

# ***Transformation Journal***

*September 11 – November 5*

**THIS JOURNAL  
BELONGS TO:**

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# ABOUT THIS JOURNAL

We're so honored that you're starting on this transformation journey with us! It's our wholehearted belief that the daily discipline of time in the Word and with God is a key element to building our spiritual muscles and help us become strong disciples. We believe and have seen it lived out that the daily discipline of devotion to God can help people become more fully who God created them to be.

With that in mind, we hope that each and every one who picks up this journal will be challenged and encouraged.

## the setup

**SUNDAY:** There's space for those that would like to take notes during the message. (Don't forget to bring your journal along with you to worship!)

**MONDAY:** There's a reflection on the faith topic of the week and a space to take notes. As you explore God's word, see how your understanding grows about the topic.

**TUESDAY – FRIDAY:** There's a daily scripture reading and space to write out your thoughts.

**SATURDAY:** There's a challenge for you to try out or complete. Some may be easy for you and others may be more demanding, but you've got this!

Remember to pray before you begin and ask God to bless you with insight and discernment as you reflect and respond.

Journeying with you,  
The Adult Discipleship Team

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## The Great Requirement: Micah 6:8

These beautiful verses answer the question asked by the people of God from long ago as well as today! They are seen on posters and memes today as our mantra as Christians. To act justly requires us to be free of bias and partiality when we view mankind. To have mercy requires us to have compassion and loving kindness toward others, even the offensive and undeserving. To walk humbly requires us to have a heart with God, realizing that our life is not about our abilities but our dependence on God. One author describes these requirements as involving the outward action of acting justly, the inward action of loving mercy and the upward action of dependence on God!

Putting these requirements in practice is a very large task: How can I ever really know how to act justly, when my view of right and wrong is so limited by my experiences, which may be very narrow or tainted? Can I really feel mercy when I have been hurt, maybe even victimized? Am I capable of humility when I feel pride swelling up after success in my endeavors? On the surface, we want to sign up today for these requirements. But as we dig deeper, we realize these requirements mean personal sacrifice! Justice, mercy and humility do not come naturally or easily in life.

So how, God, will this ever be possible? The answer was given to us on the cross. A life accepting the great sacrifice of Jesus allows all of us to take the journey of living out the requirements of Micah. The answer is staying close to Jesus through worship, devotion, and repentance. Hear our prayer, oh Lord: Teach me each day to have your eyes for justice, your heart toward mercy, and to accept your grace to allow me a humble walk with Jesus!

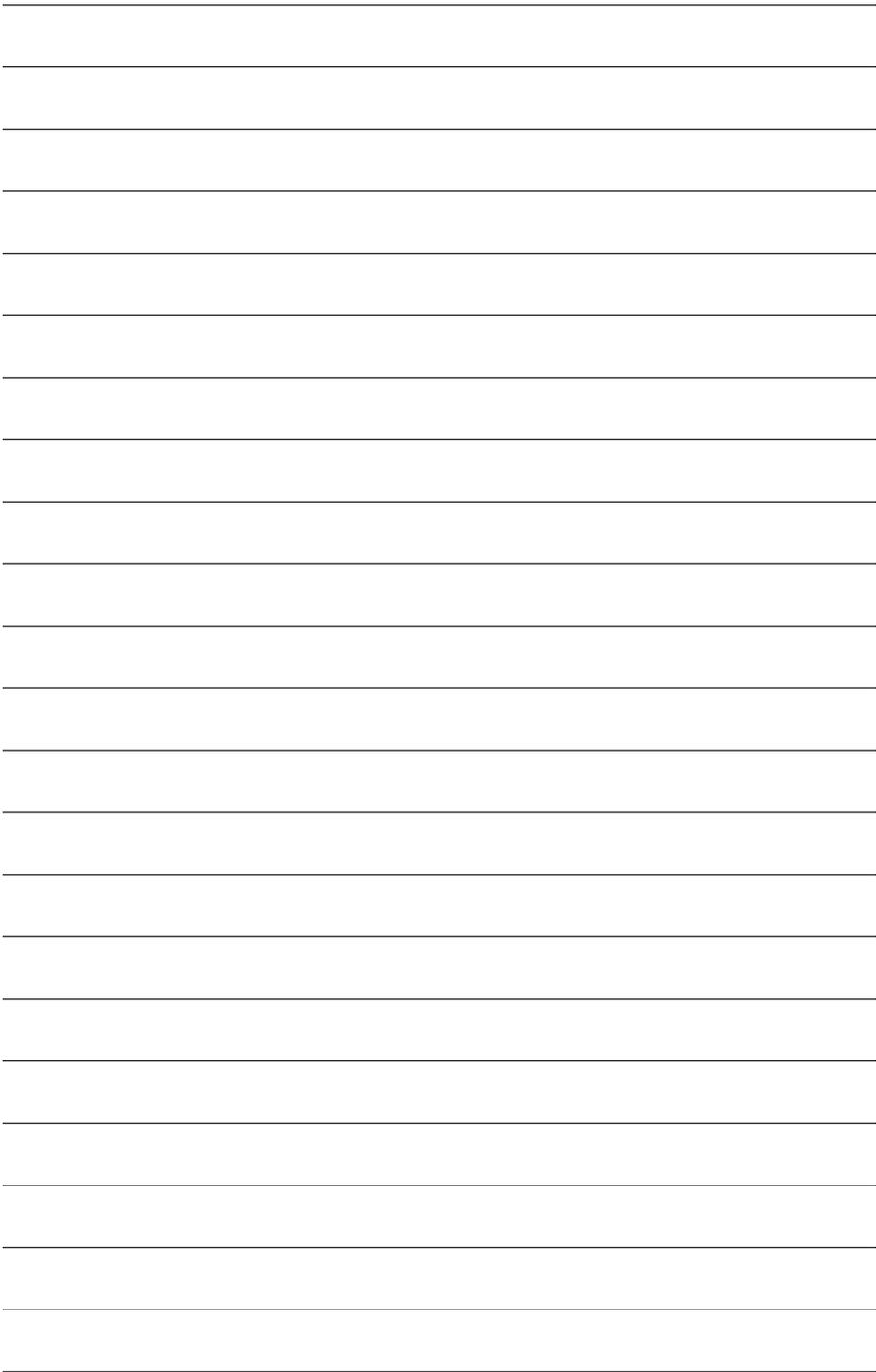
In further reflection today:

- How can I stop letting judgment affect how I treat others?
- Who needs my mercy today?
- How can I walk humbly with Jesus today?

–Mark & Kitty Kincaid

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# Tuesday, September 13

**Read:** Isaiah 58

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# Wednesday, September 14

**Read:** Matthew 5:3-11

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# Thursday, September 15

**Read:** I John 2:1-17

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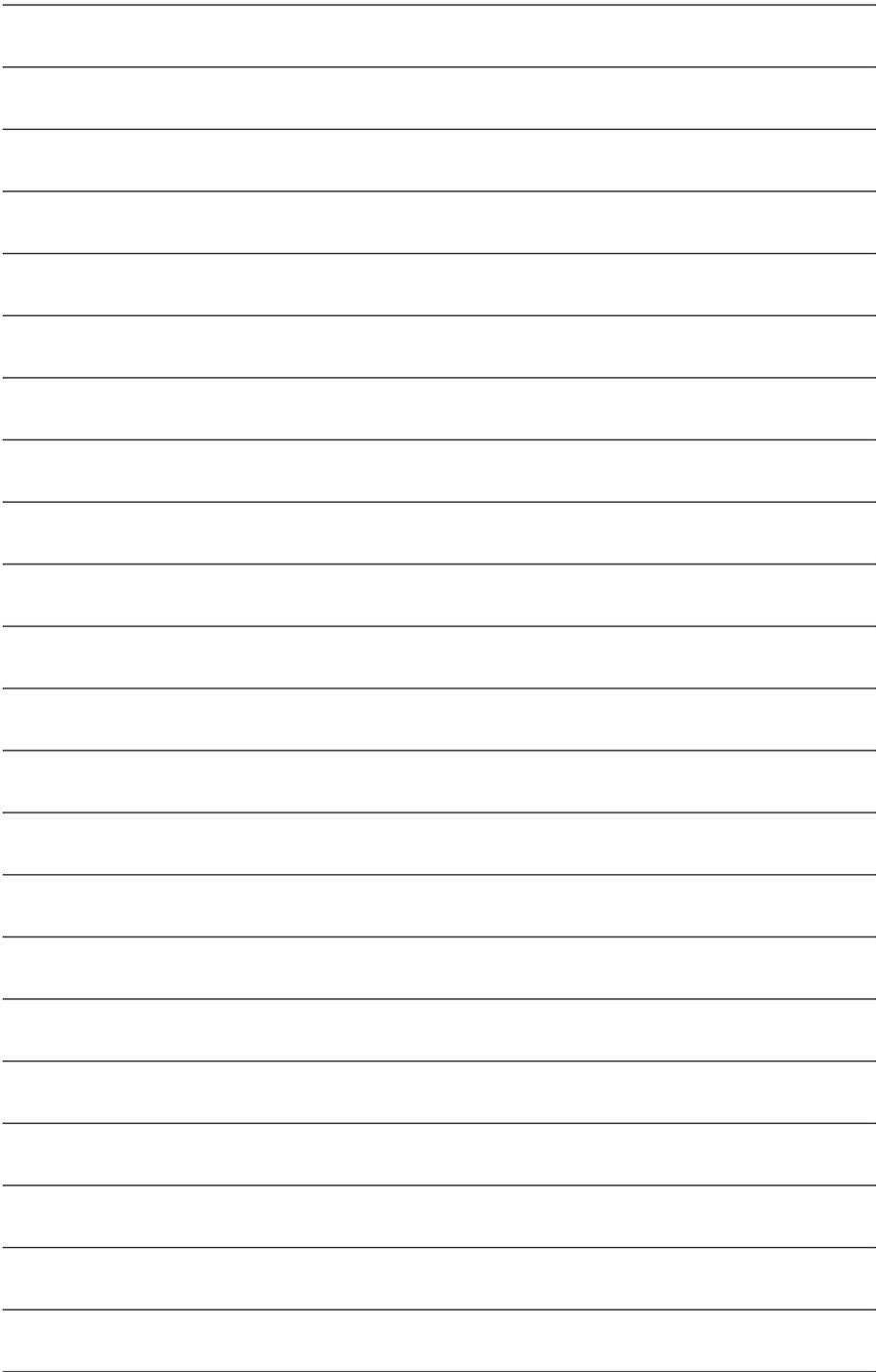
# Friday, September 16

