



APRIL

2021

1 PETER - JUDE

MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

“...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

Reach out...

How I will do it...

How it went...

Other requests...

Answered

How it was answered...

Name: _____

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will help you grow in your walk with God. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable to your personal commitment.

Personal Devotions:

How did I do with my commitment last month? _____

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought _____ day(s) each week this month.

Church Attendance:

How did I do last month with my attendance? _____

I will attend Youth/Growth Group _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday AM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday PM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

Scripture Memory:

How did I do with Scripture memory last month? _____

I will memorize _____ key verse(s) from the daily OnTrack Devotions this month.

Outreach:

How did I do last month with sharing Christ? _____

I will share Christ with _____ person/people this month.

I will serve my local church this month by _____

Other Activities:

List any other opportunities such as events, prayer group, etc., that you will participate in this month. _____

What is the difference between perishing, spoiling, and fading? Is Peter simply saying the same thing in three different ways or is there more significance to these words? When we look closely at the meaning of these three words, we discover a unique definition for each. First, Peter tells us that our inheritance cannot perish. This means that it cannot decay or become corrupt. Secondly, we are told it cannot spoil. This means that it is not affected by evil and it is without defect or flaw. Finally, Peter explains that our inheritance cannot fade, which tells us that time does not affect it. By using these three words, Peter demonstrates that there isn't anything, external or internal, that can or will impact our inheritance. He explains that it is, right now, being kept for us in heaven. How much more certain can your salvation be than for you to know it is waiting in heaven and nothing external or internal can impact it? Who can have this certainty? According to verse 5, those who are shielded by God's power through faith. Allow the certainty of your salvation to give you peace and confidence.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 1

1 PETER 1:13-25

BE HOLY

SAY WHAT?

How can you prepare your mind for action?

SO WHAT?

How can you gain more self-control?

NOW WHAT?

What can you do to set your mind on the grace you have been given?

THEN WHAT?

How can you keep from becoming conformed to your evil desires?

How should we respond to the truth revealed to us in yesterday's reading? Should we live in any way we choose since our inheritance is secure? Peter follows his discussion about our salvation with the appropriate response to such incredible truth. First, he tells us that we should prepare our minds for action. We must realize that we are in a spiritual battle and must be ready. Secondly, we need to be self-controlled. We must not allow our feelings or desires to control us. Thirdly, we need to set our minds fully on the grace given to us. In other words, we must meditate on what our salvation really means. And finally, we must be sure that we are not conformed to the evil desires we had before we were saved. Why? Because doing so will enable us to be holy, which is our goal. Some might think that because our salvation is secure, we can behave any way we choose. That is not what Scripture teaches. After salvation, we are called to pursue holiness in every aspect of our lives by obeying these four commands. Put numbers next to these four instructions in your Bible to remind you to pursue holiness. It is what God expects.

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 1

Has a word or phrase from your devotions ever caught your attention and revealed something new from God? There are a few such words in this passage. Did you notice them as you read? The first one is found in verse 5. It is the phrase "being built." Do you realize the significance of those two words? Peter tells us with those words that the Christian life is a process. He wants to emphasize that even though we are saved and our salvation is secure, we are in the "process" of becoming like Christ. When one is born again, God begins the process of making him more like His Son. Peter says that we are "being built" into a spiritual house. We may not be one right now, but each day we get a little closer. It is important to realize that we are in process. Maturity occurs as we grow and move forward in our walk with God. We may not be perfect now, but we ought to see ourselves sinning less, having our devotions more, gaining more boldness, loving people more, etc. We may not be where we want to be, but we are moving toward the goal. Don't become discouraged by the process. Be careful that you don't regress.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 2

PROVERBS 31

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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Have you ever made a decision to do the right thing and then had someone accuse you of doing something wrong? How did you feel when you suffered for doing right? If you have ever faced that kind of situation, then today's reading should be helpful. It gives us a sobering, yet encouraging principle regarding unfair treatment. The phrase found in verse 21, "to this you were called" should wake us up a bit. Peter informs us that suffering for doing right is something all Christians should expect and prepare for. Knowing that, we can be encouraged by the fact that Jesus went through the same things. Peter tells us that He did so in order to leave us an example. How close are you to the example He provided? Look at the specifics. There was no deceit found in His mouth. Is there any in yours? He hurled no insults at those who insulted Him. Do you respond this way when people insult you? When He suffered, He made no threats, but instead entrusted Himself to the Father. Sound like you? What a powerful testimony this kind of life would be in our world today! What situation are you facing that demands the imitation of Christ in your life? Are you ready?

