful, but none of them knew much about God’s standards – His radical standards – His right and true standards. But you looked at and studied those standards with an open heart and saw yourself for the first time, and you cried out with the apostle, “Wretched man (or woman) that I am.”

But then, by the grace of God, you made a right and courageous choice. You looked up into His eyes and said one of the most important words anyone can ever say to God. You said, “Help!” Like the Roman centurion, like the Canaanite woman, like the invalid at the pool, you said, “I need help.” You said, “I need *your* help.” And then God looked back at you and said, “I will help. I am in the helping business. I am in the saving business. I am in the redeeming business. I am in the forgiving business.” And then God worked a miracle. He took a sinner who was lost in an empty way of life, traveling toward hell and without hope, and he made you new. You don’t belong to the old any more. You belong to the new.

You confessed, “Jesus is Lord” and went down into the water. You were buried with Jesus in baptism and your *old* life was consigned to the grave (and by way, let it stay there). You came out of the water and are not the same. A new Spirit is filling you up. Heaven’s view of you has changed and now your view of everything can change. Once you looked at things from a human point of view. Now you do so no longer. Everything Jesus did has now been applied to your life. Everything He achieved has been credited to your account. When God looks at you today, it is as though He is looking at Jesus. Incredibly, you stand before Him without spot or blemish and free from accusation (and this remains true for as long as you live if you continue in your faith). The old has passed away. The old *you* is gone. The old record of sin is gone. The old sentence of death is gone. All things have become new. Take some time to just let that soak in. It is so amazing that you won’t get it quickly. In fact, only in heaven will you surely understand it all.

Challenges Ahead

You have probably already learned that new does not mean perfect – at least not yet. (Perfect also must wait for heaven). You are new, but there is still a lot of old around to deal with. You are new but you are not finished. There is still a great spiritual battle to be fought. You are on the right side. You have been given the right weapons. But there are some intense times ahead. One this is for sure: Jesus never promises that following Him will be a cushy ride. He promises life and joy and peace, but he also talks plainly about sacrifice, crosses, and persecution. He lets you know plenty of times that being new in an old world means there is a price to pay. But you counted the cost and with eyes wide open made your decision, and now by the grace of God you can keep paying the price as long as it takes.

Along the journey, you will have some great victories. You are fighting with a God who knows how to win. You will see amazing things. You've seen love, but you will see much more. You will see love that overcomes sin and love that overcomes hurt and love that never quits. You will have that kind of radical love for others and you will be loved with that kind of love. You are in a kingdom that is advancing around the world. You are in a church that is tearing down walls of division and bringing people together, and you will be a part of that. You will contribute to all this. God will take your talents, energize them with His Spirit and use you to make a difference in the lives of others.

God has a plan for your life and it will come true as you stay with Him. He did not go to all the trouble of creating the world, choosing a nation, bringing a savior and giving us a Bible to let it all fizzle at the end of the twentieth century. What He starts He finishes. The bottom of the ninth and the fourth quarter always belong to God. He finishes, and He finishes strong.

But bear in mind that you will have some tough days. God allows them. Don't be surprised when they come. Don't despair if they come more often than you think they ought. Somehow they're all part of His plan to build your character. You'll have days when the demons of doubt will pound on your faith. You'll have days when the demons of fear chip away at your courage. You'll have days when the demons of selfishness will try to undermine your commitment. You'll have days when the demons of fatigue will tell you God expects too much. Your old life died with Christ in baptism, but the demons didn't take that same bath. You have a new mind and new heart but the demons haven't given up on reclaiming you for their cause.

Sometimes, they'll dress up in sheep's clothing and present their case in a dozen smooth and attractive ways. Sometimes they'll come dressed like football linebackers and try smashing you into hopelessness. Their minds are fertile with schemes to distract and discourage disciples. But mark this down: *No day will ever be so tough that you cannot make it through and no demon so strong that you cannot overcome him.* God just will not let it be any other way. You are His son and daughter, and He will make sure that no matter how hot the fire, no matter how cold the wind, no matter how tough the disappointment, no matter how perplexing the question, He will always provide a way out – a way of escape – a way back to the one and only road that leads to heaven. Just make up your mind that you will never never never quit on God, and you can be sure that He will never quit on you.

Vital principles

Being a disciple of Jesus is really a matter of taking very simple ideas and relentlessly applying them. And relentless means daily. Remember how often the word "daily" shows up in your Bible. Understand what that is saying about what we all need. Never think you can be an exception.