**Read:** Psalm 103

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## The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20

These verses contain both a command and a promise. The promise: Jesus will be with us, always. It is a profound comfort to know that I will never be alone, even in the darkest of times. (If you haven't read the short poem "Footprints in the Sand" author uncertain, you can read it at <https://www.onlythebible.com/Poems/Footprints-in-the-Sand-Poem.html>).

The command: Go. Baptize. Teach. I think it's important to separate this from the Greatest Commandment. That commandment is for everyone. This commission was given specifically to the disciples – those who had already committed themselves to the discipline of following Jesus. I feel that this was done this way as this walk isn't easy, and unfortunately, is not for everyone, though I could wish differently. While we may not face the same threats of physical hardships or violence that the original disciples did, there are hardships that modern disciples still face as they walk with Jesus.

Loss of friends. Rejection by family. Public attack via social media. Wherever we walk, though Jesus walks with us, the enemy goes ahead to make our way more difficult. Yet we are called to walk through all of this, in his name, with his power (the Spirit), to tell his story. But it doesn't end there. Once the story is told, heard, and accepted, we who have matured in our faith are called to continue to teach those who are new to theirs. We are to raise them up to a new life in Christ, strengthening them to take this walk upon themselves, so that they too may be commissioned disciples of Christ.

We have resurrection power. The power to bring people into new life. Power given by Jesus in the form of the Holy Spirit, that dwells within us, and fulfills the promise of the one who will be with us to the end of the age.

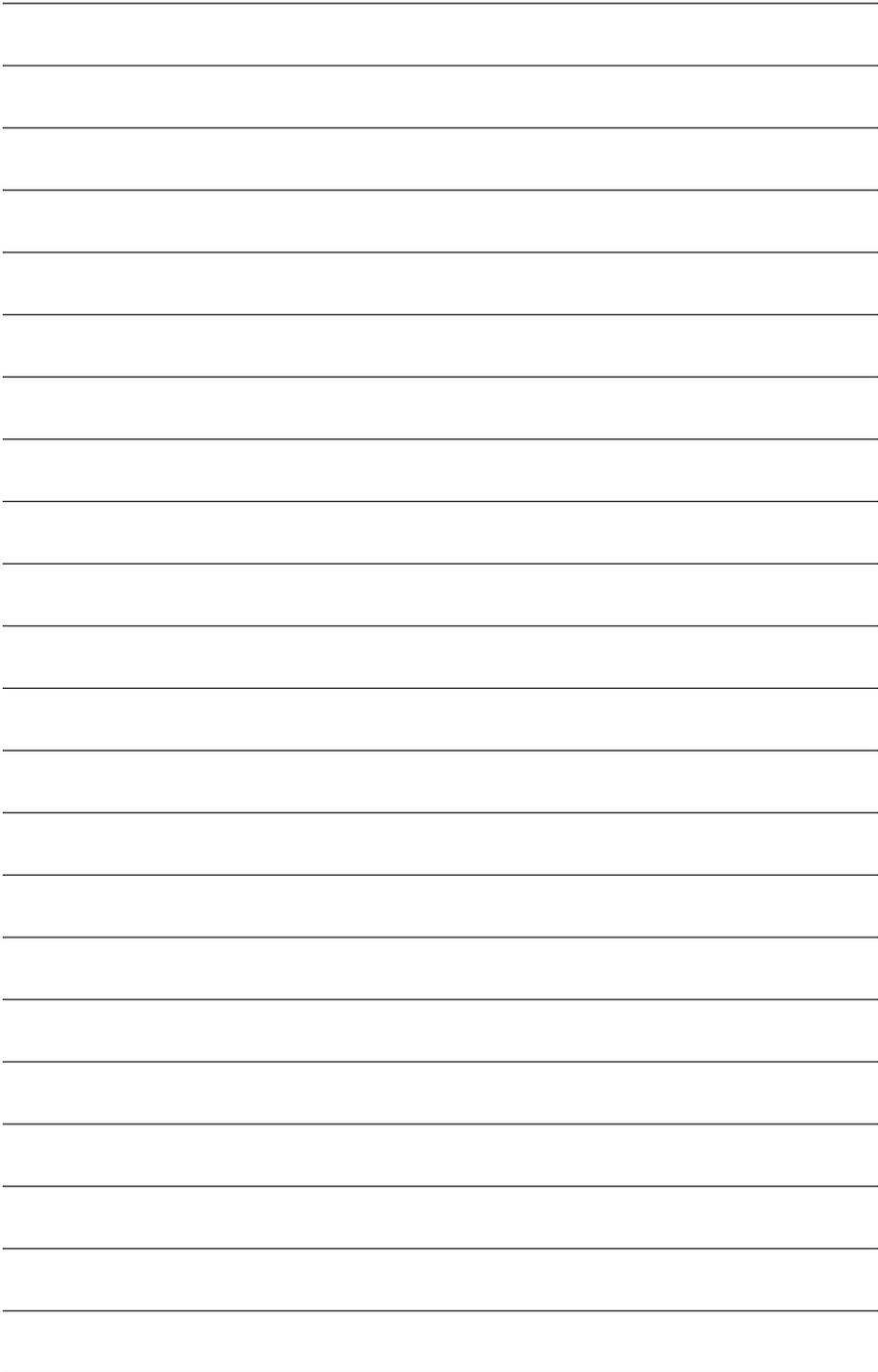
Song Suggestions:

"The Commission" by Cain

"Resurrection Power" by Chris Tomlin

–Jon Sears

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# Tuesday, September 20

**Read:** Acts 1:8

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# Wednesday, September 21

**Read:** Matthew 5

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# Thursday, September 22

**Read:** I John 2

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# Friday, September 23

**Read:** Psalm 127

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## Challenge

The challenge of the Great Commission has been out there for all of us ever since we began our faith walk. Many of us (including me) have made excuses for not taking the challenge head on. Haven't you said, "Well, the Great Commission is for pastors and those who really want to go on a mission trip?"

We can rationalize and list our reasons for not pursuing it all we want. However, we must confront the Great Commission. The command to "Go" cannot be ignored. Jesus wasn't playing games. He meant what he said. So what are we to do?

### Discern

A matter of regular prayer must be what is God's plan for each of us in helping him achieve the Great Commission. Remember, each of our days were numbered for us before we were born. (Psalm 139:16) It is up to us to discern our role through prayer.

### Decide

If we pray with an open and sincere heart, God will reveal God's purpose for us and our role. When you pray, listen. The Psalmist reminds us to "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). With discernment and an open heart comes answers. Most importantly, decide on your course of action. It may be to go on a mission trip or it may be to work your mission field in your neighborhood or at work.