SAY WHAT?

In what ways do we respond deceitfully when persecuted?

SO WHAT?

How do we hurl insults at those who persecute us?

NOW WHAT?

In what ways do we retaliate?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 2

1 PETER 3:1-7

INSTEAD

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What makes a girl attractive? What should girls strive for? What should guys look for in a girl? In today's reading, Peter gives us an answer. He tells us that while it is fine for girls to braid their hair, wear jewelry and fine clothes, those things should not be where their beauty originates. What ought to make a girl beautiful is what we find on the inside. Her inner self ought to be what she is known for and what makes her attractive. In light of that, girls should be making inner beauty a priority. Much too often, girls spend a lot of time each day working on their outward appearance and very little time working on their inner beauty. To God, external beauty has no worth, but a gentle, quiet spirit is of great worth. Guys ought to be looking for girls who have these inner qualities. They are the most important. Outward beauty is not a standard for judging the quality of a person. Both guys and girls need to resist the pressures in today's society to look on the outside and make that the priority. How does your life demonstrate which qualities you value most? How much time do you spend on your inner beauty?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 3

What if someone came to you and asked you questions about your faith? Would you be able to give him answers? Could you tell him who Jesus Christ is and why He came to this earth? What if he wanted to know why you think you are on your way to heaven? What if he wanted to know why you believe the Bible to be the Word of God? Could you tell him? To encourage us along these lines, Peter gives us an admonition in today's passage. In verse 15, he tells us to always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks us the reason for the hope we have. Specifically, in this context, he explains that these opportunities will come our way as we respond in a godly manner to the suffering we experience for doing what is right. As we respond correctly to our suffering, some may speak maliciously against us, but some will want to know why we have hope in the midst of such hardship. At that moment, we need to be ready to give them the reasons for our hope. Can you verbalize the reasons? In what areas do you need to be better prepared to give an answer? What steps can you take to get yourself ready to give reasons for your hope?

SAY WHAT?

Why have you decided to commit your life to Christ?

SO WHAT?

What reasons would you give for the hope you have in Christ?

NOW WHAT?

What would you say to someone who asked why they should trust Christ with their life?

THEN WHAT?

What do I need to do to always be prepared to share this with others?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 3

1 PETER 4:1-11

GIFTS

SAY WHAT?

In what ways has God gifted you?

SO WHAT?

How can you develop them further?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use your gifts to serve the body?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

In what ways has God gifted you to serve and encourage the body of Christ? How is the body being influenced by the way you use your gifts? If you do not know the answer to those questions, you cannot comply with what today's passage teaches. In verse 10, we are told to use whatever gifts we have received to serve others. We are to take the gifts God has given to us and use them to encourage and help the body of Christ. In this book, we have already learned that we are called to face all kinds of unjust suffering. While we know it produces positive results in our lives, it does not necessarily make it easier to endure. It is important, therefore, to be a part of the lives of our brothers and sisters by using our gifts to serve them. When we do, we are ministering God's grace in different ways. We don't have the option to sit back and not fulfill our responsibility to the body. If we do, the body loses the grace of God that should be administered. God has a purpose for you and, when you fulfill it, you administer God's grace. What role does God want you to play? Do you know what your gifts are? How can you use them? How can you find out and get started?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 4

Does a passage of Scripture like today's reading encourage or discourage you? If you understand the truth involved, it should encourage you. Again, Peter tells us that we will suffer. In fact, in verse 12 he tells us not to be surprised by painful trials as though something strange has happened. What should our response be to this truth? According to verse 13, it is to rejoice. As Christians, we often get bent out of shape when we suffer for doing good. We act as if this is something unheard of and not as Peter warned—something to be expected. Don't acquire or develop a persecution/martyr complex. We ought to rejoice because we are experiencing Christ-like suffering. As a result of suffering for our faith, we will be overjoyed when He appears. If we are being insulted, we view it as a blessing and know that it means the glory of God rests on us. In other words, we should be honored that we are worthy to suffer for being a Christian. Is this your attitude? Have you suffered? How have you responded? Ask God to help you have a right perspective on suffering and a right response to those who cause it.

SAY WHAT?

In what way are you suffering right now for being a Christian?

SO WHAT?

How are you responding to your suffering?

NOW WHAT?

