

coffee
with Christ



“...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:17

In 1992 Raymond came up with the Slogan that wearing their Suits and Shirts is what makes a man complete. Not many in today's generation prefer the brand anymore. However for past 2000 years The Bible has helped millions of men and women to be complete. With the help of the scriptures many men and women have risen to be the best they could be for God and for the people around them.

As you start this New Year 2017 with these lessons, our prayer is that you will be the best for your Creator. That you will rise to fulfil what you were born for. That you will be transformed when you pray through and meditate on these scriptures every day. And as you get transformed, may God use you to transform the life of many in your campus.

Wish you a happy and prosperous new year.

Campus Mentors of India

Week 1

PRAYER



Day 1: Pray about everything

Have you been in a situation recently or in the past that you weren't able to sleep because of anxiety?

I remember, during my undergraduate years, there was not a day that I didn't feel anxious. The number of times I wanted to look in the mirror; number of times I refused to go with my friends in the college and in the church because I felt insecure about not having enough money.

During my college days, I always thought - is there a remedy to my anxieties, my worries, and insecurities. Can someone take it away?

Thoughts such as; what would my friends think about me. What about the girls in the group; wouldn't it make me look miserable.

Have you been in a situation when you weren't able to enjoy anything because?

- You were so worried about how you were looking that you were all the time consumed with yourself and weren't to enjoy the time with disciples or your friends.
- You were so worried about scoring a certain percentage or grade or comparing yourself with others that you completely missed the joy of completing your graduation.

There is a remedy in the bible to all our anxieties: Paul says in **Philippians 4: 6-7** “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

He wrote this scripture because he understood the meaning of anxiety.

As a disciple, my anxieties and worries have compelled me to pray so many times. So often I prayed because I was anxious about something. The day I was asked to preach for the first time, share a communion message on the stage, the day I was going on my first date – every anxious moment led me to pray more.

Pray through everything. Is there anything bothering you this morning, pray. Don't worry about having a quiet time in the same format every day. When you are anxious, just come straight to the point before God. Be honest; ask him to calm you down.

What happens when you pray about everything to God? It becomes His priority; your prayer becomes God's agenda for the day.

Prayer can act like an antidote with soothing effect, as if something happened during prayer that brought peace to your mind. The word peace used in the bible is derived from Hebrew word *Shalom*.

Shalom means peace; but not just any peace. It is a feeling of contentment, completeness, wholeness, well-being and harmony. Make your worries and anxieties as God's agenda and pray for grace and peace.

Challenge

- a) Make a prayer list of all your anxieties or worries and pray through the list. Do the same thing but this time pray for someone else. Ask them, is there anything bothering you? Can I pray for you? Have them share their worries and you pray through it.
- b) Search for at least 7 verses in the bible where Paul greets disciples with grace and peace or prays for it. Ex.: **Philippians 1: 2** - May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Pray for grace and peace for your family, friends and yourself.

Day 2: Pray when you are angry

What do you do when you are angry? What does it lead to?

There is so much anger in the world. There is the personal anger we feel for someone who has taken advantage of us, who has cheated us, or abused us. There is national anger we feel when something affects us as a country. The recent demonetization has angered so many ordinary people. There is anger towards our political leaders and at times towards leaders who lead us in the church.

We feel angry when we feel we have been exploited, or ignored or neglected. And there is the anger we feel toward God Who has mistreated us or, in neglect, has allowed others to mistreat us.

Do you feel like yelling and screaming about something, but were afraid the listeners would get angry with you or would stop talking to you.

There is so much anger seen around us every day, we see people express it, suppress it, or channel it in the wrong directions. Sometimes people go to psychiatrists to seek counselling to overcome their anger.

When I don't deal with my anger, it leads me to sin against people and God both.

Psalms 109:8-14 - May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership. May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. May his children be wandering beggars; may they be driven from their ruined homes. May a creditor seize all he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor. May no one extend kindness to him or take pity on his fatherless children. May his descendants be cut off, their names blotted out from the next generation. May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD; may the sin of his mother never be blotted out.

The question we need to ask this morning is: Q. Do we pray about our anger.

We do not like to bring our anger to God in prayer. In fact, we have a hard time praying when we are in anger leave alone bringing our anger in prayer.

However, the entire book of Psalms is full of anger; at times towards self, people, and even God.

Psalm 83:13-17 - Make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind. As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze, so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD. May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace.)

In this Psalm written by Asaph, he expresses his anger towards the enemies of his nation and prays to God to deal with them. God did destroy Israel's enemies.

Happy are you if you did not know what this psalm is about. But most people have a real personal enemy, someone who genuinely hates them, someone who truly makes life miserable and unbearable for them. There are those who even have someone who has ruined them for life, crippling them emotionally through one of the many forms of abuse.

As a disciple, who is our real enemy; do I need to mention his name? He is at war with God and wants to destroy His people.

Prayer is the most powerful thing one can do to deal with anger towards our enemies. Prayer is not just words that we speak to God; it's an action.

Challenge

a) Pray through **Psalm 83**.

b) Write down some of the things you are upset and angry about, also the people you are angry with and talk about it with God in your prayer.

Day 3: Pray when you are in sin

1 John 3:20 - Whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

God, who knows everything, hears the prayers of everyone (disciple or an unbeliever). If he didn't, he would not be all knowing

The question is really whether or not God will answer a person's prayers while he is continues to be in sin. For the most part, the answer is no.

1 John 5:14 - This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Sin is rebellion against God, and while we are in sin we are not doing the will of God. So if God is to answer our prayers, our prayers must be according to his will not ours, and when we are sinning we are carrying out our will not God's will. So, even though God will hear all of our prayers, while we are in sin we are not in his will and our prayers will not be answered -- at least not if they are focused on asking God to help you in sinning.