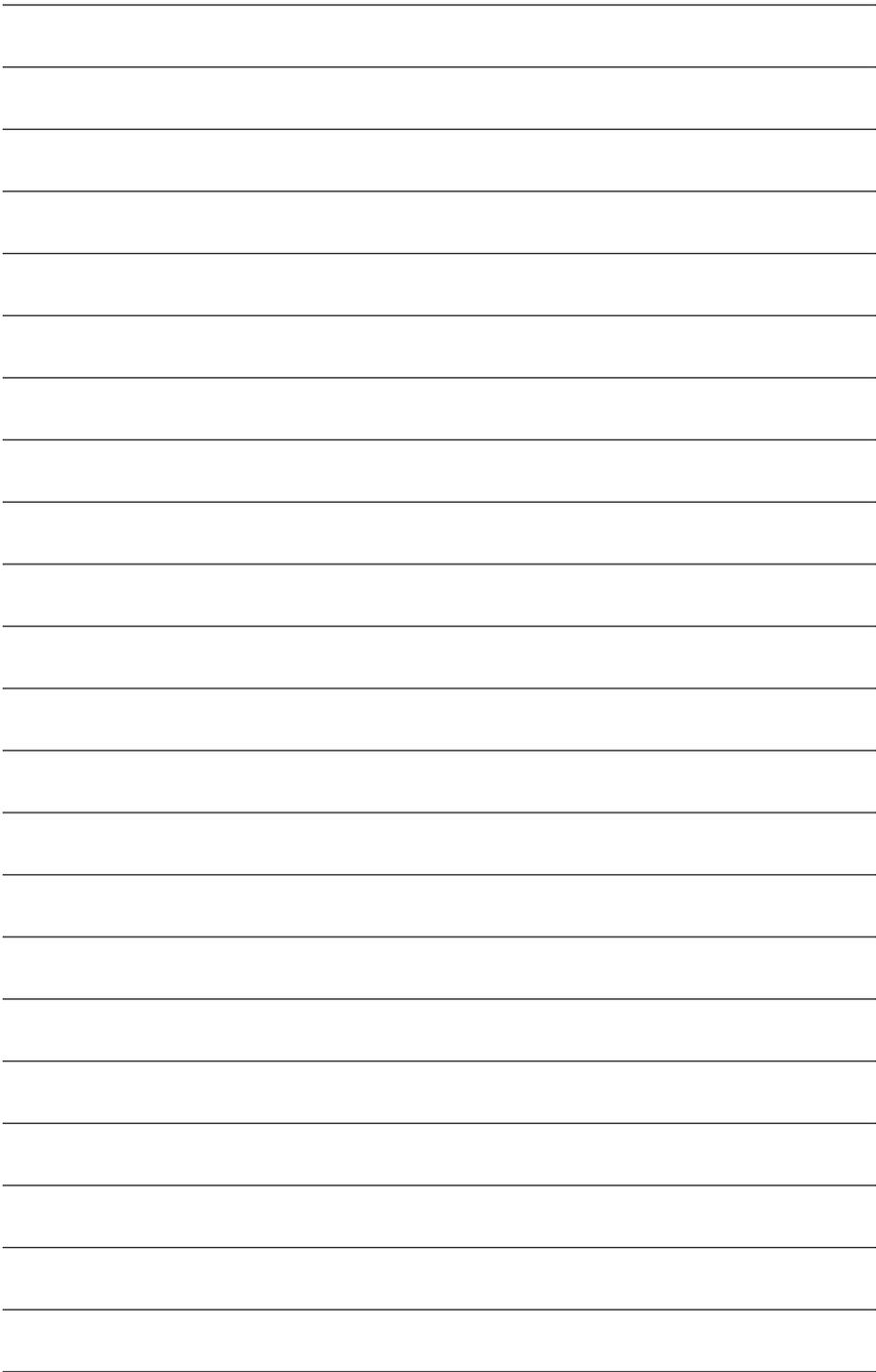
### Develop

Once you discern God's will and decide what you feel God is calling you to do, develop your plan. Follow the advice of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." Live it out in all you do. Be guided in your daily activities by the standard Paul set when he told the believers in Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

*-Rich Wallace*

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## The Great Commandment, Part 1: Deuteronomy 6:5

Sometimes, following God can seem complicated. Have you ever felt like following Jesus felt like a list of exhausting rules? If so, be encouraged: checking a box of rules is not God's heart for us! In a famous situation recorded by Matthew in his gospel (chapter 22:36-37), one of the religious leaders of the day, a Pharisee, came to Jesus to test him. In those days, the Pharisees were known for their scrupulous observance of the Old Testament commandments – 613 to be exact! The unnamed expert in the Law asked Jesus, “Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?”

This man, an expert in religion, may have expected a checklist; instead, Jesus called him to relationship – loving God and loving others. What man had made complicated, the Son of God made unflinchingly simple: he quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 (which the expert would have known well), showing us that those made alive in Christ are known by our love (see John 13:35). But what does this first part of the commandment, “Love the Lord your God,” look like? How do we love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength?

We humans, myself included, love checklists. They give us easy ways to see if we measure up. If we're accomplishing everything on our to-do lists, we can feel productive. But Jesus' answer is deceptively simple: as any of us who have loved know, love – real love – asks us for *everything*. And loving God asks for *everything* we are: our **hearts** (feeling love for God, as David does in Psalm 27), our **souls** (responding in awe and wonder to God's creation, as in Psalm 19; or trusting him through the darkest nights as in Paul's trials and tribulations) and our **minds** (choosing to believe the truth of God's love and word – even when it contradicts what's easy, popular, or convenient).

Part of the point in Jesus' words is this: if we feel we've arrived at loving God, we haven't...not on this side of heaven. If we're still alive, as long as we're breathing, we have space within us to love God more, to know him more deeply. Can any of us – except Jesus – say that every moment of every day we've lived, we've loved God with all we are? The expert wanted Jesus to tell him he'd arrived: Jesus showed him that – realistically – none of us have ever arrived. And that's the point: this life with Jesus is a journey – of growth, of relationship, of *love*.



# Tuesday, September 27

**Read:** Deuteronomy 6:1-5, 11:13-15

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# Wednesday, September 28

**Read:** Exodus 20

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# Thursday, September 29

**Read:** 1 John 4

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# Friday, September 30

**Read:** Psalm 19, Ephesians 4:32

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## Challenge

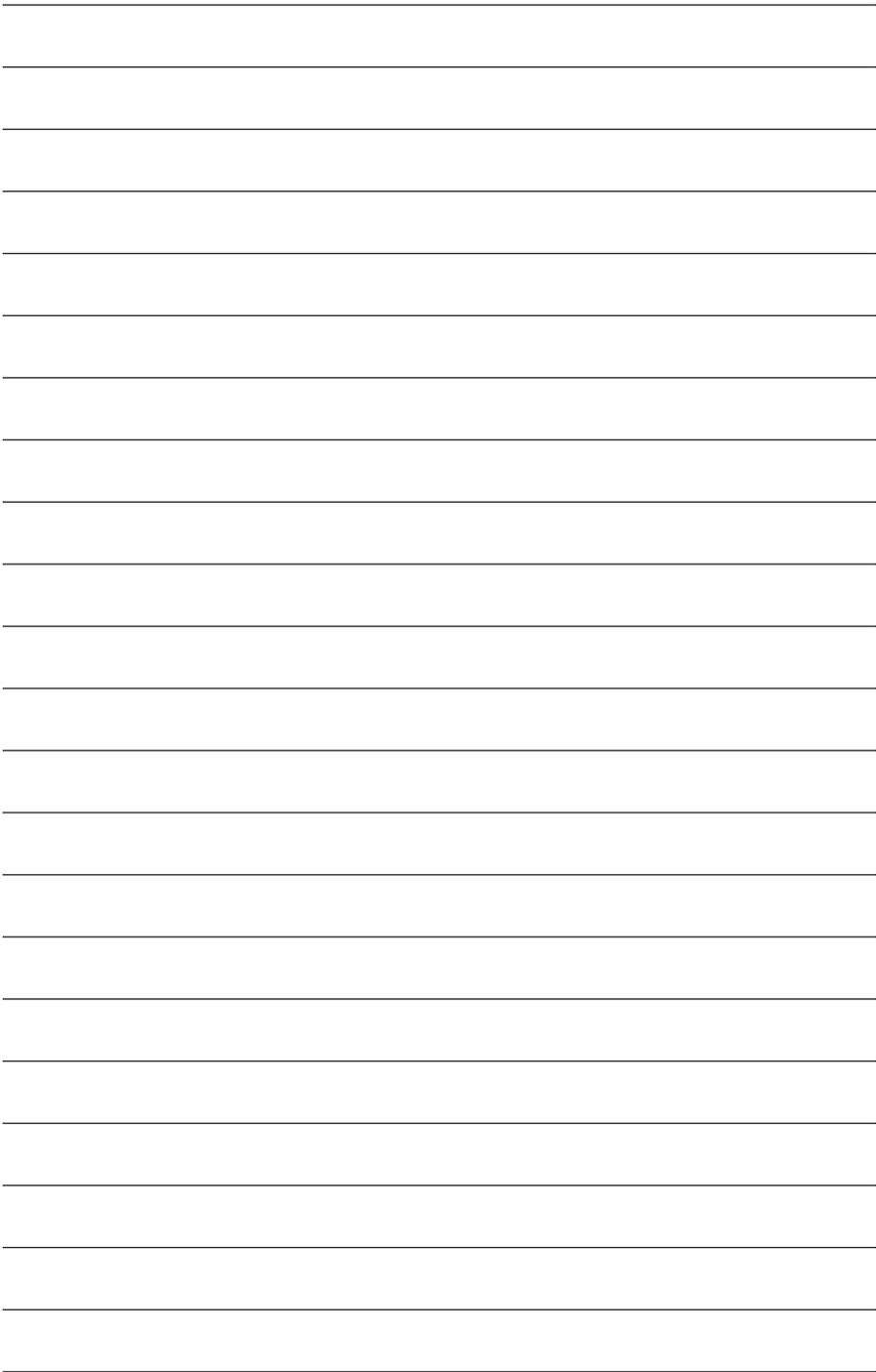
We've had a week of studying the scriptures and the Holy Spirit has spoken to us all in a personal way. Let's recap what we are to do as a result of our study. It was a very short scripture, but very powerful. I always ask questions of the scripture. What does love really mean in this context? Who is the Lord my God? How do I do it with my heart, soul and mind? The English language doesn't give us the depth of meaning that other languages give. So when you study I recommend using a Greek/ Hebrew study guide to get the original intent that gives a clearer view of the word. Love in this scripture means to have a fondness and attraction for. You want to spend time with them. You enjoy their company. You like them and just can't get enough of them. Think about someone you have had that kind of feeling for. That's what God wants.