What can you do to respond to suffering like Peter described?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 4

1 PETER 5:1-11

RESISTING

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What does Satan want to see happen in my life? What goals does he have for me? How do I avoid his agenda? How should I respond? The answers to these questions are found in this chapter. They help us avoid his agenda. We need to understand what Satan's goal is for each of us. He is not trying to trip us or cause us to slip a little. His goal is to totally destroy our lives. His agenda is total devastation. He walks around every day, looking for ways to destroy our lives. He will do all he can to bring it to pass. Our response should be to resist him and stand firm. How can we do that? First, we must be faithful to our time in the Word every day. It is our sword and shield against Satan's schemes. We must know what the Word says and how to use it. Knowing what he is trying to do to our lives ought to motivate each of us to never miss a day. Our hearts can be encouraged knowing believers all over the world face the same attacks as we do. God's response is that He will restore us, make us strong, firm, and steadfast. When? After we have suffered "a little while." We can resist Satan, and not allow him to destroy our lives. How can you be better prepared to resist him?

EXTRA READING

1 PETER 5

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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2 PETER 1:1-11

ADD

SAY WHAT?

Which of the six items do you need to work on the most? Why?

SO WHAT?

In what specific ways can you begin to work on the item from above?

NOW WHAT?

How will you be able to tell if it is being added?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

Why should we be motivated to add to our faith the qualities mentioned in verses 5-7? Since we are already on our way to heaven, why put forth the effort? According to verse 8, it is a guard to keep us from becoming ineffective and unproductive. If we do not have those qualities growing in our lives, we will become near-sighted and forget what God has done for us. In verses 3-4, Peter tells us that everything we need for living and godliness has been given to us. Notice that he says LIFE and godliness. The point is that adding these qualities to our faith does not just impact our "spiritual lives" but impacts everything. God has given us everything we need to be effective and productive in anything we do. Anything we need to live our lives and grow in our faith has been given to us by God and is contained within the pages of Scripture. Since all we need is found in Christ and the knowledge of His Word, we ought to be even more eager to grow in our faith. To neglect your faith results in being ineffective and unproductive in what really matters. How sad to be effective at what does not matter and ineffective at what does. Which is true of you?

EXTRA READING

2 PETER 1

Today we see one of the most important statements about the credibility of Scripture. Did you notice it? It is found in verses 20-21. Peter first tells us that he was an eye witness to much of what he had written concerning Christ. One would think that would make him a trustworthy source. However, he tells us that we have an even more trustworthy source than an eyewitness account. It is the Bible! Our Bibles are even more certain than someone's eye witness account. The Bible is not simply an account of what an individual has seen, or his interpretation of what he saw. Even though the event was seen in person, the interpretation of what was seen could be biased. How we feel or what we want to see can alter the accuracy of our account. In contrast, our Bible came to us from men who were guided by the Holy Spirit, so that the words they wrote came not from their memories, but from God Himself. The result is a true, accurate, trustworthy, and unbiased account. We can have confidence in every word found in our Bibles. That is why Peter says in verse 19, "you will do well to pay attention to it." Do you have this kind of confidence?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 PETER 1

2 PETER 2:1-11

THEN

SAY WHAT?

How will someone who is motivated by personal gain demonstrate his true motive?

SO WHAT?

How will someone whose true motivation is his love for God and for people demonstrate his motives?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid the trap of a false teacher?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

Does today's reading frighten you or give you hope? It can be alarming to realize that there are teachers in this world who are out to lead us astray. It's frightening to realize that someone would introduce false information that purposefully leads us in a wrong direction. They will not speak the truth but, in order to exploit us, will make up stories that sound like the truth. Peter also tells us that their motivation is not to help us, but comes from a desire to get rich. In light of this, what follows is comforting. Verse 9 tells us that God knows how to rescue the godly. Punishment is coming for this kind of teacher. We need to be aware that they are out there and be on guard. We must arm ourselves so that we are not caught by them. We need to examine all teachers and ministers to see if they have true love for us, or if they are using us to become rich. We must study the Bible ourselves to make sure what we believe is truly found in Scripture and does not flow out of someone's personal opinion. God hates false teachers and will punish them. We must arm ourselves, lest we fall prey to their schemes. Daily personal devotions is a good place to start.