On the other hand, God certainly hears and answers the prayers of the sinner who seeks to repent from sin and who asks God to cleanse him yet again of his sin. God is, after all, loving and forgiving.

Ephesians 4:30 - and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

What does it say? It says do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. I understand and learn two things from this verse.

1) God (Holy Spirit) lives in me. It's not a small portion of God given to us at the time of baptism but God himself comes to live within us. This truth has changed the way I pray.

The God who created the universe and everything around us, lives in me; fully.

2) The Holy Spirit can be grieved but it doesn't leave me. It has been given to me for the day of redemption.

When I sin against God; He is grieved within me but He doesn't stop listening to me or leave me. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins so that we can be led to repentance.

But repentance is not possible without talking to a brother or a sister and to God simultaneously.

When I sin against people; the tendency is to stop talking. Similarly when I sin against God; the tendency is to stop praying. In fact it should be the other way round.

When I have sinned against someone; I need to talk with an intention to reconcile, to apologize and to resolve.

Has it happened with you that you sinned and stopped praying till you confessed?

Let's remember that God is all-knowing; he will listen to your prayer even when you are in sin but not answer it according to your will. This in no way means that we can continue sinning and continue to pray at the same time.

Galatians 6:7 - Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Pray with in intention to repent from your sins. Ask God to give you strength to confess, to reconcile with your brother/sister.

Challenge

Make a banner for God expressing your commitment that I will never stop praying to Him; no matter what happens. Hang it somewhere in your room where it is visible to you.

Day 4: Pray through your thoughts

Psalm 139:23-24 - Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

There is one thing we do every day that consumes so much of our time. What is it that I am talking about? Thoughts.

How often do we think during a normal day and how much does our thinking increase if the day is not normal? While we are in the class; while we are riding; while we are at home; on the bed.

We think so much through the day. Our thoughts without us knowing can consume the best hours of our day.

What if you could turn your thoughts into small prayers through the day?

The more you get in the habit of praying, the more you will accomplish through prayer and the happier you'll be, because you will have learned the secret of staying in constant, close communication with your loving Father and friend.

One of the best ways to put our thoughts to good use is to turn them into prayers. Think of all the things you do throughout the day, all the things you think about, all the thoughts that run through your head. Now consider your thoughts. Take stock of your thoughts, analyze them, weigh them up, and ask yourself what your thoughts are accomplishing. Where are they going? Are you transforming your thoughts into power that will bring about some good in your life or lives of others?

Prayers through thoughts can be silent prayers or whispers or the way you want to pray.

- You get a thought about a friend who left faith – pray for him immediately
- You get a thought of your sins/ sinful days – pray to God to give you strength to say no to sin and also thank Him for protecting you.
- You remembered someone had asked you to pray. (I have been practicing this: When someone in the church or outside requests me to pray for their problem situation I pray with them at that minute. I might not remember it later on.)
- If you're at home doing something and your thoughts turn towards your family in native place, pray that they'll have a good day; for their security.

- Or if while at campus you start thinking about an upcoming difficult project, or a test, turn that thought into a prayer for the Lord's strength for the task and start preparing for it

Thoughts are real. They can help or they can hinder our prayers. Are your thoughts helping to sustain a soul in need? Or are they silently turning a blind eye to the one who cries for help? Where are your thoughts running? Are they reaching out to answer a call? Are you tapping into heavenly thought power? Are you directing your thoughts to where they can do some good and really make a positive difference?

God wants us to learn to convert our thoughts into powerful prayer. Thoughts turned into prayers will materialize into God's blessings, God's intervention, God's protection, power and strength, and God's healing balm rubbed on those for whom we care. On the other hand, thoughts left idle slip away into time and go nowhere. Sometimes our thoughts can lead us to depression, discouragement and our past sins.

Every time we think a thought, we can turn it into a mighty prayer - all the time, anywhere, even when we're all alone. When we're doing physical chores or routine duties, we can turn our thoughts into prayers throughout the day. We can capture our thoughts, take them up to God, and see and hear of miracles coming to pass because of them.

All day long, no matter what else we're doing, we're thinking thoughts, but it's how we filter and direct them that can make a difference. What we decide to do with our thoughts and where we direct them is what counts.

Thoughts can become burden or a blessing. Turn them into good by turning them into prayer.

Challenge – Pray through your thoughts today and try to practice it during this week. Practice it from time to time.

Day 5: Make time for prayer

Psalm 5:3 - In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

It takes time to communicate, whether with friends at church or at campus.

There's no way around it! Considering everything else you need to do today, it will probably seem like a sacrifice at first to take a few minutes with the Lord before your day begins.

It may also seem awkward to stop other things for a later time to talk with the Lord now. It's a mistake, though, to look at time spent in prayer as time that could have been better used to get things done, because as busy as you may be, if you take time to pray, you'll be able to get a lot more done than you ever would otherwise. It's an investment, but once you start reaping the benefits, you'll wonder how you ever managed without it. Here are a few tips to help get you started:

Make a conscious effort. Like any new habit, this will take conscious effort over a period of time. You have to really work at it at first. It usually involves a lot of forgetting and some remembering, but in time you'll find you're remembering to pray more and more, and forgetting less.

Make it a priority. You always have time for the things you consider most important.

Set aside specific times for prayer in your daily routine.

Mark 1:35 - Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

If you wait till everything else is taken care of, it will never happen. If you find that one time of day doesn't work well for you, try another. Find a time and place where you can get quiet, and where other things going on around you won't distract you.

Set attainable goals for yourself – try at least twenty minutes once a day to start, and then try to up it to twice a day or more. Prayers don't need to be long. When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, the model prayer He taught them - known as the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6)

Count the number of words in the prayer taught by Jesus. How long did it take to pray that? It's not how long you pray that counts, but how much you believe, how earnest and sincere you are when you pray.