Your conviction that you needed help brought you to God in the first place. Now, let Him hear from you every day how you need His help. *Make your prayer life a priority.* Do it now as a young disciple. Give it the place that it deserves – at the top of your "to do" list, at the center of your existence. But don't ever do it just to check it off. Don't do it to fulfill a duty. Do it because every day of your life as long as you live you will need help from God. Fight off the distractions, shake off the drowsiness, break out of the routine, do something unusual, but whatever it takes, claim your birthright. You are a child of the King. Walk with Him every day. Lay every tough decision before Him. Cast all your anxieties on Him. Intercede with Him for every person He is putting in your life to love. No matter how much you learn. No matter how much you do. No matter how many other great things others may say about you, learn to be a man of prayer or a woman of prayer and stay that way as long as you live.

And then, *treasure your Bible.* Expose your mind and your heart to it every day. In a world of shifting opinions and changing standards, it is your only safe guide to truth. When powerful feelings of sentimentality pull you toward compromise and an unbiblical broad-mindedness, the Bible will remind you that God means what He says. But beyond that you need the Bible's wisdom, its vision, its direction – and you need it fresh every day. If Jesus lived by every word that came from the mouth of God, how can we be any different?

And then look around you and see *the family you are in*. Be grateful for your physical family, but realize that this new spiritual family is even more of God. Here is where you will see godly examples. Here is where you will get godly advice. Here is where you will give and receive the love that Jesus said would get the attention of the world. And it needs to happen how often? There's that word again – daily. But remember, we haven't gotten to perfection yet. Your spiritual family is still on earth, not in heaven, which means you will have to forgive even as you will need to be forgiven. You will need to be forbearing, even as you will need others to be forbearing of you. But love this family. Treat it just the way God does.

And then, *never forget the importance of the mission*. Fulfilling the mission must be daily like the others. God has a strategy of getting His miracles into more offices, more neighborhoods, more cities, and more countries. You are at the center of His plan. He called you to fish for men and women, to go and help others become what you have become. You can think of a dozen reasons why you can't do it. But understand this: Your circumstances will change, your opportunities will change, your energy will change, your challenges will change. But your mission will not change. In every situation, you will still be Christ's ambassador and God will still be seeking to make His appeal through you. In many ways, being faithful here may be your greatest challenge, but aren't you grateful someone was faithful to you? Aren't you glad someone didn't make an excuse but found a way to get into your life and share with you that Jesus is Lord? Aren't you glad someone gave you a lot of time and stayed with you until you got it? Because that person did that for you, you can now do it for someone else. What that will mean to them and to you can hardly be described.

And so, my new Christian friend, you did the right thing. You have the right King. You are on the right road. You have the right friends. You are singing the right song and you are reading the right book. Never forget what you were, how you got here and who you belong to.

DAY ONE “SAVED COMPLETELY”

What God has done for you through your baptism into Christ is truly AMAZING!!

Colossians 1 : 21 - 23

1. What was your relationship with God before today? What had you done to make God your enemy?
2. What does it mean to be holy/without blemish/free from accusation?
3. What condition is there to staying saved (v23)?

1 John 3 : 1 - 4

1. AS a “child of God”, what should your attitude be?
2. How can you begin to “purify yourself”?

Hebrews 9 : 24 - 28/Hebrews 10 : 19 - 23

1. What has Jesus’ sacrifice done for you?
2. How can you draw near to God with a sincere heart?

Psalm 103 : 1 - 5

What has God done with your sins? Write other “benefits” God has done for you (v2).

APPLICATION : Praise God and thank him for saving you! Write a thank you prayer to God.

DAY TWO “TESTED & TEMPTED”

Matthew 3 : 16 - 4 : 11

1. What happened to Jesus after his baptism? What should you expect after your baptism?
2. How was Jesus tempted to question his relationship with God? God’s plan for him?
3. How has Satan tempted you with doubts/insecurity/fears since your baptism?
4. How did Jesus use the Bible to fight temptation? How does the Bible expose Satan’s lies?

Ephesians 6 : 10 - 18

1. How might the devil scheme against you?
2. What armour has God provided to keep you strong?
3. What is our only “weapon” against Satan (v17)?

APPLICATION : Expect to be tempted and decide to be open about your struggles. Talk with another Christian today about your temptations and pray together.

DAY THREE “GROWING ROOTS”

Luke 8 : 13

What happens to young disciples who don’t grow “roots”?

Acts 2 : 41 - 47/Acts 4 : 32 - 37

1. What helped keep these young disciples faithful?
2. Are you devoting yourself to the same things they did (2:42)?
3. How can you deepen your relationships in the church?