EXTRA READING

2 PETER 2

What can you learn about false teachers in the second half of this chapter? Certainly one thing is that God has a very grim view of them. Peter gives insights into the characteristics of false teachers. You might want to number them in your Bible. They take good Christian fellowship and use it to practice their ungodliness. They use their positions and abilities to do spiritual work for personal gain. They promise refreshment for people who will follow them and adhere to their teachings, but what they produce in peoples' lives is far from it. They, at one time, have had the appearance of godliness, but the pattern of their lives illustrates that their true nature is far from God. In fact, Peter says that it would have been better for them not to have known the truth, than to have known it and then reject it in order to teach their false doctrine for personal gain. We need to be careful whom we trust and follow. What a blessing to have a teacher who is not like the ones in this chapter! If your teacher is not like this, why not write to thank him? It would encourage him to continue to faithfully walk with God.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 PETER 2

2 PETER 3:1-10

COMING SOON

SAY WHAT?

What can we do to be prepared for Christ's return?

SO WHAT?

In what specific ways can we tell if we really believe He will come back soon?

NOW WHAT?

How are you working to help others be prepared for Christ's return?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

Why hasn't Christ returned yet? When will He come again? Does His delay mean He might not ever come? To some, His delay does indicate He is not coming back. However, to the Christian, His return is certain even though it has not happened yet. Peter closes this book by addressing the scoffers who claim that Christ is not coming back and then explains why Christ's return has been delayed. First, the scoffers say that things have gone on the same since the beginning of time and, therefore, will continue. Peter tells us that they have not taken into account how God judged the world with the flood, illustrating their point to be false. Peter follows by letting us know that to God a day is like a thousand years. To Him, it has only been about 2 days since Jesus left the earth. Peter closes by telling us the return of Jesus Christ has been delayed to provide more people with the opportunity to be saved. His delay is not the neglect of His promise, but the fulfillment of His promise. When His patience has ended, He will come. Are you ready? Who can you tell that the return of Christ has been delayed to provide him an opportunity for salvation?

EXTRA READING

2 PETER 3

What does the truth of yesterday's reading mean to us who are alive today? How should we act since the return of Christ is certain? Peter answers these questions as he closes this book. First, he tells us that we should live holy and godly lives (vs11). The knowledge that the return of Christ is certain, yet delayed in order for the last ones to be saved, should motivate us to live lives that show the difference Jesus Christ makes. Secondly, we should make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with God (vs14). All of our energy should be spent becoming a person who could be described this way. Again, Peter reminds us that the delay is so that others can be saved. Our light in the darkness is vital in order for them to see their need for Christ. Thirdly, Peter tells us to be on our guard (vs17). There are forces at work designed to teach us error and make us insecure in our relationship with Christ. Both of these could make us ineffective in reaching our worlds for Christ. We must help others see and then take advantage of their opportunities to trust Christ. In light of Christ's return, we must live godly lives. Are you doing that?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 PETER 3



PROVERBS 2

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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If 1 John 1:9 were not in the Bible, what would we miss? What kind of impact would it have on our lives if God had left it out? We would miss one of the foundational truths in all the Scriptures. John tells us that God can do something to relieve the burden and guilt of sin. We all violate His standard and feel guilty about it. How comforting to know that we can go to God, confess it, and He will forgive us. What hope this verse gives! However, the truth does not stop there. John tells us not only can we find forgiveness, but He will "purify us from all unrighteousness." It is one thing to be forgiven, but it is something more to be cleansed. The guilt can be taken away because we have experienced His forgiveness and have been cleansed. We do not have to keep repeating it and continually seek God's forgiveness. What sin in your life do you need to confess and seek forgiveness from God? From what sin in your life do you need to be cleansed? You do not have to live under the burden of guilt. Do not allow Satan to neutralize you with your past sin. Go to God and allow His forgiveness and cleansing to give you peace and hope.

SAY WHAT?

Is there any sin that you need to seek God's forgiveness for?

SO WHAT?

Is there any sin in your past that have you sought God's forgiveness, but not His cleansing?

NOW WHAT?

How can you apply what you have read today to these two areas?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 1

1 JOHN 2:1-14

EVIDENCE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How can you tell if an individual is a believer? What characteristics demonstrate that he is truly saved? The book of 1 John is filled with characteristics that show up in the lives of those who have eternal life. As you read through this book, make a note in your Bible of what they are. Put a - next to those that are signs of unbelief and a + next to those that are true of one who is saved. In today's reading, we find three characteristics of those who are saved. John wrote in verse 3 that if we are truly saved we will obey the commands of God. If we say we are saved, but do not obey what Scripture teaches, we are liars. In verse 6, we read that if we are truly saved, we will walk as Jesus did. There will be evidence that we are becoming more like Christ in every area of our lives. In verse 9, we see that our behavior towards our brothers in Christ also demonstrate our standing before God. If we are saved, we will love our brothers. Those who are not will hate their brothers. How does your life measure up to these standards? Do they give you assurance of your salvation or cause you to doubt the sincerity of it?