Take advantage of spare moments during the day for short prayers. You can do it during a coffee break, when stuck in traffic, while waiting for an appointment, while cooking, while taking a shower, while waiting for sleep, while walking the dog - almost any time, really. Just focus your thoughts on the Lord and let Him refresh you and give you strength and inspiration to carry on.

Even after you get in the habit of praying while you're doing other things, you still need quiet times when you can give your full attention to the Lord and what He has to say to you.

If you miss the appointed time one day, don't give up! Try again the next day.

Challenge

- Fix a time for prayer every day. Put this in your calendar and keep a prayer alarm on your smart phone. Whenever your prayer alarm rings; pray.
- Take a day out for prayer. Create special memories of quiet times.
- Find a special place for prayers. (When I lived in a small town called Vasai while I was in the full-time ministry; I use to go to Vasai fort to spend time with God. It was an amazing experience that cannot be forgotten. I have heard of some brothers going to graveyard to pray (Please do not attempt any of these suggestions without seeking advice).

Day 6: Pray with others

Mathew 18:19-20 - I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Most of the time we prefer praying in private. There are other times, however, when it is important/needed to pray with others. Jesus promises, "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them."

In certain situations, there simply is more power in prayer together.

Especially when we are facing the challenges together. You don't have a church hall – pray together, you want to become fruitful as a family group – pray together; you want to thank God for everything at the end of the year– pray together. We have gathered together on so many occasions to pray together.

Having others pray with you when you're passing through a particularly tough time can also be a comfort and source of spiritual strength. Part of our responsibility as Christians is to support each other through our prayers. Your prayers can significantly improve the lives of others. Praying with someone who is not a disciple can be the best thing one can do with him/her apart from studying the bible and other things as per their need.

Revelation 8:4 - The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.

Your prayers move the heart and hand of God to take action on their behalf. Through your prayers others can receive most of the same benefits that you receive when you pray for the same things for yourself - including blessings (spiritual & material), protection, freedom from anxiety and fear, healing, and more.

Because you pray you are also in a better position to help others directly. The Lord often uses people as His representatives on earth to bring people to have faith in Him, so it could very well be that He wants to use you to help bring faith in someone's life just by simple act of praying with them.

I remember when my father was suffering from cancer in early 2008 and I had just started coming to church although intermittently; the disciples from city ministry in Mumbai came to the hospital to visit him and pray for him and pray with me for him. I

experienced the same care and concern when he was in the last stages of cancer. There were multiple occasions when disciples not only donated blood for my father but also came and prayed for him.

During my early years as a disciple, there were many occasions when I was weak in my faith or I would be down in sin and not want to come to church. The brothers would reach out to me and pray with me. It is like someone who wants to leave the hand of God is being helped by someone to hold God's hand once again. Jonathan did the same thing with David. He helped him to find strength in God.

James 5:14-16 - Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

The very fact you pray for others shows that you're concerned about their happiness and well-being, and this puts you in a position to better understand His loving plan for their lives and how you can help them see the plan of God. When you pray for someone who is sick, or with someone who is struggling with sin, and God might heal them as a testimony to them and others of His miracle-working power, and to cause their relationship with Him to be healthy again

Challenge

- Ask someone in the church or in your campus or your neighborhood; Is there something they would like you to pray for them. Pray with them and help them put their request before God.
- Find someone in the church or outside of church for whom you can be a prayer friend.

Day 7: Pray like Jesus prayed

(Inspired by Bill Peach' series on your personal best for God – Boston Church of Christ)

“During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” **Hebrews 5:7**

Today we will focus on praying like Jesus. How can his praying teach us so much about effective prayers?

Praying is a way God has given us to connect with Him, rely on Him, cast our burdens on Him, and much more. But the question that comes to my mind is Why were Jesus' prayers heard?

There are many good answers:

because of his loud cries and tears (heartfelt intensity)

because he was The Son of God (This was what I would have guessed)

because he was righteous

because he was sinless

because he had faith

because he believed in the power of prayer

because he was consistent and prayed every day

The actual verse “because of his reverent submission” (Hebrews 5:8) is even more surprising and more encouraging. Here's why:

Do you want to be heard by God? Do you want your prayers to result in God's action? Don't we all?

We can't be sinless like Jesus was sinless. We can't be as faithful as He was, as consistent as He was, as joyful as He was. But we can cultivate the attitude of reverent submission, and that's what got Jesus' prayers heard.

This is probably the most important key to impacting prayer (and to a powerful walk with God): reverent submission.

What is reverent submission? It is an attitude, an understanding about God. It is a perspective that explains how you view your relationship with God. Submission comes in more than one form. Just because we submit, doesn't mean we are reverent. Do you ever feel like you are God's hostage? Do you feel like He has a gun pointed at your head, and if you don't do what He says, He'll just blow you away? That's a pretty

common perspective on God. It happens to people who understand God's Power and Justice enough to fear Him, but don't understand His Love and Compassion enough to love Him back.

Hostage submission is resentful submission. It's faithless. It's something we need to grow out of as we mature spiritually. Reverent submission is an attitude. It is based on understanding the Glory of God that we see in the Scriptures and in the world around us. It's a natural result of participating in the divine nature.

In English, we can sum up reverent submission in one sentence: "Not my will, but yours, O God."

Jesus walked a difficult road His entire life. He lived out reverent submission every day, every step, every choice. He always found out what was on His "to do" list from God, and He always did His Best.

Focus on growing in your reverent submission, and watch what happens in response to your prayers to God.

Challenge

A. Memorize and study out [1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18](#).

B. Study out [1 Timothy 2: 1-8](#). What are the different types of prayer Paul listed? Why is each important?

Week 2

Promises of God

Day 1: Trusting because of who God is

The *Cambridge* Dictionary simply defines Promise as this: "To tell someone that you will certainly do something".