1 Thessalonians 1 : 2 - 10

1. What does it mean to have “deep conviction”? How can you develop conviction?
2. Who should you imitate? In what ways?
3. Are you becoming a “model” to others? How?

APPLICATION : Spend time this week with Christians you can imitate/encourage/learn from.

DAY SEVEN “THE FAMILY OF GOD”

Mark 3 v 31 - 33

1. Why did Jesus have to make a choice between his physical and his spiritual one?
2. Who are the people who are closest to you? What choices do you have to make? Are God's people really your family?

1 Peter 1 v 22

1. What is “sincere love”? How can you love deeply, from the heart?
2. Who have you loved this much in your life before? How does your love for the disciples need to grow?

2 Corinthians 5 : 16 - 17

1. What are some worldly ways you have looked at people before?
2. How do you need to change your way of seeing people? (Be specific).

1 Timothy 5 : 1 - 12

Who are some people in your ministry that can become like spiritual “fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters” in your life?

APPLICATION : This week, schedule time to spend with two Christians that you have not spent time with before.

DAY EIGHT “THE HOPE OF GLORY”

1 Corinthians 15 : 19

1. Why does our hope in Christ go beyond this earthly life?
2. Why are we, as Christians, to be pitied if there is no eternal life?

1 Corinthians 15 : 42 - 58

1. What is the mystery Paul tells us (v51)?
2. Why do we normally fear death - and why should we no longer be afraid of dying?
3. How should we work for the Lord? What will happen when we give ourselves completely?

Colossians 3 : 1 - 4

1. When were you raised with Christ?
2. What should your thinking be about from now on?
3. What things should you stop thinking about so much?

APPLICATION : Think for a while about what heaven will be like. Don't forget to thank God every day for the opportunity to go to heaven!

DAY NINE “TRIALS OF MANY KINDS”

James 1 : 2 - 8

1. Why does God allow us to go through trials?
2. What should your attitude be about going through trials?
3. What are the trials in your life right now?

James 1 : 12 - 15

1. How can you persevere through trials and stand the test?
2. Where do temptations come from? What things tempt you? Have you talked about your temptations with God and with another disciple?

1 Peter 1 : 3 - 9

1. Why should we rejoice in trials?
2. How can you know if your faith is genuine or not?
3. Write a list of some of the tests that could come your way (financially, relationships, persecution, etc.). How can you prepare today for trials you may face later?

APPLICATION : Talk with another disciple today about the trials and temptations you face. Discuss your attitude about trials. Be happy!

DAY TEN “PRAYING LIKE JESUS”

Mark 1 : 32 - 39

1. What sacrifices did Jesus make to go and pray? Think of his previous day. What excuses could he have made not to pray?
2. When do you feel the need to pray? Do you ever make excuses not to pray?
3. How has your prayer time been the past 10 days?

Hebrews 5 : 7 - 10

1. What kind of prayer life did Jesus have?
2. What things, besides going to the cross, would have been difficult for Jesus to obey?
3. What things are difficult for you to do as a disciple?
4. Have you been praying with loud cries and tears for God to help you be obedient?
5. What situations in your life do you need to pray more about? Make a list and be specific.

APPLICATION : Spend time today praying about the things you wrote on your list. Be specific in your prayers. Try praying out loud and talking to God as if you could see him. Tell him how you feel about these things, what is difficult, why it is difficult and what you can change.

Review the past ten days' applications. Have you put them into practice?

DAY ELEVEN “HOLDING TO THE TRUTH”

2 Timothy 2 : 4 - 19

1. Why do some people like to quarrel about words and spread their own ideas around? Do you ever quarrel about words? Have you talked about it with another disciple?
2. How can you train yourself to be an approved workman?
3. Have you been involved in any discussions lately about God's word or the church that were pointless or even harmful? How can you avoid godless chatter?

1 Timothy 1 : 18 - 20

1. How can you fight the good fight?
2. How does a disciple “shipwreck” their faith?
3. Remember Hymenaeus (2 Timothy 2 : 17 - 18) and Alexander (2 Timothy 4 : 14 - 15). What is the outcome of people who turn away from the faith? How do they try to harm others?

1 Timothy 4 : 15 - 16

1. Are you watching, daily, your life (as a disciple) and your doctrine (understanding the Bible)?
2. Has anyone noticed changes in you?

2 Timothy 2 : 22 - 26

What should your attitude be toward those who oppose you?