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 2

What does John mean when he tells us not to love the world? Does it mean that we cannot be really close to anyone who is unsaved? The Greek word for world in this verse is *cosmos*. It is a word that refers to the world's system, not to the people who live in it. It is the system that exists in our world that is opposed to God. John wanted us to know that we should not love what the world encourages us to love. Someone who loves the world is someone who finds pleasure in what the world offers. He is someone who wants the same lifestyle and value system that he sees on TV. It is wishing he could be like the people around him who are not obedient to God and wanting to engage in their activities. The reason is found in verse 16. John tells us that the world is made up of the desires of our fallen, sinful nature, and the temptations that face us encourage us to violate God's standard. It also includes boasting about what we have as though it came from our human efforts, not God's. How do you feel about the world and its system? Do you envy it and let it entice you or does your heart become burdened as you see the lives it destroys? What does your response tell you?

SAY WHAT?

What are some examples of things in the world that are easy for us to love?

SO WHAT?

How does someone demonstrate they love the things of the world?

NOW WHAT?

How can you protect yourself from developing a love for the world?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 2

1 JOHN 3:1-10

VICTORY

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Was John's intent in these verses to communicate to us that any sin we commit indicates that we are not really saved? Some would say that is exactly what this verse teaches. A closer look, however, reveals a different interpretation. John, in this section, was again emphasizing that those who are really saved will demonstrate it by their behavior. In verse 3, he said that anyone who is saved purifies himself. He works hard to get rid of sin in his life, and his desire is to be pure in all areas. Jesus Christ came into this world to take away our sin. After salvation, we begin to realize what sin is, what it does, and we hate it. We do not want it to be part of our lives. Our desire is to purify ourselves from sin. The point John is making is not that people who are saved never sin, but that people who are saved do not "keep on sinning." That means that sin is not the pattern of their lives. They do not continue to live a life of sin, but strive to live a life of purity. How I respond to sin indicates whether my salvation is genuine or not. What pattern do you see in your life? Do you see yourself gaining victory over more areas of sin?

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 3

How do you feel when you see someone in your community who has a material need? What do you do when you hear he has no money to pay for basic needs or simple wants? How do you respond to the difficult circumstances in the lives of others when you hear about them? The response you give in these circumstances will reveal something about where you stand before God. John tells us that turning a blind eye to obvious needs demonstrates that we do not have God's love in us. In other words, it shows we are not saved. It is not enough to see the needs and communicate them to others. It is a demonstration of love when we actually do something to meet the needs. He tells us not to be the kind of people who see needs and do nothing about them. In fact, when we see needs and do something to meet them, we demonstrate that we are saved. It is good to be burdened about needs, but it is better to do something about them. When is the last time you did something about a need you knew about? Are you aware of someone who has a need that you can help? Do not love with words only, but love with actions also! Look around today and see what needs you can meet.

SAY WHAT?

What needs are you currently aware of?

SO WHAT?

In what ways can you help with those needs besides praying about them?

NOW WHAT?

How can you become more sensitive to meeting the needs of others?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 3

1 JOHN 4:7-21

BROTHERLY LOVE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

When John wrote this book, what main ideas do you think he wanted to communicate? As you read today's passage, did you conclude that one of the points he was making was that we all need to love our brothers? That is one of the primary themes mentioned over and over throughout this book. Why was it so important to John? He wanted to ensure that we know what our love for each other communicates to the world. Jesus told the disciples that the world would be able to tell they were disciples by their love for each other (John 13:35). In fact, in that passage, He told them they were to love each other as He loves them. The same level of compassion that Christ has shown to us is what we are to show our brothers. With the same selflessness Christ demonstrated, we are to seek to meet the needs of our brothers. The one thing that ought to show the world that we are disciples of Christ is the love we express to others. When people spend time with us, they should notice our love for each other. Using that measuring stick, how are you doing? Can people tell you are a disciple based on your love for the people in your world?