There are over 200 direct references to this word in the Bible and hundreds of other words that describe promises of God. Yet, it is a struggle to fully trust in God's promises. Is this, perhaps, because that promises made to us have been broken and we have broken them too (I certainly have!)?

How then does one learn to trust in the promises of God? Before we study the promises of God in the Bible, it is important to understand the nature of the person making the promise.

A) Let us through scriptures look at **3 reasons** on why we should trust in his promises.

Numbers 23:19 - God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

First reason: Because God does not lie : Humans can lie even while promising .
God always promises in truth

Second reason: Because God does not change his mind : Sometimes humans promise but later change their mind. God does change his mind. He always fulfils his promises.

Romans 4:21 - being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Third reason: Because God has the power to do what he has promised:

Sometimes even if we are sincere while making promises, we don't fulfil them because several things are beyond our control. E.g. If I promised that I would take care of you all your life, the problem is that I may not be alive throughout your entire life to take care of you. Or, I may lose my job and not have money to take care of you. Yet, the Bible assures that God has all the power to fulfil the promise he makes.

Joshua 21:45 - Not one of all the Lord's good promises to Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled.

The above scripture is so encouraging. Joshua testifies that every one of God's promise was fulfilled.

B) Now that we have seen why we should trust in God's promises, let us see what happens when we trust in the promises of God

2 Peter 1: 4 - Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

The scripture above assures us that through the promises of God, we participate in God's nature and that the promises can change our lives

C) So what is expected from us ?

Hebrews 10: 23 - Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Life application: Let us ask ourselves

"Do I really trust in the promises of God?"

"Which are the promises of God that I don't trust? Why?"

Challenge: Based on the scriptures we studied today, make a decision to trust in God's promises

Day 2: Trusting in God's promises even when it seems difficult

Today we will learn from the life of Abraham and Sarah and how God kept his promise

Genesis 15: 1- 3 - After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

Though Abram (before his name was changed to Abraham) had everything, he felt the need for a child of his own. God responds with a promise

Genesis 15: 4-6 - Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Though the promise was that the heir will be through Abram it didn't specify it would be through Sarai. Abraham is around 75 years old when this promise is made (**Genesis 12:4**)

Genesis 16: 1-3 - Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

One can expect that Abram would have discussed God's promise (Gen 15:4-6) with his wife Sarai. But more than ten years had passed since the promise (Gen 16:3 and 16:16). So they seem to be planning on how to 'help' God fulfil his promise. Sarai suggests a solution which is outside of marriage. Abram agrees. Many try and 'help' God fulfil his promise instead of waiting on Him to do it the right way. The struggle is that we want God to fulfil his promise according to our time.

Genesis 17: 15-16 - God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

Abram had a son now (Ishmael) born through Hagar, but this was not the promised son of God's covenant. The son of the promise was to be through Sarai.

Genesis 17: 17-18 - Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

We see in the above verse, another attempt to 'help' God. While God is clearly indicating that Sarah will bear a son (**Gen 17:16**), Abraham is offering God his own solution in an attempt to help God (**Gen 17:18**).

Genesis 17: 19 - Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year."

God clarifies that he will deliver on his promise. God does not need our help. He knows the right time to fulfil his promise. Yet we struggle to believe, trust and wait. We notice that both Abraham and Sarah laughed when God said that he will bless Sarah with a son (**Gen 17:17 and Gen 18:9-12**). This is how humans doubt divine promises.

Genesis 18:13-14 - Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

God in his omniscience, notices Sarah's doubt in his promise and he addresses it by saying "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Genesis 21:1-5 - Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

After 25 years, God fulfils the promise he had made (Gen 21:5). God knew when Abraham was ready and always fulfils his promise in the right time and not according to our time. But God always delivers!

Life application: Let us ask ourselves

"Do I believe that God will deliver in his promise?"

"Do I try to 'help' God fulfil his promises like Abraham and Sarah did?" "What are some of the areas where I try to 'help' God?"

Challenge: Based on the scriptures we studied today, make a decision to wait for God to fulfil his promise because God will deliver at the right time

Day 3: God promises to provide for all our needs

We all worry constantly about our survival – will we find work, will we make enough money, will we be able to provide for our family and so on...

Today we will study some scriptures that will assure us that God provides. As we study these scriptures let us remember two principles of God's provisions

A) God has a plan to provide for everyone

Mathew 6:31-33 - So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Psalms 136:25 - And who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever

The above verses teach us that when we worry our basic needs, we show a lack of trust in God. God knows what we need to live. He will provide for our needs, not always our wants. These verses refer to the physical and normal needs of life. God will not leave us stranded. This is a general principle that we should trust.

B) God promises something special for the righteous.

Proverbs 10:3 - The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked

Proverbs 13:25 - The righteous eat to their hearts' content, but the stomach of the wicked goes hungry

Psalms 34:10 - The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Psalms 37:25 - I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

The above verses emphasize two key principles:

- 1) The righteous and their families will always be satisfied and will not lack anything good.
- 2) The wicked will be craving and hungry

After reading the above verses, what should be expected of us?

Psalm 23:1 - The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

Knowing that God is our shepherd should cause us to be content.

Life application: Let us ask ourselves

"Do I believe that God will provide?" and "Do I worry about this because that shows my trust in God's provision?"

"As I sign of my gratitude to God's provision, do I strive to be righteous?"

Challenge: Based on the scriptures we studied today, make a decision to trust in God's provision and strive to be righteous for his sake

Day 4: God's promises regarding temptation

We all are tempted to sin. It is the devil's plan that we give into temptation and be devoured

(**1 Peter 5:8**). However, God has a plan. Today we will study some scriptures on God's promises in relation to temptation.