Now, who is "the Lord your God"? First of all, it's personal. You stake a claim of ownership. It's yours. Lord here means, one you have recognized and accepted has power and authority over you because of their greatness, superiority and excellence to whom service and obedience is due. God is supreme reality, being perfect in power, wisdom and goodness and love. That is the person you want to spend time with. Picture that person in your mind. They are the one who gave you the world you live in and all it entails. Look around you and know that the very breath you breathe everyday comes from them. The food that nourishes your body and heals it comes from them. The early morning sunrise and beautiful sunsets and starry nights come from them. Ask what your Lord requires of you daily and wait to hear or go and trust that he will reveal it to you as you go along. We are his ambassadors, desiring to do his bidding with the passion of our heart, our intellect and gifts and all that is within us. What are your gifts? Ask God if you don't know. Use books, like Strengthfinder 2.0. Do the test for spiritual gifts.

Finally, I have a picture in my mind of a king sitting on his throne. We his ambassadors come before him daily. He dispatches us to go into his kingdom with the tools he has given us and most importantly the seal of the king that gives us power and authority. We have no fear or doubt because we go in the name of the Lord our God. Go! Do whatever he tells you.

*-Jennifer Bing*

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## The Great Commandment, Part 2: Matthew 22:38-40

Love your neighbor as you would love yourself. Instead of using “others” or “people,” Jesus used the term “neighbor”. It reminds us of this simple truth: no matter how different we seem, we live in this world together. We are family in the sense that we need each other in order to live fulfilling lives.

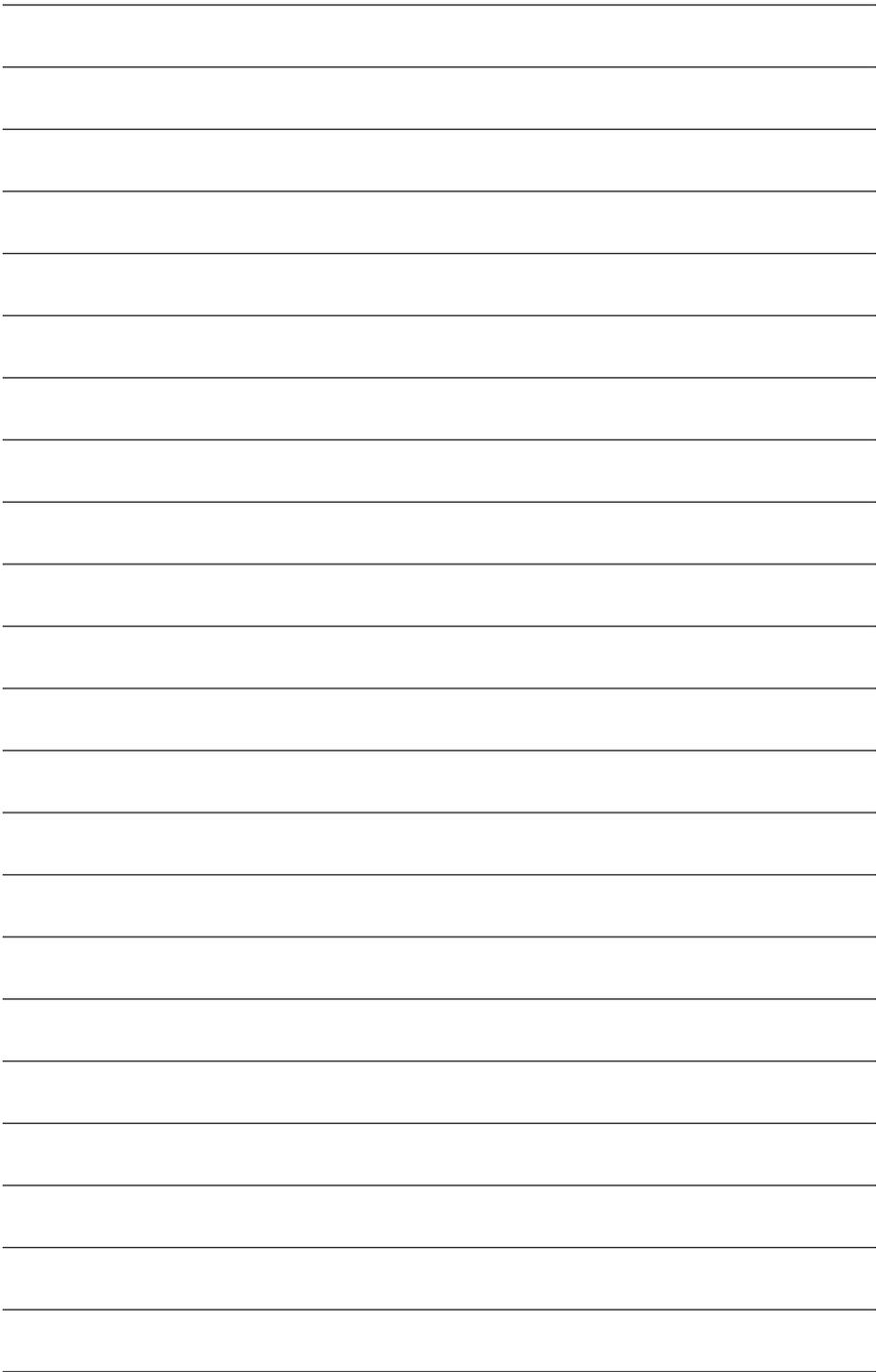
I went with our student ministry on a mission trip this summer. One of our serving adventures took the form of a cleaning crew sent to help out a senior woman. I found myself in a tiny, stuffy bathroom leaning over a tub scrubbing window screens. She was telling me about her grandkids that live in a different state, and about how she wished she had someone nearby that could do things like this for her. She asked me, “Why would y’all spend your free time cleaning some old lady’s apartment? I’m sure there’s a lot of other things you could be doing.” Without really knowing how to answer that, I said, “Well, I’d do this for my grandmother so I’ll do it for you.” It’s one of those moments where I know the Holy Spirit was speaking on my behalf. This is the mentality behind “love your neighbor” – I’m going to treat you like family because you are family. Every Christian is adopted into God’s family. When we adopt our neighbors into our family, we’re just following the example God set. This week, we will see what God has to say about loving our neighbors. Here are some themes I’ve noticed:

- **We love God by loving others.** We love others by loving God. We prove our love for God by how we love our neighbors.
- **God’s love is extraordinary.** Love inspired by God is extended to everyone indiscriminately– even and especially to people against us. Love is showing compassion where it is not earned and where it cannot be returned.
- **Love is an action.** Love does not sit on a shelf on display. Love breeds mercy and kindness.

As you read the scriptures this week, take time to truly meditate on the words. What themes do you notice? Allow yourself to refresh your definition of loving your neighbor.

–Aliyah Bing

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# Tuesday, October 4

**Read:** Luke 10:25-37, John 4:1-26

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Wednesday, October 5

**Read:** Leviticus 19:18

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# Thursday, October 6

**Read:** Romans 13:8-10, Colossians 3:12-14

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# Friday, October 7

**Read:** Exodus 23

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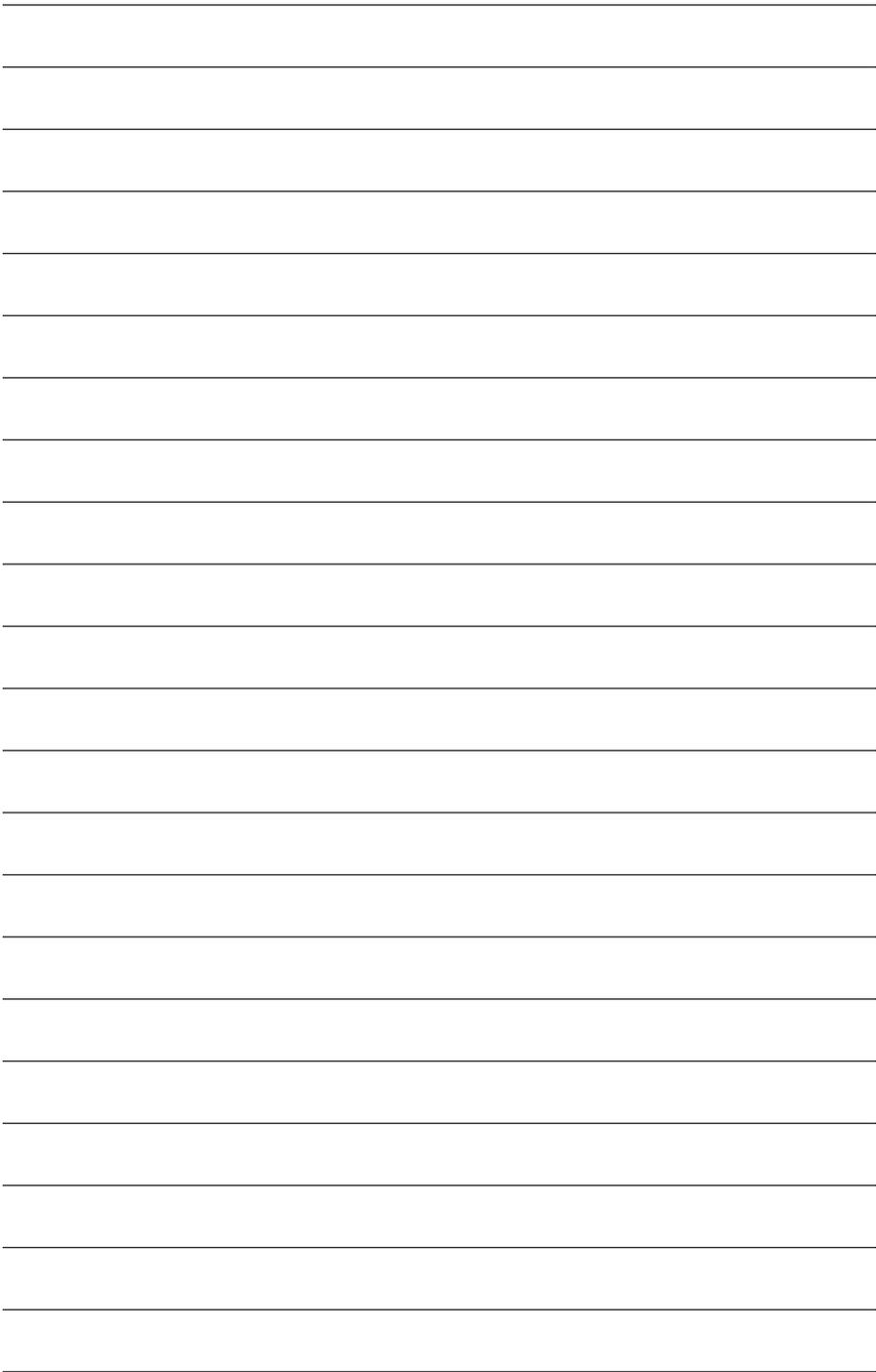
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## **A.C.T.S:** Philippians 4:4-6, 1 Chronicles 29:11-13