APPLICATION : Discuss with your discipling partner any questions about doctrine or the church that you do not understand

DAY TWELVE “DOING GOOD THINGS”

Ephesians 2 : 10

1. What has God created for us to do?
2. Make a list of some good works that you could do.

1 Peter 4 : 8 - 11

1. How does love cover over many sins?
2. Have you been offering hospitality to other disciples?
3. How can you improve in this?
4. What do you think God wants you to be giving to others?

Galatians 6 : 9 - 10

1. Who does God want us to help?

2. Who in your Bible talk has special needs right now that you can help with?

*APPLICATION :If you see needs you can meet, do it **this week!** If you don't know how you can help, ASK. REMEMBER : We need each other. We are family.*

DAY THIRTEEN “SAVED TO SERVE”

Matt 25 : 31 - 46

1. What will we be judged for on the last day?
2. Why is it not enough to simply give money to beggars?
3. Which of the 6 things listed in verses 35 - 36 have you done recently?
4. Who are we really ignoring when we neglect the needy?

Deuteronomy 15 : 7 - 10

1. What does it mean to be “hard-hearted” or “tight-fisted”?
2. What kind of giving does God expect from you?
3. Who are some of the poor and needy around you - and how are you going to help them?

Matthew 10 : 47

1. What are some small acts of kindness that will not be forgotten by God?
2. How can you help the needy even if you have little money?

James 1 : 27

1. What is true religion in God's sight?
2. Who does God have a special concern for?

APPLICATION : Who can you help today? Do it. Also, make plans with another disciple to help other needy people this week.

DAY FOURTEEN “A NEW CREATION”

2 Corinthians 5 : 17

1. What are some of the “old” parts of you that are gone?
2. What are some of the “new” things you are becoming?

Mark 2 : 21 - 22

1. How new must you be?
2. What is the difference between adding on new habits and being changed from the inside?
3. Are you like an old wineskin or a new one? Why?

Romans 12 : 2

1. What are some examples of worldly thinking in your life?
2. How can you change your thinking?

Ephesians 4 : 17 - 5 : 2

1. How does God describe your old way of thinking and living?
2. Who were you created to be like? Why is it so important to keep on forgiving each other?
3. What does it mean to live a life of love?

APPLICATION : Ask your discipler or a Christian who knows you well how they see worldly attitudes or habits in your life

DAY FIFTEEN “THE HOPE OF HEAVEN”

Revelation 20 : 11 - 15

1. Imagine what the day of judgement will be like. Who will be there?
2. How will everyone be feeling?

Revelations 21 : 1 - 8

1. Who is the bride of Christ?
2. Describe heaven.
3. Check yourself against verse 8. Are any of these sins in your life?

Revelation 22 : 1 - 6

1. What other eternal joys will be in heaven?
2. Why does God want us to know these words are trustworthy and true?

Revelation 22 : 14 - 15

Are any of these sins in your life?

APPLICATION : Pray about what God promises in heaven! If there are any sins you need to confess and change, do it TODAY!

DAY SIXTEEN “SAVED TO SAVE”

1 Peter 2 : 9 - 10U

1. What does it mean to be a royal priesthood?
2. What message should you be sharing?
3. Are you really declaring God’s praises or just giving out an invitation?

2 Corinthians 5 : 14 - 21

1. How can you tell if you’re living for yourself or living for Jesus?
2. What does it mean to be Christ’s ambassador?
3. Would Jesus be pleased with the way you represent him?
4. What does it meant to APPEAL to and IMPLORE people?
5. What attitude should you have toward to this?

Acts 17 : 16 - 34

1. Why was Paul distressed?
2. What are some sights around your city that should distress you?
3. Where did Paul share his faith?
4. Why did Paul begin his message by commending the Athenians for being very religious?
5. What does this teach you about reaching out to religious people - even of different faiths?
6. How did the people respond to Paul’s message?

APPLICATION : Write at least 4 things you have learned about evangelism from today’s study. Share your faith with these things in mind.

DAY SEVENTEEN “DISTRACTED OR DEVOTED”

Luke 10 : 38 - 42

1. Why was Martha distracted?
2. How was she feeling?
3. What are some things you have let distract you this week?
4. Are you more like Martha or Mary?
5. What did Mary choose?
6. How was is it better?

Luke 8:14

1. What does it mean to be “choked”?
2. What is the result?
3. What are the worries/money and business concerns/pleasures that are keeping you from growing more?

Luke 12:35 - 40

1. Why do we need to stay alert and ready for Jesus?
2. How does Jesus feel when we get distracted from our purpose and start doing other things?