1) God does not tempt

James 1:13-14 - When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

We blame others for our sin. We blame God, the devil, our situation, and others. We refuse to take responsibility for our sin. We are tempted by our own desires. God does not intend to destroy us. Rather, he wants us to be saved (2 Peter 3:9)

2) God's promise regarding the extent and solution for temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it

From the above verse, we learn about some promises God makes

- a) I will not get a temptation which is unique to me alone. There are others who have been tempted similarly. In fact, Jesus also has experienced and overcome all temptation which is common to man (Heb. 4:15).
- b) I will not be tempted beyond my capacity to resist it. In fact, in all situations, there will be a way to resist temptation

3) If we resist temptation, we will overcome

James 4:7 - Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you

It is possible to resist temptation. The method is described in Ephesians 6:11-18

4) We can get help from Jesus in our temptation

Hebrews 2:18 - Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Since Jesus has resisted temptation and not sinned, we can do it too. We must set our eyes on Jesus and get his help for he is able to help us.

Life application: Let us ask ourselves

"What are some areas I am tempted in?"

"Which of my own desires entices me?"

Challenge: Based on the scriptures we studied today, decide to resist temptation and look to Jesus for help

Day 5: God's promises regarding forgiveness

Yesterday, we learnt about temptation and the sin it causes. However, we are not doomed. God promises forgiveness. Today, we will study some scriptures that reveal God's promises around the forgiveness of sins

1) God will not despise a broken heart

Psalm 51:17 - The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise

Repentance has an effect on God. See **Psalm 34:18** The LORD is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Isaiah 57:15 - For this is what the high and exalted one says - he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

2) If we confess, God will forgive

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness

If we acknowledge that we have violated God's holiness, our hope is that God's unchanging, merciful and faithful nature will forgive us. This includes salvation to the lost and the ongoing cleansing necessary for fellowship with God

3) If we forgive, God will forgive, if we don't, God won't

Mathew 6:14-15 - For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

This does not mean that our actions earn our forgiveness, but our actions do indicate our attitude towards the forgiveness we have received. This is reiterated elsewhere i.e.

Mathew 5: 7 – Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy;

Mark 11:25 – And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins

4) God will not remember what we did (sins).

Hebrews 8:12 - For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more

Isaiah 43:25 - I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remember your sins no more

Guilt is one of Satan's biggest weapons. He uses it to make us feel that we are worthless and that we cannot change. Sadly, many of us treat each other the same way. But this is not the nature of God. The sins that God forgives, God forgets

Life application: Let us ask ourselves

"Am I broken and contrite in spirit?"

"Do I acknowledge the sins I commit regularly?"

"Do I forgive the way I have been forgiven?"

Challenge: Based on the scriptures we studied today, pray for brokenness and choose to forgive all those who have wronged you.

Day 6: The promises of Jesus (Part I)

In the last 5 days, we have studied various scriptures on the promises of God. Let us spend the last two days meditating on the promises made by and through Jesus

1) The promise of eternal life

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

This emphasizes initial and continuing belief in Jesus. The offer is for anyone (whoever) with no special distinction of any kind. God provides a covenant – He initiates (gave his one and only Son) and expects a response (to believe in him).

2) Only, if we acknowledge Him before men, will He acknowledge us before God

Mathew 10:32-33 – Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

Christ and our decision to follow him (Christianity) must be personally and publicly acknowledged and obeyed. One who refuses these does not belong to the family of God. This is reiterated in **Mathew 12:50** – For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

3) In order to receive LIFE, we must lose our life for Christ

Mathew 10: 39 – Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Jesus calls us to lose our life (our self-interest), in light of Jesus' interest. For eternal life, we must be willing to lose all possessions, relations, reputation, time, energy and everything else. All is demanded from us so that ALL can be given to us eternally. This is emphasized in **Mathew 16:26** – What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? And **John 12:25** – The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

4) If we hold to his teaching, we will be set free

John 8:31-32 – To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

God's word is to be believed and obeyed continuously. Also emphasized in **John 5:24** – I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

The knowing of truth (**John 8:32**) indicates a 'personal relationship' and not 'intellectual knowledge'. This results in freedom from legalism, ritualism, and performance based religion.

Life application: Let us ask ourselves

"Do I believe in each of these promises listed above?"

"Do I acknowledge Christ before men (my family, my colleagues, my friends ...)?"

"Is there anything I am not willing to lose for Christ?"

Challenge: Based on the scriptures we studied today, decide to have a continuous personal relationship with Christ

Day 7: The promises of Jesus (Part II)

1) If we believe, we can!

Mark 9:23 – “If you can”? Said Jesus. Everything is possible for him who believes.

This doesn't mean we can manipulate God into doing anything but is a promise that God will do His will through those who believe.

2) The promise of Jesus' presence

Mathew 18:20 – “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them”

The main message this verse conveys is that when disciples meet to pray, Jesus is there.

3) The promise of rest for the weary.

Mathew 11:28-29 - “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

The expectation is that those who are weary should seek Jesus personally. As a response, Jesus offers to lead them to 'rest'. This rest will provide refreshment for the soul and training for service in Christ.

4) The promise of the reward for what we have done

Mathew 16:27 – For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done

The way we live our lives shows who and what we believe. Jesus came as a Saviour but he will also come as a Judge. This is emphasized in **Acts 17:31** – For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

Life application: The promises of Jesus offer rest and the capacity to do the impossible. While Jesus has offered this freely, am I willing to respond equally?

Challenge: Make a decision to study out all the promises made by Jesus in the gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. Meditate through them, ask God for a heart of flesh that believes these promises and commit to a life that pleases God.

Week 3

Stay in touch

Day -1.Staying in touch with your heart - Emotions

Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Mark 7:21-23 - For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

It is important to be in touch with & being aware of what's on your hearts because it is the source of your life. The way you respond, your choices, your desires, your actions is all the outcome of what is stored up in your heart.