There is a popular and helpful pattern for prayer that goes by the acronym A.C.T.S.

### **A - ADORATION**

We begin by directing our thoughts and hearts toward God. Borrow the words of Scripture from the Psalm, "O Come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!" Sing a new song as your heart connects with the One who knows and loves us fully. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords - HALLELUJAH!

### **C - CONFESSION**

We next look at ourselves and take an inventory. We examine our thoughts and words, what we have done and failed to do. Where have we fallen short? Where have we caused offense? In 1 John we read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

### **T - THANKSGIVING**

Giving thanks, like adoration, puts our focus back on God. It is gratitude from the heart to our Heavenly Father for the gift of life, for our salvation, for the great eternal love that we experience in knowing and walking with the Lord. With our gratefulness we bless God who has already so richly blessed us.

### **S - SUPPLICATION**

Asking for help for ourselves or on the behalf of others comes last in this pattern. Yet we are encouraged to ask and to receive from our good and gracious God who loves to give and heal and help - a very present help in time of trouble.

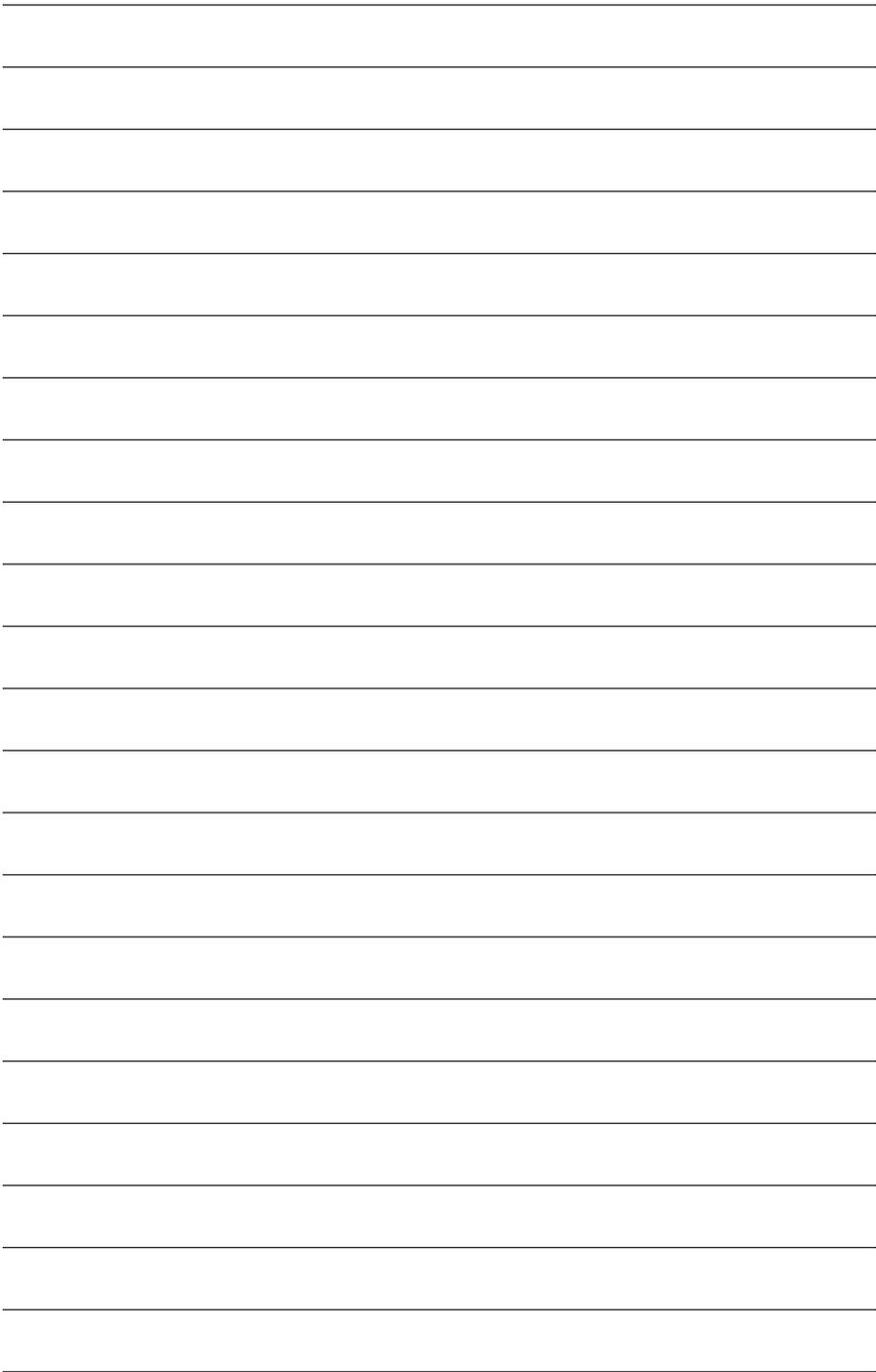
Take this week to meditate on the scriptures given and listen to the Holy Spirit's whisper.

-Becky Lawrence

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# Tuesday, October 11

**Read:** Luke 17:11-19

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# Wednesday, October 12

**Read:** James 5:16, Psalm 32

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# Thursday, October 13

**Read:** Psalm 100, Luke 1:46-56

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# Friday, October 14

**Read:** Philippians 4, Matthew 7:7-12

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## Challenge

We can get into routines with our prayer and study life and wind up doing things by rote. I want to offer you another tool that I hope will deepen your experience in using A.C.T.S. The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. I find that this helps me to slow down and take an honest account of my day and not just give the right answers or fill in the blanks or walk through the steps.

### Here are the basic steps:

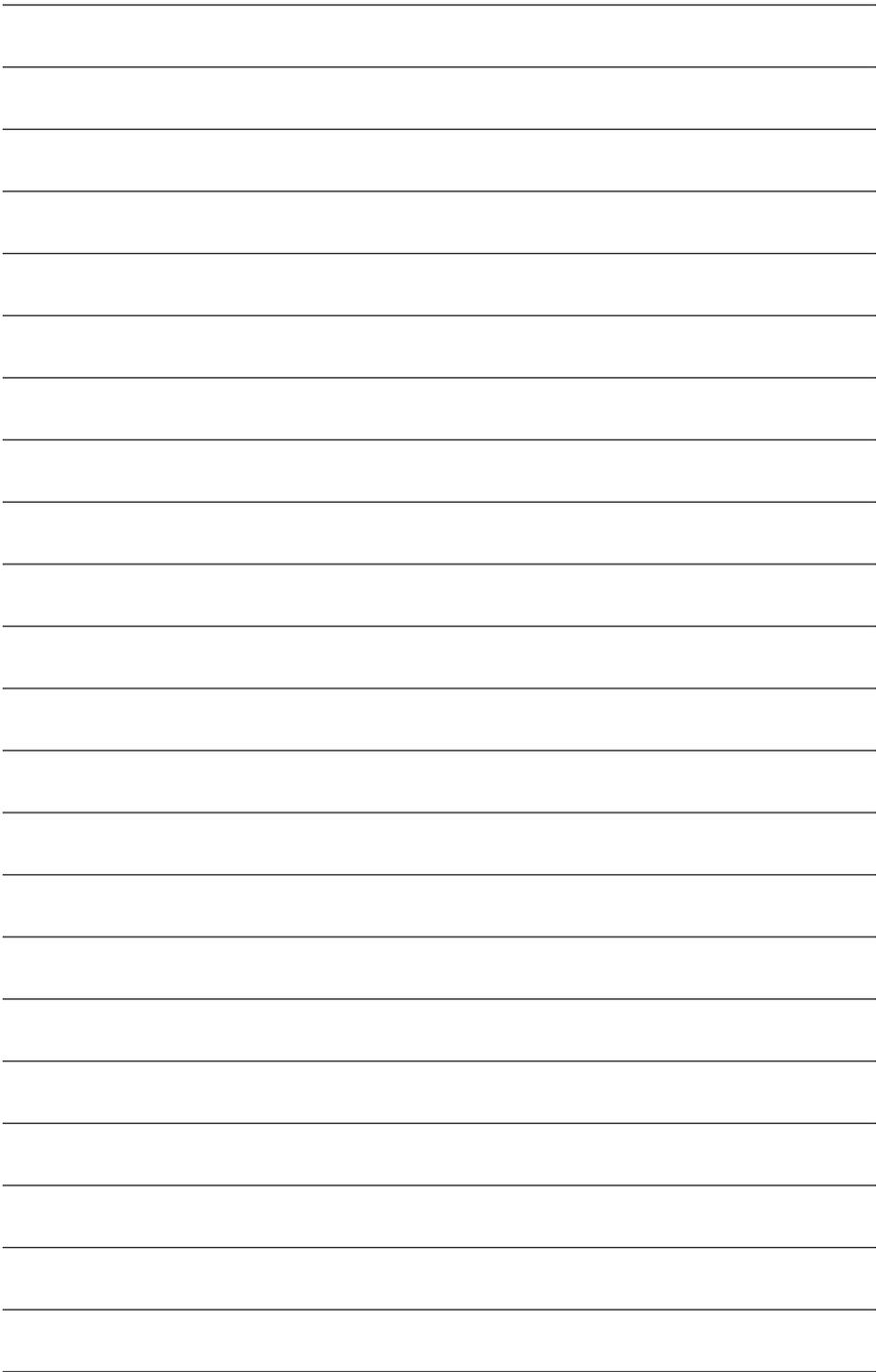
1. Place yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for God's great love for you.
2. Pray for the grace to understand how God is acting in your life.
3. Review your day — recall specific moments and your feelings at the time.
4. Reflect on what you did, said, or thought in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?
5. Look toward tomorrow — think of how you might collaborate more effectively with God's plan. Be specific and conclude with "Our Father."