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 4

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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1 JOHN 5:1-12

THESE THREE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What does John mean by saying that we have three witnesses that Jesus Christ is God—the Spirit, water, and the blood? There is some debate about this passage, but its truth is crucial and very clear. There are some who would argue that Jesus Christ was not God, but simply a man. Others would at least say that God came upon the man Jesus Christ when He was baptized. In other words, he became God. However, this passage makes it clear that those positions are not true. John tells us that both Jesus' baptism (water), and His crucifixion (blood), prove that He was God. When referring to the water and blood, John used the verb "came by." He uses that verb to emphasize that Jesus Christ wasn't made God by these things but, as God, came by these things. John explained that His earthly ministry proved He was God from His birth to His baptism to His crucifixion. Beyond these two, the Holy Spirit also testifies to us that He is God! We can have confidence that Jesus Christ is God. His baptism, His crucifixion, and the Holy Spirit demonstrate it. What people do you know who would be open to this message?

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 5

We have just completed reading through this great book. Throughout 1 John, we find characteristics of those who know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. John closes this book by stating that it was written so that you might know you have eternal life. As you read through it, did you see evidence that you are saved? Use today's questions to help you evaluate what you have learned. John wants you to know you have eternal life. Be honest about what you discover. Be sure to talk to someone who can help you understand what you have discovered about yourself, as well as how to respond to it.

SAY WHAT?

List some of the characteristics found in this book of those who are saved.

SO WHAT?

List some of the characteristics John gave in this book for those who are not saved.

NOW WHAT?

Summarize what your answers to these two questions tell you about where you stand in your relationship to God.

EXTRA READING

1 JOHN 5

2 JOHN 4-11

DEMONSTRATED LOVE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Can one say that he loves God and is a Christian, but not obey what the Bible teaches? No, he cannot, according to today's reading. John wrote to some friends here in this small book and gave them a command. The command was to love one another. What does it mean to walk in love? According to these verses, it means to live a life of obedience. It requires loving Christ so much that you want to do what He says. It requires that you deliberately seek obedience. It requires obedience by choice, not by obligation or duty. All of this implies firsthand knowledge of His Word. We show our love by our desire to know what God's Word teaches and then by living in obedience to what it tells us to do. We cannot say we truly love God if we do not do what He says. What does your life tell you about how much you love God? Are you obedient to His Word? Do you read it and study it so that you know what He expects of you? In what way can you be obedient today in order to show God and those who observe your life that you love Him? Find a new way to show Him how much you love Him. It is the least you can do.

EXTRA READING

2 JOHN

What brings you the most joy in your life? As you think back over this past week, what event brought a smile to your face? What is it about you that gives other people joy? In today's reading, we get a glimpse into the heart of John and learn how he would answer those questions and how we can be an encouragement to others. John says that what brings him the most joy is to know that his children, those on whom he has had a spiritual impact, are walking in the truth. His joy comes from seeing others continue in their faith. He was concerned about their spiritual well-being even as they grew older. Even more amazing to consider is the potential that they had to be either a source of great joy or great sorrow to John. He loved them and cared about their relationship with God. We sometimes forget the impact our lives have on those who have invested time in us. We do not consider the pain or hurt we inflict when we do not walk with God. How much joy do those who have invested time and effort into your life get as they observe your walk with God? Have you ever thanked them for their efforts? Why not do so today?

SAY WHAT?

Write down the names of people who have invested in your life?

SO WHAT?

How would you guess your walk with God is impacting them?

NOW WHAT?

What can you change in your life in order to bring more joy to them?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING

3 JOHN

JUDE 17-23

BUT YOU

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What should we do, knowing that people will come who want to destroy us and our faith? The answer is found in today's reading. Did you notice it? This book tell us that there will be people whose sole purpose is to destroy the message of the Gospel. In light of that, we are told by Jude to contend for the Gospel so that it remains pure. He ends the book by giving us two things we can do to prepare ourselves for their attacks. First, we need to build ourselves up in the faith (vs20). In order to do this, we must study our Bibles and make sure we know what it teaches. We must be continually growing and learning more. Second, we should pray in the Holy Spirit (vs20). He alone, not our selfishness or intellect, needs to be guiding our prayers. The bottom line is that we need to be committed to personal study and prayer. These two will give us the knowledge and the strength to be able to recognize and fight off the false teaching that will come. What are you doing to prepare yourself to be able to contend for the faith? Is your devotional life consistent? Daily? Do you pray guided by the Holy Spirit? How can you be more effective in those areas?

EXTRA READING

JUDE

A small white silhouette graphic on a black background showing two people sitting in a boat.

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1 PETER 5:8

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