Heart is the seat of all our emotions & Feelings. It is mainly based on our experience, belief & Upbringing. As human we tend to trust our hearts so much & live by that. That's why it's important for us to be aware of what is stored in our hearts.

Bible says in **Jeremiah 17:9**, the Heart is deceitful above all things & is beyond cure. And No one can understand it.

As your heart is deceitful it is important for you to be sober when it comes to knowing what's in your heart.

In **Mathew 13:1-9** Parable of the Sower the Soil represents the heart.

When you are not in touch with who you are...Seeds are sown in your heart through fellowship but what's in your heart crushes what is sown & hence there is no change in the outcome of your life.

Change begins with getting to know what is in your heart , confessing the same & filling it with the truth comes from God's Word.(Psalm 119:9)

Challenge:

Focus on one area of your life & write down your pattern of handling the same.

1. Behaviour

2. Language
3. Thought process during that Situation.
4. Share it to someone who can help you.

Day -2 Staying in touch with your Mind – thoughts:-

Your thoughts influence your character, shape your attitudes, determine your behaviors, affect your spirituality, and even influence the immune system.

Sinful thoughts are often something we disciples struggle with. Sometimes you have no control as to what thoughts enter your minds. However God's Word's help us to recognize our thoughts for what they really are, and how to act (or not act) upon them. Let's look at few scriptures

2 Corinthians 10; 5 - We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 - I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Paul's conviction was to make every thought captive to obey Christ. For many of us, the thoughts that continually run through our mind are more adversary than ally. Left unchecked, our "thought life" can become our own worst enemy, poisoning us from within. That's why it is important for us to make every thought obedient to Christ.

How can you change your thinking??

As the scripture says it's by renewing your mind. It involves capturing your thoughts & setting it in the light of the scriptures & replacing your thoughts with the God's word.

As campus students it's important to filter what enters your mind. What you see, what you hear, what you read everything plays a major role in your thinking. That is the reason it's necessary to feed your mind with God's word .It starts from having a great bible study.

Challenge -

1. Examine yourself to see what you are feeding your mind with??
2. What are some of the sources that you need to cut off in your life in a way to Guard your mind??Write it down & share with someone else.

Day 3- Staying in touch with your friend– Calling each other higher

Daniel 3:13-27 - Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.” He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.” Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Friendship makes life enjoyable & helps us in our difficult times. Friendships are tested & strengthened by hardships. Such was the relationship between 3 young Jewish men; Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego. They help us think about the real meaning of friendships.

As much as these friends meant to each other they never allow their friendships to disturb God's plan for their lives not even in the face of death.

We can see in the above passage that they were tested by Nebuchadnezzar to defile their God. Their friendship was tested. Imagine this situation, what they would have communicated to each other at this point of time??

A small compromise would have allowed them to live longer & enjoy their lives in the foreign land. But they were wise enough to see that their compromise would have affected their conviction that bonded them so closely – The conviction is their faithfulness to God.

When we take away God from our friendships, we tend to expect those relationships to meet our needs in us that only God can meet. Friends are helpful but they cannot meet our deepest spiritual needs. Leaving God out of our friendships indicates how unimportant he really is in our own lives.

These 3 people shared a very Good friendship that stood the test of Hardship, success, wealth & possible death. There is a great strength in real friendships. It is very important to stand with our friends who share our same convictions.

Challenge

1. Is faithfulness to God more important than your friendships?
2. Who is your Shadrach? Who is your Meshach? Who is your Abednego?

Day 4 - Stay in touch with your Friend – Look out for each other.

I Samuel 18:1-4 - After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

I Samuel 20:4

Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do for you.”

I Samuel 20:6-17

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord Call David’s enemies to account.” And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

If a movie is taken today based on the friendship of David & Jonathan, this will win many Oscars. This is not a movie & this happened in real life.

Jonathan being the King's son was next in line to be the King. But his heart for David the one who was anointed to be the next king was simply amazing.

Some of the statements that described their friendship.

Jonathan loved David as his own Soul.

Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. In fact Jonathan stripped himself of the Kingdom & gave it to David.

I Samuel 20:33

So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

I Samuel 20:41-42 - David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with

one another, David weeping the most. Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, “The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.””

Jonathan inspires all of us to be a Selfless friend who looked out for the well-being of David.

He wanted to make sure that David was safe under his father. When he came to know about his father's evil intentions his heart grieved for him. Truly Jonathan convicts us & he calls us higher.

How is your friendship today?

Do you really care for the well-being of the brothers & Sisters in your spiritual family??

Are you willing to share what you have with those who are in need even when it hurts you?

What sacrifice you will make today to meet someone need in your group?

Day 5. Stay in touch with your Mentor:-

The role of the Mentors in our life can never be underestimated.

Some of you are in fear when you hear the word Discipling. You feel like running away. Some of you don't believe in discipling it all. You feel like it's a man-made thing & You think "I don't need discipling & I am just fine"

But it's important for us to understand the biblical perspective about discipling.

Mathew 28:18-20 - Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The commission given to disciples by Jesus. The role of every disciple is not only to make disciples but also to continuously teach them to obey everything.

That's what discipling is all about. Discipling someone is helping someone to obey everything that Jesus has commanded.

2 Timothy 2:2

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Here Paul tells timothy to appoint few faithful men who will be able to teach others.

Colossians 1:28

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

God calls for us to warn & teach everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Hebrew 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Mentors are overseers for your soul. The call for us is to be a source of Joy for them & not a source of burden

Ephesians 4:16

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Mentors have the responsibility to speak the truth in love to us so that we can grow into the likeness of Christ. Even disciples also could speak the truth in love to their discplers & help them to be Christ like. It Works both way. But we can undermine the importance of discipling in our lives.