Prayer is more about letting God change us than us telling God what to do. The seasons in which I have used the Examen have been the most impactful on my character. As a naturally task-focused person, using the Examen helps me be more aware of my tone and demeanor in my daily interactions. I am more attuned to God's voice in every situation. I see people as God sees them and their needs for which I have the resources to provide. I don't just move from one thing to the next with tunnel vision when I use the Examen regularly.

I used to wish to be one of those people who always seem to notice God in a particular situation, who speaks to the heart of a total stranger or sees an unspoken need. I wanted that gift! I found when I was tuned into God in the way that the Examen leads me to be, that I have that gift. And that when I am not tuned into God in that way, I have unplugged from that gift. God changes us when we allow space for him to speak to us. The Examen is the tool that helps me do that.

You can download the Reimagining the Examen app in your app store or you can purchase the book Reimagining the Ignatian Examen: Fresh Ways to Pray from Your Day by Father Mark Thibodeaux.

—Shannon Flora





## Tell Your Story: John 9

Pause for a moment to think about your favorite story. Maybe it's a movie, a book or Grandma's fabricated retelling of how dear Uncle Joe was the true inventor of the post-it note.

Have you ever wondered why? Why is that story your favorite one?

Most, if not all good stories have a similar formula. Simply put, Donald Miller says, "A story is a character who wants something and overcomes conflict to get it."

Take *Shawshank Redemption*, for example. Not only does Andy Dufresne's innocence make him so endearing, but he wants his freedom and overcomes impossible odds to escape prison. Simple formula, incredible story.

My favorite movie is *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* featuring Jim Carrey. The main character thinks he wants to break it off with his girlfriend, only to realize he doesn't after enlisting special memory-washing scientists to erase her from his brain. The story unfolds within his deteriorating subconscious mind as his deeper desires overcome the sinister procedure to grasp last-chance love. A little more complicated, but still the same simple formula.

There is a playlist full of good stories on the Ginghamburg YouTube channel – all from within our church family! All told with this simple formula in mind.

Another helpful way to break down a good story is to answer the following questions:

Who was the character, what *happened* to the character, how did the character *change* and what did the character *learn* along the way?

This week, let's dissect the story of the man born blind in John chapter 9. Put yourself in the blind man's shoes and try to articulate his story. Who was he (vs 1-2), what happened (vs 3-7), how did he change (vs 8-24) and what did he learn (25-41)? Along the way, also ask yourself what the blind man really wanted, and what conflict did he overcome to get it?

If you're interested, pick a few other characters in the Bible and do the same exercise.



# Tuesday, October 18

**Read:** John 9:1-2

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# Wednesday, October 19

**Read:** John 9:3-7

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# Thursday, October 20

**Read:** John 9:8-24

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# Friday, October 21

**Read:** John 9:25-41

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## Challenge

When I look at different stories in the Bible of different characters and take a look back at my own life there is one person that stands out in my mind that I most resemble.

When my boys and I started attending Ginghamburg in 2011, we were the family that snuck in the back door running a little late while the worship team was probably in their second song. We sat in the back so we were unnoticed by everyone. We loved coming but were not about to get involved. We were too busy with our lives. It wasn't long and then I met Amy. She introduced me to her group of friends who are now my friends. Then I wanted to be baptized so she introduced me to Sarah, who little did I know, would become one of my very best friends and be my mentor. She saw things in me that I was doing with my faith, helping others, discipling others, which I didn't even realize. I absolutely love getting involved at our church events to serve and meet new people. You never know who you're going to meet and impact their life.

I became a care pastor and part of the adult ministry leadership team. I've been trained to lead classes and to serve on multiple teams. I absolutely love it. I don't get paid for any of this. I do it because I have a servant's heart. I relate myself to Ruth in the Bible because not only can Ruth's loyalty and steadfastness stand as an example to us all, but her willingness to listen and obey God illustrates her faithfulness, trust and love for God. Her characteristics in the Bible also include someone who takes care of those around her. As Christians, we can look up to Ruth as an example of goodness and someone worth emulating. Ruth is an amazing woman of the Bible and a very moving story we can all learn from.

Multiple times in my life in the last few years since I've become stronger in my faith. God has shown me that miracles do happen, and that he does answer prayers. I've shared my real life stories on my social media platforms. I'm open and honest. It's drawn people to me and my Christian faith that I didn't even know were watching me. I've led many new people to Ginghamburg because of it. Last week, I received a message from a good friend of mine. Her exact words were, "Your faith is something to behold. I love you. I'm slowly finding my way back to Jesus because of you. Honestly." She went on to say they had church hurt from their previous church so they want to watch our services online first then try to come in person.





## Three Simple Rules: 1 John 4:7-12

Do no harm. Do good. Love others.

These are simple rules, but this is a tough week for me...because I see all the ways I fall short. Sometimes I do no harm because I'm being selfish and avoiding things. I do good, but not all the time. Is what I do enough? Do I hide behind rest as an excuse? And loving others—could I ever love people around me enough?

But when I think this way and get hard on myself, I can almost picture God shaking his head and chuckling. I hear him say, "Stay in your lane."

God isn't asking us to be productive 100% of the time. God isn't asking us to be perfect—God knows we're still learning and growing. God IS asking us to be obedient when he calls. And these passages give us some guidelines. Live at peace with everyone. Control your tongue. Look after those who have needs. And, for goodness' sake, don't be polluted by the world.

So I'm not going to get paralyzed by all the things I haven't done and won't do. I'm going to focus on loving God and obeying the good advice God gives us in his Word.

Do you ever get caught up in feeling "not enough"?

How can you reach beyond your inadequacies and insecurities to allow yourself to be used by God?