APPLICATION: If you have been distracted or wasting time, try writing a personal schedule every day. Let another disciple help you.

DAY EIGHTEEN: “LEARNING FROM OTHERS”

Matt 18:1 - 4

1. What kind of heart does God want us to have?
2. What qualities of children do we need to imitate?

1 Thess. 5:12 - 14

1. Who is “over you” in the Lord?
2. Does it have anything to do with age or education?
3. Write the names of some Christians who work hard, set a good example and admonish you.
4. Are you showing them respect?
5. What kind of disciple need special help (vs. 14)?
6. Have you been admonished for any of these problems?

Psalms 119:99 - 100

1. What gives us real maturity and understanding?
2. How is verse 100 opposite of how our society thinks?
3. What should your attitude be when you are being taught/disciplined/corrected by someone younger than yourself?

1 Tim. 4:11,12

1. What does the Lord expect from young leaders?

Psalms 32:8 - 10

1. How can you not be like a horse or mule?

APPLICATION: If you have resisted learning from younger disciples, repent today and seek them out to ask questions. If you are young yourself, set the believers a great example!

DAY NINETEEN “POWERFUL PRAYERS”

1 Chron. 17:15 - 22

1. What was David feeling as he prayed to God? Why?
2. How has the Lord treated you with undeserved honour and blessings?
3. How did God bless Israel?
4. How has he done even greater things for his people today?
5. What attitude toward God does this prayer express?

Gen. 24:10-27

1. Why do you think the Lord answered this prayer so quickly?
2. The servant’s prayer was simple, but he had great faith. How can you tell?
3. What was the servant’s first response to the answered prayer?
4. Are you remembering to thank God for every answered prayer?

James 5:15-18

1. What makes prayer powerful and effective?
2. Do you pray eagerly and earnestly?
3. Do you pray with great faith? Have you been righteous this week?

APPLICATION: Make your prayer very specific today. Pray with faith and gratitude.

DAY TWENTY “TEMPTED BY THE WORLD”

Psalms 73:1-14

1. What was the writer feeling as he looked at the wealthy, unsaved people around him?
2. Why did life seem unfair to him?
3. How have you envied people in the world?
4. Have you struggled with this since becoming a Christian? Have you talked about it?

Psalms 73:15-22

1. What did he realise about their final destiny?
2. How is the “good life” like a dream that will end on judgement day?
3. How was the writer thinking when he was envying them?

Psalms 73: 23-28

1. What did the writer realise about his relationship with God?
2. Memorise verses 25,26.

1 John 2:15-17

1. What things in the world are you supposed to hate?
2. What worldly are still attracting you?

APPLICATION: Talk with your discipler about your feelings about the world. What temptations you have been having. Pray about them today.

DAY TWENTY-ONE “REJOICE IN PERSECUTIONS”

Matt. 5:10,11

1. What should make us rejoice in persecutions?
2. Have people insulted or spoken evil of you because of Jesus?
3. How did you feel?
4. Who else has been treated this way?

John 15:18-23

1. How should we expect to be treated?
2. Why does the world hate us?
3. What makes people guilty when they see us become disciples?

Acts 4:13-22

1. What made Peter and John so bold?
2. Has anyone tried to stop you from teaching, speaking, worshipping Jesus?
3. How have you responded?

Acts 5:17-29

1. Jesus was persecuted out of envy (Mark 15:10); the apostles were arrested out of jealousy.
2. Why will we be persecuted or slandered?
3. By whom?
4. What was the apostles’ reply when they were told to stop?

Acts 5:40-42

1. What made the apostles happy?

APPLICATION: Let verse 42 be your theme today end every day.

DAY TWENTY-TWO “GIVING LIVING”

John 13:1-17

1. How did Jesus show the full extent of his love?
2. What was he carrying trying to teach his disciples?
3. How can we obey verse 17?
4. Give specific examples.

Acts 9:36-42

1. Why was Dorcas so loved by everyone?
2. Who were her “special friends”?
3. Why do you think she did so much for them?
4. If you died today, what would you be remembered for?
5. What can we learn from Dorcas’s life?

Phil. 2:19-24

1. What made Timothy different from the others?
2. What shows a genuine interest in the welfare of others?
3. How can you be more like Timothy?

APPLICATION: Think of a practical way to show another disciple that you truly care. Do it today.

DAY TWENTY-THREE “CONFESSING SIN”

Psalms 32:1-7

1. How do we feel when we are hiding/not confessing our sin?
2. Have you felt this way since your baptism? Are there any sins you have been afraid to confess?