1. Are you willing to take help from your Mentors- If not, what is stopping you from do that ??
2. Write down the reasons that stops you from taking help from others & share it to your Mentor.

Day 6: Stay in touch with your Mentor- Paul & Timothy

Acts 16:1-3

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Paul heard the good report about Timothy & he wanted him to accompany him. This was the beginning of the discipling relationship between Paul & Timothy. As a first discipling instruction, he got Timothy to be circumcised which is quite difficult (Lot of pain & it will take a week to heal) after someone is grown up. But Timothy was willing to do that as it could become a stumbling block for him to preach to the Jews. It is inspiring to see how this relationship grows from strength to strength.

Are you willing to obey your mentor's advice for your life & for the welfare of the kingdom??

In **I Corinthians 4:21** Paul calls Timothy as his child .

That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

Paul was confident of Timothy's way of life that he would remind them about Paul's way of life.

In **Romans 16:21** Paul takes it higher. He calls Timothy as his fellow worker.

All these things would not have happened overnight. It happened because Timothy walked with Paul & allowed Paul to disciple him. Let's see below some of the advices that Timothy Received from Paul

1 Timothy 1:18

This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

1 Timothy 5:2

Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

1 Timothy 6:20

Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,”

Questions to consider:-

1. Are you willing to make time in your schedule so that you can be with spiritually matured disciples & learn from them??
2. Are you willing to be disciplined & obey those things even though it is hurtful??

Challenge -

Think about your schedule for a week & See how you can be with matured disciples to learn. Be accountable to someone with your schedule.

Day 7 - Stay in touch with your family

Beloved brothers & Sisters. The family that you have today is given by God. Your father, your mother, your brother, your sister. Everything is given by God & you did not choose them. The family that we are part of is our immediate neighbour whom God commands us to love them.

You might think you love them but the love has to be reflected in your actions. At this age, you love to be independent, you like your own space & in the process you may end up not connecting with your own family members. For some it is easy to connect with your own family for some you are not used to this idea of connecting with your family. In our quiet time today we are going to study about the importance of connecting with your parents.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

The goal of the command is “Honor your father & mother.” And it is the commandment with a promise. Many young people think that their parents need to win their respect. But that’s not true. Irrespective of whether you perceive them as good or bad, the command of the bible is to honour one's parents for which the Lord will bless you to enjoy long life on this earth.

Jesus shared a great bond with his father which is very evident through the scriptures.

John8:49

“I am not possessed by a demon, “said Jesus, “but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.

John10:15

Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

John 12:49

For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.

The willing of Jesus to lay down his life came from bond that Jesus shared with his father.

“He became obedient even to the point of his death” totally reflects the kind of honour that Jesus gave his father.

Challenge -

Write a letter/ express to them how much they mean to you.

Once a week, take some time out to be with them.

Week 4

Discipline of God

Day 1- Discipline is part of love

Hebrews 12:5-8 - And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.

Who loves his child more—the father who allows the child to do what will harm him, or the one who corrects, trains, and even punishes the child to help him learn what is right? It’s never pleasant to be corrected and disciplined by God, but his discipline is a sign of his deep love for us. When God corrects you, see it as proof of his love, and ask him what he is trying to teach you when you go through the various trials of life.

Hebrews 12:9-10 - Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

When we were disciplined by our parents and elders we didn’t like it. However as we grow and mature we realize that was meant for our good. How much more do you think God who created us, who knows our inmost being intends to help us through all the discipline he applies in our life.

Hebrews 12:12-13 - Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

God is not only a disciplining parent but also a coach who inspires us to give our best and helps us to achieve great things and grow stronger through every discipline. Although we may not feel strong enough to push on to victory, we will be able to accomplish it as we follow Christ and draw on his strength. Then we can use our growing strength to help those around us who are weak and struggling.

We must not live with only our own survival in mind. Others will follow our example, and we have a responsibility to them if we are living for Christ, as we claim to be.

Challenge

- Write down at least 3 incidences where God had to discipline you in your life.
- What are some areas of life you have grown in because of discipline?
- How did you feel towards God when you were disciplined? How are you going to feel in future when you will be disciplined?

Day 2 – Discipline is a blessing

Job 5:17-26 - “Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

Usually when we hear the word discipline we tend to see it in a negative way. I personally have struggled to see it in a positive way. But now when I look back in my life some of the greatest transformations of my life happened when I was going through a time of discipline. God had used some of the most difficult situations to teach me some of the most valuable lessons of life.

Psalms 94:10-12 - Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge? The Lord knows all human plans; he knows that they are futile. Blessed is the one you discipline, Lord, the one you teach from your law;

At times, God must discipline us to help us. This is similar to a loving parent disciplining his child. The discipline is not very enjoyable to the child, but it is essential to teach him or her right from wrong. The Bible says that “no discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way” (Hebrews 12:11). When you feel God’s hand of correction, accept it as proof of his love.

Proverbs 3: 11-12 - My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Discipline means “to teach and to train.” Discipline sounds negative to many people because some disciplinarians are not loving. God, however, is the source of all love. He doesn’t punish us because he enjoys inflicting pain but because he is deeply concerned about our development. He knows that in order to become morally strong and good, we must learn the difference between right and wrong. His loving discipline enables us to do that.

It’s difficult to know when God has been disciplining us until we look back on the situation later. Not every calamity comes directly from God, of course. But if we rebel against God and refuse to repent when God has identified some sin in our lives, he may use guilt, crises, or bad experiences to bring us back to him. Sometimes, however,

difficult times come even when we have no flagrant sin. Then our response should be patience, integrity, and confidence that God will show us what to do.

Proverbs 12:1 - Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.

If you don't want to learn, years of schooling will teach you very little. But if you want to be taught, there is no end to what you can learn. This includes being willing to accept discipline and correction and to learn from the wisdom of others. A person who refuses constructive criticism has a problem with pride. Such a person is unlikely to learn very much.