*-Kate Johnson*

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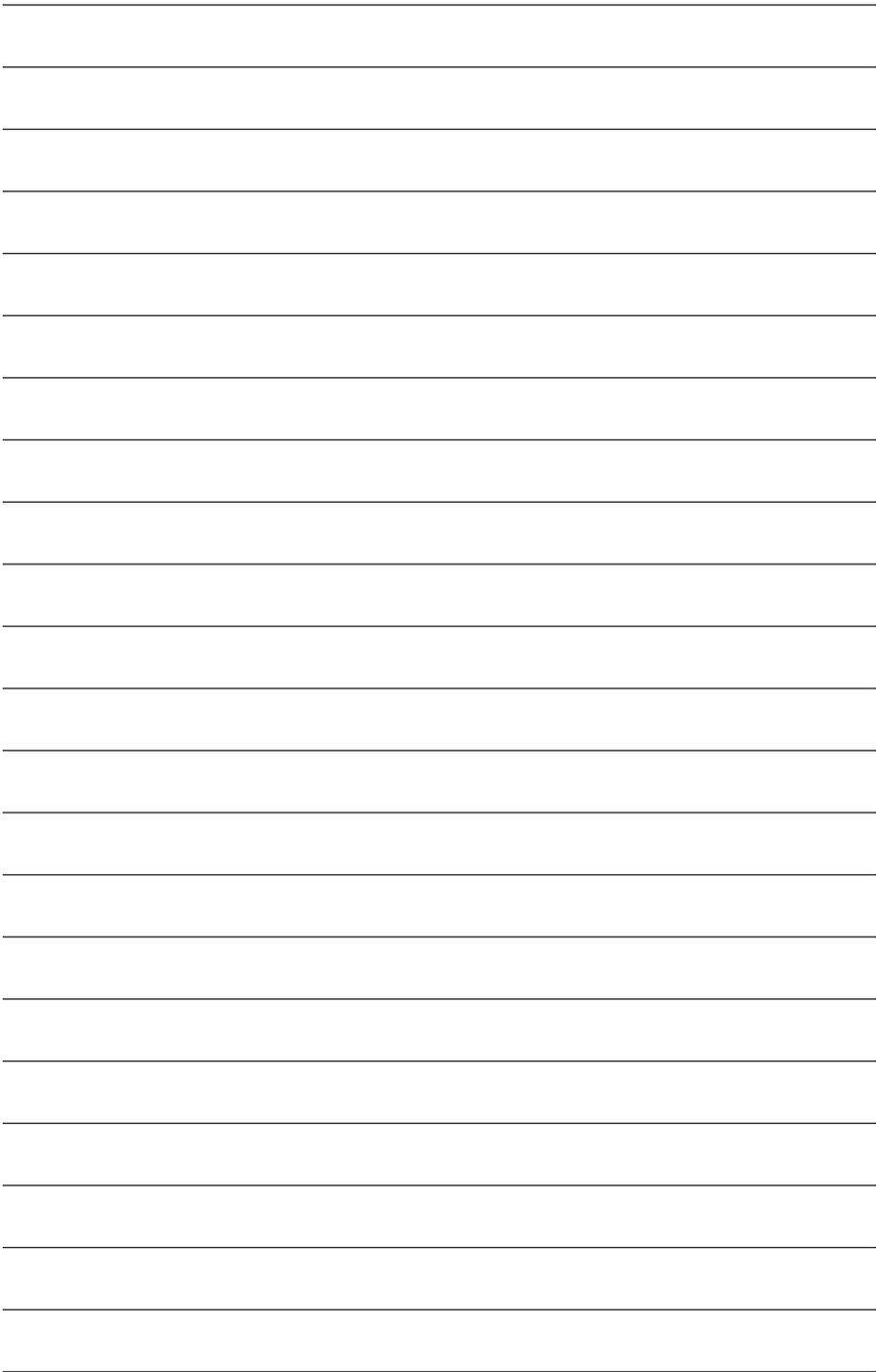
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# Tuesday, October 25

**Read:** Romans 12:18

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Wednesday, October 26

**Read:** Psalm 34:11-14

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Thursday, October 27

**Read:** James 1:22-27

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Friday, October 28

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 13

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Challenge

Do no harm, do good, love a lot...Sounds like three simple things to do but comes with many challenges for most of us. It is easy to love those close to us and when we love, we do not want any harm to come to those we love. What about those individuals that have hurt us or hurt others? That is when we truly need to remember God's instruction to us. If you truly follow this, you will forgive all others and not judge them. Only then is unconditional love possible. When we are acting in love, we will never hurt anyone.

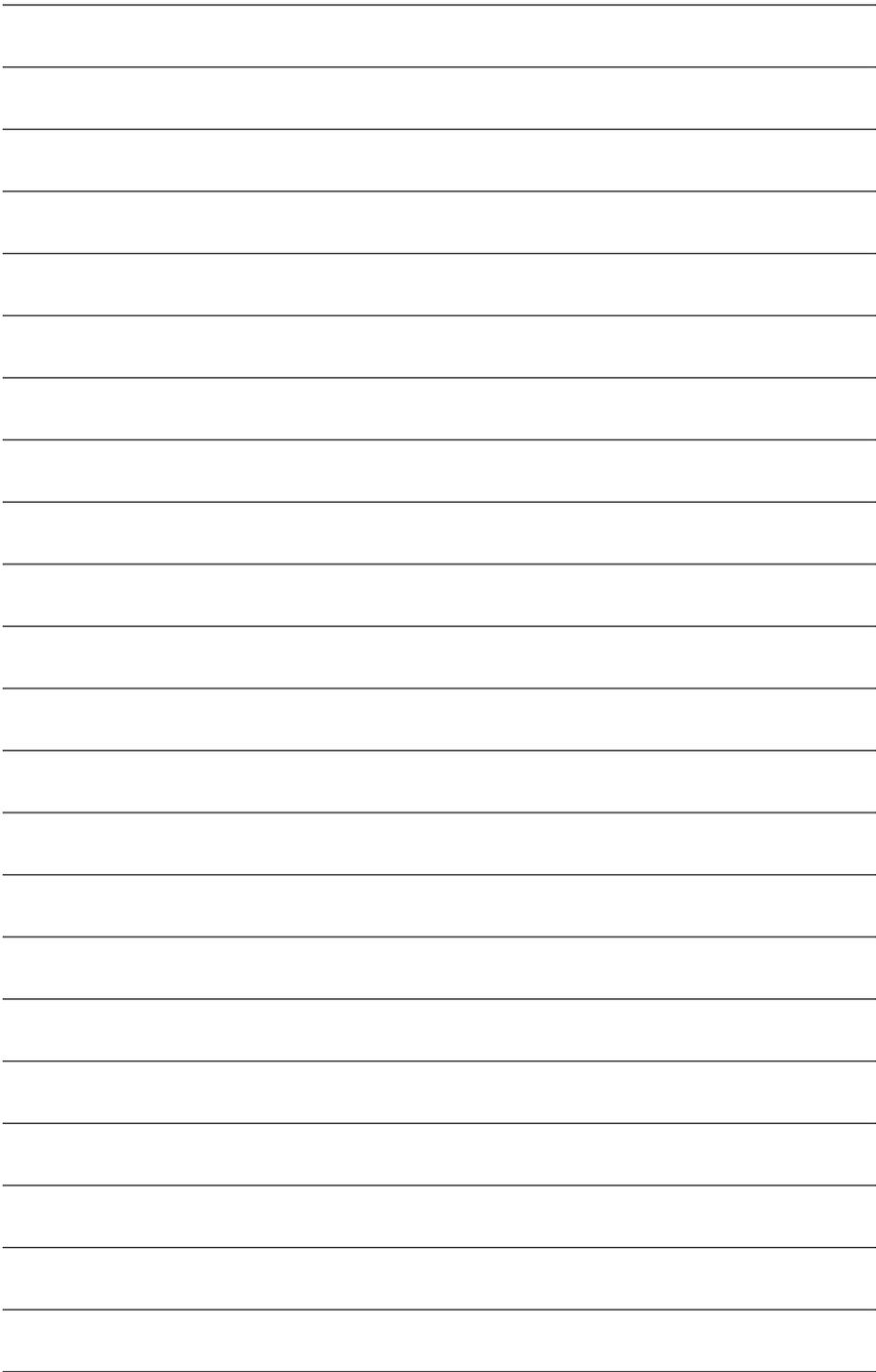
Social media today makes it too easy to hide behind false statements or unkind comments. As Christians we are to lead by example and stay away from hurtful comments that can be harsh and mean. This does not just apply when face to face with others, it also applies to what we write about others. If we choose empathy, kindness, and forgiveness we find what it means to honor life and in doing so leads to loving one another.

Our challenge to each of you would be to evaluate the verbal and written comments you make over the next week. Are you choosing to live by these three simple golden rules, or do you try to only live by these when it is convenient to do so? Keep in mind the term "love your neighbor" also includes enemies as well as family and friends. James writes "a person is considered righteous for what they do and not by faith alone." It is about living our lives and knowing that our actions oftentimes speak louder than our words. When we say or write something out of anger or when we think no one is watching it is not showing love. Oftentimes our own ego needs to be reduced to love others effectively, otherwise our defenses will attack someone who will in turn counterattack which goes down a very wrong path. If you love your neighbor, you do not even have to think about all the laws in the Bible, or the ones that govern society. None of us love perfectly as that is where our sinful nature comes in. Sin is loving ourselves more than others, or more than God.

Three very simple terms: do no harm, do good, love one another. We need to challenge ourselves to live every day in love as it gives us our best chance to live our lives as God wanted us to.

*-Chuck & Debbie Fraizer*

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## **Peacemaking Practices (Listen Well, Ask Anything, Freely Disagree, Love Regardless):** Romans 12:17-19