Prov. 28:13

1. Can we conceal our sins from God?
2. Who do we need to confess our sins to besides God?
3. What effect will unconfessed sin have in our life?

Luke 8:17

1. Why is it foolish to try to keep our sins hidden?

Psalms 66:18,19

1. What else happens if we conceal or cherish sin?

APPLICATION: Take some time to think about any sins - attitudes, action, thoughts - that are troubling you because you haven't shared them. Write them down and make sure you talk about them even today!

DAY TWENTY-FOUR “FAMILY PRESSURES”

Mark 3:20,21

1. Why do you think Jesus' family was upset with him?
2. Has anyone in your family tried to stop you from serving God because they think you are hurting yourself?
3. What would have happened if Jesus had agreed with them?

John 7:1-9

1. What did Jesus' own brothers think of him?
2. Why didn't Jesus do what his family wanted?

Matt. 10:37-39

1. List some examples of ways we can “love” our families more than we listen to Jesus.
2. If someone looked at your life, who would they say you love the most?

APPLICATION: Discuss any pressures you are feeling about family expectations with a strong disciple. Are there any changes you need to make?

DAY TWENTY-FIVE “BEING OPEN”

John 15:15

1. What did Jesus share with his disciples?
2. Are you this kind of a friend to other Christians?
3. Do they really know all about your life?

2 Cor. 6:11-13

1. What does it mean to speak freely?
2. Are you opening your heart to others?
3. What are some feelings you aren't expressing to anyone?

Prov. 20:5

Are you helping others to disciple you by being open or does someone have to “draw you out” by asking many questions?

APPLICATION: Spend some time today writing down some feelings/plans/secret sins that you haven't been sharing. Discuss these things with another Christian this week. Be open!

DAY TWENTY-SIX “DEALING WITH DOUBTS”

Matt. 11:1-6

1. After all that John the Baptist knew about Jesus, why do you think he began having doubts?
2. What did John do to deal with his doubts?
3. What should you do when doubts enter your mind?

Matt. 18:16-17

1. Does this surprise you? Read on and see what Jesus told his doubting disciples to do.

1 Cor. 15:11-14

1. What were the Christians in Corinth doubting? They had believed at first, but later some began to doubt.
2. What are some teachings you have doubted after believing?

Luke 24:36-45

1. Where do you think doubts come from?
2. How did Jesus help them to find faith?

APPLICATION: Write briefly how you can overcome doubts through openness, the word of God, prayer and obedience

DAY TWENTY-SEVEN “LEARNING TO BE LOYAL”

First, what does loyalty mean to you?

1 Cor. 13:4-7

1. Write out this passage substituting your name in place of the word love. Now read through it again, thinking about some specific relationships you have.
2. What do you see about yourself that needs to change?

Eph. 4:29

1. What kind of talk is harmful to others?
2. Have you been involved in talk that is unkind, slanderous or mocking?

1 Thess 5:12 - 15

1. Who is “over you is the Lord”?
2. Is this based on how they live?
3. Write some names of Christians who work hard among you. Do you respect them from your heart?
4. What is your attitude toward Christians who are weak or slow to learn?

APPLICATION: Write a note of appreciation to someone you respect, who is over you in the Lord and also to someone who needs patient encouragement.

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT “DISPUTABLE MATTERS”

Rom 14:1 - 8

1. What are some disputable matters among Christians today? (dress, taste in music, food and drink)
2. What should your attitude be toward those who see these things differently?

Rom 14:16 - 23

1. What does God care about the most?
2. Are you doing anything that could cause others to stumble
3. What does verse 23 mean?
4. Do you feel good about the way you are living now?

1 Tim 2:9,10/1 Peter 3:3 - 5

1. What make a woman beautiful to God?
2. In you own words, write what you think these passages are teaching about clothing and about godliness.

Matt 11:18,19

1. Why did the people criticise Jesus and John the Baptist both?
2. Why do you think they were so different yet both were pleasing to God?

APPLICATION: Do you have questions about what is right and wrong for a Christian? Find out from a mature disciple whether these things are disputable matter and come to your own decisions.

DAY TWENTY-NINE “JESUS IS COMING SOON!”

2 Peter 3:3 - 14

1. Why do some people scoff (mock) at the promise of Christ’s return?
2. What will the “day of the Lord “ be like?
3. Are you living as though Jesus could come TODAY?

1 Thess 4:13 - 18

1. Compare this passage to 2 Peter 3:7,10. Will there be any “second chance” for those who are not ready to meet the Lord?
2. Why will this day be like “a thief in the nights”?
3. What does it mean to be alert and self-controlled?