Challenge

- What has been your view of discipline so far? How should it be according to The Bible?
- Why would God, though he is the Creator of the universe be interested in disciplining us?
- Ask God to help you have a moldable heart, and make a decision to see discipline as in a positive way

Day 3 – Don't try to run away

Proverbs 5: 11-14 - At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, “How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors. And I was soon in serious trouble in the Assembly of God's people.”

There are two ways we can learn in life. One is by making a mistake, and the other is by listening from those who have already made those mistakes. We don't have to repeat the mistakes that has already been made. God has put enough people in our life to help us not to make the mistakes they have made. We just need to listen to their advice and trust them.

1 Peter 1:6-7 - In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

We all go through various trials in our life. But how we come out of it defines what we are made of. When we go through a time of discipline we can either be grumpy and frustrated or blame people and God for our situation or we can decide to stay strong and trust God. And believe that once this is over I am going to be better then what I was yesterday. There is a saying which always inspired me, “when the going gets tough, the tough gets going.”

Hebrews 12:2-3 - fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

No one wants to be in a team that is going to lose. The good news is that we are in the team of Jesus. And he has already won the battle. We just have to persevere. Let no one take away the reward that is in store for you. Stay strong in this battle and let God discipline you when he wants you to be more like Christ.

Challenge

- Pray and commit to God that you will not run away when things get tough
- Make a commitment with two of your best friends in Christ that you will never ever give up on your Christian life and when it gets challenging you will be there to help each other

Day 4 – Self - Discipline

2 Timothy 1:7 - For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

God wants us to discipline ourselves. We need a plan to help ourselves. If you are thinking that one fine day things will start changing then it's never going to happen. The only thing that grows by itself are weeds. However we are called to bear fruits for our creator. The scripture makes it clear that God believe in us and expects us to apply discipline in our lives.

Ephesians 5:15-17 - Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

An empty mind is devil's workshop. If you don't plan out your life then the Devil will always be there to help you. We need to see how we are living our lives daily. If we are not prepared with plans for each day, there is a great chance we will end up struggling with many temptations. We must use every opportunity to live for God.

Matthew 26:41 - "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

One of the best way to apply self-discipline is to start every day by praying about all the things you will be doing today. If you can watch or see ahead what is coming and you pray about it you will be prepared to face it.

Challenge

- Make a habit of having a schedule for the day and in the morning pray through it.

Day 5 – Discipline helps us to come close to God

Jeremiah 17:21-25 - This is what the Lord says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. ²² Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors. ²³ Yet they did not listen or pay attention; they were stiff-necked and would not listen or respond to discipline.

The people were working on the Sabbath, their day of rest (Exodus 20:8-11). Instead of entering the gates of the city on their way to worship, they continued the hustle and bustle of business like any other day. They considered making money more important than keeping God's law. God always intended to use discipline to help his people.

Jeremiah 31:18 - "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God.'

These words picture grief and mourning. Although Israel, the northern kingdom, had sunk into the most degrading sins, God still loved the people. A remnant would turn to God by repenting of their sins, and God would forgive. God still loves you despite anything you may have done. He will forgive you if you turn back to him.

Jeremiah 46:28 - Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant, for I am with you," declares the Lord. "Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished."

God punished his people in order to bring them back to himself, and he punishes us to correct and purify us. No one welcomes punishment, but we should all welcome its results: correction and purity. What is stopping you from giving your full attention to God?

Challenge

- What do you give priority for in your life? (Academics, selfishness, self-glory, being competitive or God)
- Write down the things that takes priority over God in your life and share it with a disciple who can help you overcome

Day 6 – Disciplined life of Jesus

Mark 1:35 - Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

I believe many of us must be familiar with this passage about Jesus getting up early in the morning to pray. However what convicts me even more is when I read the previous passage (**Vs. 29-34**) Jesus was a very busy man. It seems that his day use to end very late several times and yet he did not compromise on his time with God. He knew when and where he can pray without being disturbed and distracted.

Mark 1:36-38 - Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”

Being disciplined involves knowing your priorities. For Jesus his time with God was his priority. And his mission to seek and save the lost was his focus. Though he performed many miracles and healed many from their sicknesses he never lost his focus.

Mark 3:7 Vs 13·Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him

Jesus was leading a group of disciples. He knew that he had to make time if he wants to accomplish something with the group he was leading. Not just in the above passage but many times in The Bible Jesus had to withdraw from the crowd. He had to go away from his daily routine. Take some time out for what was more important. And the results were breath-taking. The group he led turned the world upside down(Acts17:6).

Challenge

- If you have to write down one thing that is the most important thing for you every day, what would that be?
- Do you take time out from your routine to do things that will make a big impact in your life?
- Go to a new place this week to pray with someone

Day 7 – Discipline that bears fruit

Hebrews 12:11 - No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

One of the things that we all need to focus on is why do we do what we do. If discipline is applied properly in different areas of our life it can bear fruit that will last. However that will require fight and denying yourself on a regular basis. We all are great men and women in making if we allow God to work

1 Timothy 4:16 - Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Keeping a check on the way we live especially when we are not in the company of other disciples is very important. It's easy to fall when we are in the world and when we are faced with peer pressure. However that is our true test of character. How we persevere in those trials will bear fruit not just in our life but in the life of those who are watching us and can be saved through us.

John 12:24 - Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

While we all have our sinful nature and our natural tendency might be to choose the easy way out God intends us to be the seeds of future glory. And that will happen when we make the choices to die to our sinful nature on daily basis. That is where our character is developing. That is when Christ will shine through us.

Challenge

- What is one area of life where you have not been finding victory for a while
- Talk to your mentor and make a bold decision to find victory in your weakness. Ask God to help you as you work on this.