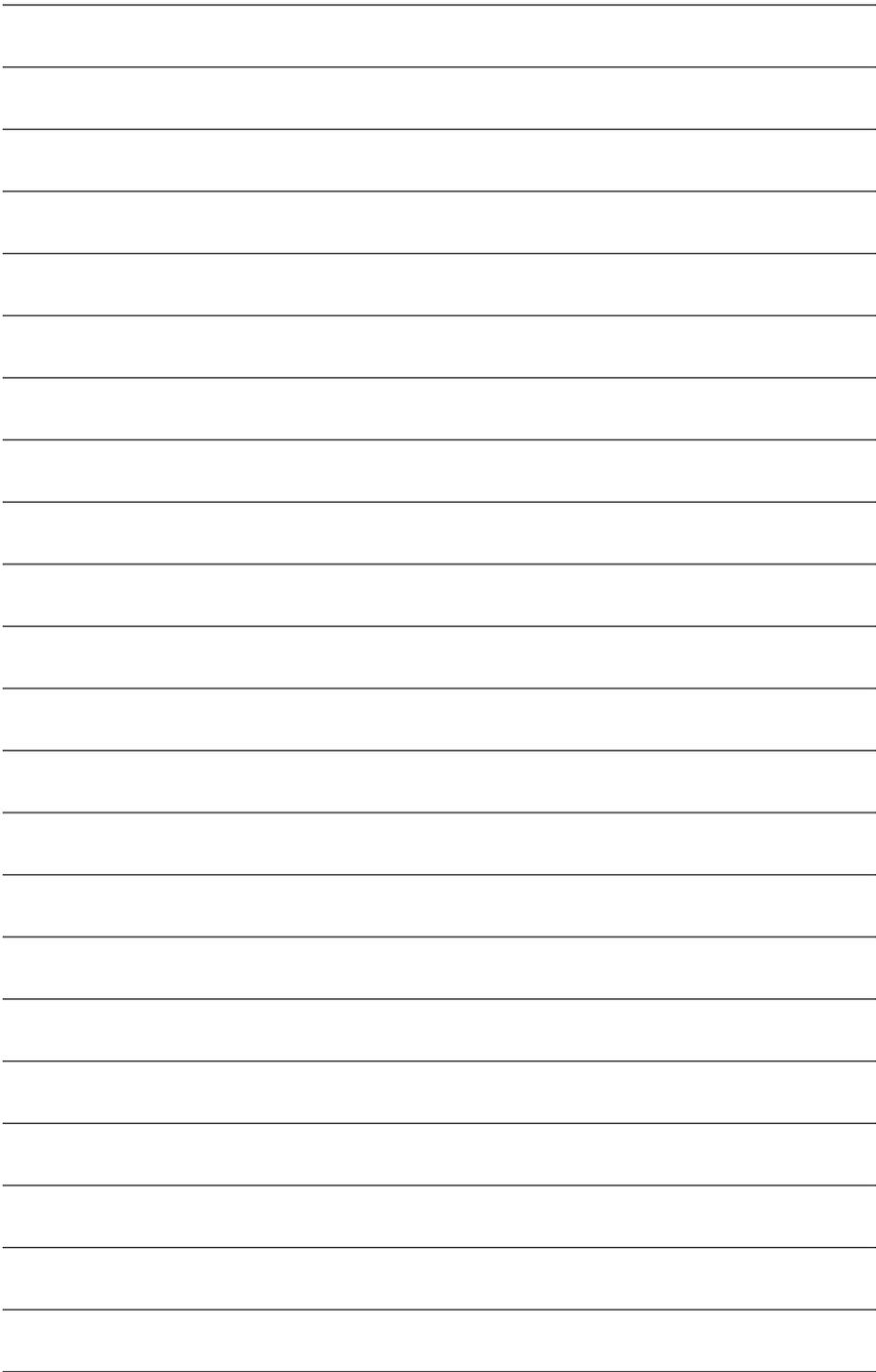
If you're anything like me, you have several different situations in your life that seem to be on fire. Sometimes, it feels like we move from one dumpster fire to the next. The challenge to following Jesus is that he asks us not to just hear his words but put them into practice. His words are the only thing that can put out the fires in our lives. It's our responsibility as your spiritual guides to help you take these theological truths about Jesus and make them practical without watering anything down. This week, we want to reintroduce some peacemaking practices that are rooted in Scripture that can help you to walk boldly towards those anxiety-causing situations in your life.

What are these peacemaking practices? First, it's to **Listen Well**. Instead of listening to respond, we must make a pivot to listen to understand. Second, **Ask Anything**. If we want to get to the heart of the issue, we need to get all of the information out there. When we have trust in the people we're talking to, we feel comfortable asking them anything. When we do this, genuine conversation starts to flow. The third is to **Freely Disagree**. You're not going to agree with everything your friends say or even what your pastor says! Take this as a challenge to be so confident in your faith that you can agree to disagree. Relationships matter more than being right. Lastly, **Love Regardless**. Love is the language of God, everything we do and say needs to be rooted in a place of love. When it's not, we give the enemy a footstool to stand on.

Why does this peacemaking practice matter? Because as Jesus followers, we are called to be a part of the messiness of the world. Through Christ, we are renewed people and because we are renewed, are sent out on mission to reproduce the Jesus that lives in us, in others. It is through these biblical models that we can learn some practical steps to be transformed. When we are transformed first, we can then bring others along and have them join in the story that God is writing through the world.

*-Jayden Groppi*

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# Tuesday, November 1

**Read:** James 1:19-22

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Wednesday, November 2

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Thursday, November 3

**Read:** Romans 14

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Friday, November 4

**Read:** Luke 6:27-36

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Challenge

When I watch/read the news my heart breaks and my mind is fried. I can't keep up with all the struggles, disagreements and hatred around us. What can we do? What does God want us to do? With God's wisdom, strength and love we become peacemakers – one person, one act at a time.

I'm the first to say that I need to work on listening. I've discovered I have a birth defect: my ear bone is connected to my mouth bone when it should be connected to my heart bone. I tend to jump in with my life experiences and opinions instead of listening thoroughly. Have you noticed that 'listen' and 'silent' have the same letters? But remember, before we listen to others, we must listen for God

Peacemaking requires action.

Let's try these actions:

1. Become a shock absorber. Instead of an 'eye for an eye' or 'getting back' at someone/some group, become a shock absorber. Receive a blow and refuse to pass it on! Note: this doesn't come naturally, but with practice and God's guidance and love we can become more kind, patient, loving regardless.
2. Remember that everyone deserves peace, not just people who are like us. If we always surround ourselves with people like us, how do we see others? Is this how prejudices form and pride sets in? How can we love like Jesus loved? How can we make a difference if we don't talk and spend time with people not like us? Have you heard that '*light drives out darkness*' and '*love drives out hate*'? Be a peacemaker with ANYONE – no exceptions.

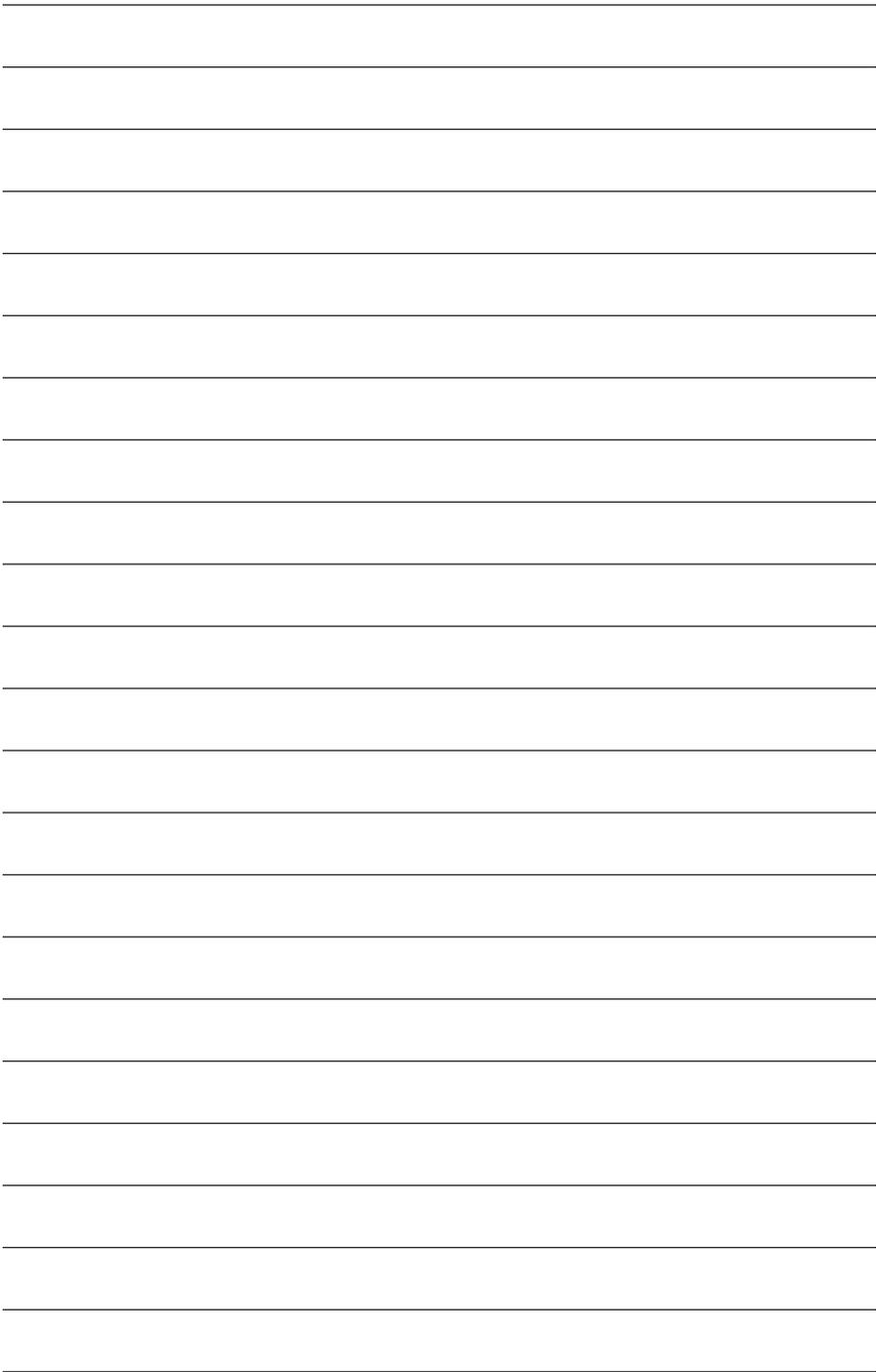
–Carolyn Pierce

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**ANOTHER  
JOURNAL  
IS ON THE  
WAY!**



**Pick yours up on  
Sunday, November 27**