2 Tim 4:6 - 8

1. How does Paul feel about facing the Lord on judgement day?
2. Why is living for Jesus like fighting the good fight, finishing the race and keeping the faith?
3. What kind of effort does it take to be this way to the end?

APPLICATION: Live each day like it is you last!

DAY THIRTY: “JOINED TOGHTER IN LOVE”

Psalm 133:1 - 3

1. What is unity and why is it so important to have it in the church?

Eph 4:1 - 3

1. Explain verse 2 in you own words. What happens when we act the opposite of this?
2. Why does it take every effort to keep unity?

Phil 2:1 - 5

1. What does it mean to be one in spirit and purpose?
2. How can you consider others better than yourself?
3. Whose interests have you been looking out for besides your own? What is the attitude of Jesus? Is yours the same?

Matt 18:15 17/5:23,24

1. How does Jesus tell us to resolve conflicts and disagreements with one another?
2. Who should go to whom first?
3. Is there anyone in the church with whom you need to go and settle a problem?

APPLICATION: Think about your relationships today. Pray to be unified with all your brothers and sisters and reach out to and spend time with those you do not love as Jesus would.

DAY THIRTY-ONE “DEALING WITH DISCOURAGEMENT”

The prophet Elijah had just experienced some tremendous victories from God: The destruction of 450 false prophets, and the first rainfall in 3 ½ years because of the earnest prayer. (James 5:17 - 18) But then he got afraid and discouraged.

1 Kings 19:1 - 8

1. Why did Elijah feel so overwhelmed?
2. What are some things that have made you feel like giving up?
3. How did the Lord encourage him physically, spiritually and emotionally?
4. What do you normally do when you start feeling “down”?
5. How can you apply the 3 lessons from above the next time you are tempted to give into discouragement?

1 Kings 19:19 - 21

1. How do you think Elijah felt to be given a friend and disciple like Elisha?
2. Why did God wait until Elijah was “in action” again before sending him to Elisha?

APPLICATION: How are you dealing with discouragement today? Share what you have learned with someone else.

DAY THIRTY TWO “WALKING AS JESUS DID”

1 John 2:5, 6

1. Think back over the past several days. Are you walking like Jesus?

Mark 1:21 - 28

1. What was different about the way Jesus taught?
2. Are you teaching others with authority?

Mark 1:29 - 34

1. How late do you think Jesus worked that night?
2. Do you think he felt tired?
3. Why did he work so hard?
4. Are you willing to push yourself for others to know Jesus - even when it is very challenging?

Mark 1:35 - 39

1. Note how early Jesus got up the next day? Why did he?
2. How much do you feel the need to pray like Jesus?

Mark 2:13 - 17

1. What kinds of people did Jesus make friends with? Why?
2. How do you treat sinners and pagans?
3. Are you making new friends to share the gospel with?

APPLICATION: Write down two things from today’s study that you can do to imitate Jesus. Do them!

DAY THIRTY-THREE “SHINING LIKE STARS”

Phil 2:14 - 16

1. How do we “hold out the word of life” to others?
2. What kind of example do we need to show those around us?
3. What have you complained or argued about lately? How can you change?

1 Cor 9:19 - 23

1. How can you be a slave to everyone? (Give examples)
2. What are some ways you need to adapt to people in your life to help them be saved?

Psalms 126:6

1. Why should we be “weeping” as we go out to make disciples?
2. What is the promise for those who do?

Dan 12:3

1. Are you being wise?

APPLICATION: Pray for a heart that truly loves people deeply as you share your faith today.

DAY THIRTY-FOUR “TAKING CORRECTION”

Gal 2:11 - 16

1. What was Peter’s sin?
2. Why did Paul correct him publicly? (See 1 Tim 5:20, Matt 18:15)

2 Cor 7:8 - 13

1. Why did Paul correct and challenge the Corinthians?
2. How does God want you to respond to correction?
3. Has anyone corrected you lately?
4. How did you respond?
5. Were they encouraged by your response?

Gal 6:1 - 5

1. What obligation do we have to help one another?
2. How can pride keep you from taking correction?
3. Why is it dangerous to compare ourselves to others?

Prov 15:31,32/16:18

1. Which one describes you?

APPLICATION: Ask your discipler how you take correction? Do you need to repent?

DAY THIRTY-FIVE “WORTHY OF THE NAME”

1 Peter 4:12 - 19

1. What kind of insults and sufferings have you endured for Jesus?
2. What should your attitude be?
3. What does Satan want you to think and do when you are being persecuted?

Heb 10:32 - 34

1. Have you gone through suffering like this?
2. What are you doing to encourage other Christians who are going through insults and persecutions?

Heb 11:32 - 40

1. Have you faced lions, flames, swords, armies, tortures, flogging, imprisonment, flogging, chains - or even banishment for Jesus’ sake?
2. How did God regard these people?

2 Cor 11:23 - 29/Rom 8:18

1. What kind of life did Paul live for Christ?
2. How did he feel about his sufferings?
3. Have you been rejoicing or complaining as a Christian?

APPLICATION: Would Jesus say you are worthy of the name "Christian"?

DAY THIRTY-SIX "A HOPE AND A FUTURE"

1. Do you worry about your future?
2. What are your hopes and what are your fears?

Jer 29:11 - 13

1. What does God promise to those who seek Him with all their hearts?
2. Are you seeking Him or something else?

Psalms 37:3 - 4

1. What are the desires of your heart?
2. Do you believe God will give them to you?

Psalms 16:5 - 8

1. Do you feel this way about your life? Why?

1 Tim 6:6 - 10

1. What should make you content?
2. What will a desire for money and things do to your life?
3. How does someone "wander" from the faith?
4. What other desires could make us wander?

Rom 8:31 - 32

1. How has God proven his love for you?

APPLICATION: If you see anxiety or discontentment in our life, confess it as a lack of faith, and memorise one of these scriptures to remind yourself of God's faithfulness.

DAY THIRTY-SEVEN "THE GRACE OF GIVING"

Luke 21:1 - 4

1. What do you learn from this widow's example?
2. Think of at least 3 reasons she could have given to be "stingy."

1 Tim 6:17 - 19

1. How should you live if you have money?

2 Cor 9:6 - 15

1. Have you decided to give generously to God?
2. Are you giving that amount regularly?
3. What does God promise to those who give freely?
4. How does your giving benefit others, God, and yourself?

APPLICATION: If you think your financial giving has not been generous or faithful, decide what you will give and honour that promise to God.

DAY THIRTY-EIGHT “GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES”

2 Tim 2:1 - 7

Compare verse 2 with Matt 28:19,20

1. What is Christ’s “strategy” for evangelizing the world?
2. Describe a reliable disciple. Are you reliable in terms of keeping appointments, keeping time, following instructions?
3. How are you to follow the example of a soldier, and athlete and a farmer? Be specific.
4. Would Timothy or Paul have chosen you to teach others? Why?

1 Cor 9:24 - 27

1. How is the Christian life like running a race?
2. What happens if an athlete does not train or “beat his body”?
3. What happens if you do not train and discipline yourself as a disciple?

APPLICATION: List ways you can be more disciplined in our Bible study and prayer, your evangelism and your use of time. Share it with your discipler.

DAY THIRTY NINE: “FAITH IS THE VICTORY”

Mark 2:1 - 12

1. Why was this man so determined to see Jesus?
2. List at least 3 reasons the man could have given to not try to see Jesus.
3. What impressed Jesus about this man?
4. How can you be more like him?

Mark 5:21 - 43

1. What did Jairus and the bleeding woman have in common?
2. Why did Jesus help both of them?
3. Why is it important for us to depend completely on Jesus when we need help?
4. What are some ways you have not been depending on God enough?
5. Have you turned to other sources for help?

Mark 6:1 - 6

1. What was different in this place? Why?
2. Is Jesus amazed at your faith or your lack of faith? Why?

Heb 11:5,6

1. Why do you think faith is so important for pleasing God?

APPLICATION: What are some things in our life (or someone else’s) for which you really need God’s help? Keep a prayer list and keep on praying.

DAY FORTY “GOOD HEARTS, GOOD DEEDS, GOOD THINGS”

Luke 8:15

1. Do you have a heart like this?
2. What is your life producing?

Philemon 4-7

1. What are 3 things Philemon did that showed a good heart?

2 Peter 1:5-11

1. What do you need to do to keep growing as a Christian?
2. Define goodness, perseverance, brotherly kindness.
3. What happens if you stop growing?
4. What does verse 10 mean?

3 John 2-6

1. If a brother or sister came to visit you, what kind of report would they give about your life?
2. How do you feel about your life in Christ up until today?
3. Are you growing?
4. In what areas do you need help?

APPLICATION: Now that you have finished your 40-days study, decide what you are going to study next and have a plan. Share these notes with the people you are leading to the Lord. Keep growing!
