

THE
GOSPEL
PROJECT[®]

All Things New

Daily Discipleship Guide

SUMMER 2021 | VOL. 12 | CSB



God's Word to You



The Good News That Awaits Us

“And they all lived happily ever after.”

This is the coda, the postscript that punctuates the tales of our childhoods. The prince is victorious. The dragon is defeated. The princess is rescued. The struggle is over. The battle is won. And finally, “they all lived happily ever after.”

The Bible has its coda as well. But unlike the happily-ever-afters of fairy tales, this is one of expectation—not for the end to come but for the next chapter to be written. A promise summarized in three words: “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20). This is the promise the entire story of Scripture builds toward. It is the deepest longing of the heart of God’s people. The first man and woman longed for the coming of the Son, the One whose heel would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Abraham longed for the promised Offspring through whom all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3,7). David longed to see his Lord, the Son who would sit on the throne of an unfading kingdom (Ps. 110:1). God’s people in exile and return longed for the coming of the Servant who would restore them (Isa. 49:6-7).

Then the long-expected One came—Jesus, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the Son of Eve, the Son of God—bringing redemption and peace with God by humbling Himself to the point of death and then being exalted in His resurrection (Phil. 2:8-11).

News of the reconciliation Jesus offered spread throughout the world. People of every tribe and tongue and nation believed and trusted Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. And as this good news continued to spread, the promise spread with it—the promise that tells of the day when Jesus returns to make all things new. When every tear will be wiped from every eye. When suffering, sadness, and death will be no more. In their place will be joy, gladness, and life everlasting as God dwells with His people forevermore.

But for now, we wait. And as we do, we join with our brothers and sisters across the centuries as we long for that day to come, echoing these words: “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!”

Suggested for
the week of

Unit 34: Paul in Prison (Acts; Epistles)

June 6	11	Session 1	Persevering in the Mission (<i>Acts 18–21</i>)
June 13	20	Session 2	Continuing Through Opposition (<i>Acts 21–23</i>)
June 20	29	Session 3	Breaking Down Barriers (<i>Ephesians</i>)
June 27	38	Session 4	Pressing Toward the Goal (<i>Philippians</i>)

Unit 35: Facing Adversity (Acts; Epistles)

July 4	48	Session 1	Preaching in All Circumstances (<i>Acts 24–26</i>)
July 11	57	Session 2	Clinging to the Promises of God (<i>Acts 27–28</i>)
July 18	66	Session 3	Living in Grace (<i>Philemon</i>)
July 25	75	Session 4	Obedying from Love (<i>1 John</i>)
August 1	84	Session 5	Defending the Faith (<i>Jude</i>)

Unit 36: Jesus Will Come Again (Revelation)

August 8	94	Session 1	The Redeemer Reveals His Glory (<i>Revelation 1</i>)
August 15	103	Session 2	The Redeemer Calls His People Toward Renewal (<i>Revelation 2–3</i>)
August 22	112	Session 3	The Redeemer Is Worshiped (<i>Revelation 4–5</i>)
August 29	121	Session 4	The Redeemer Returns (<i>Revelation 19–22</i>)

The Gospel Project®

Adult Daily Discipleship Guide CSB
Volume 9, Number 4 Summer 2021

Ed Stetzer

Founding Editor

Trevin Wax

General Editor

Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor

Daniel Davis

Content Editor

Josh Hayes

Content and Production Editor

Ken Braddy

Director of Sunday School

Brandon Hiltibidal

Director, Adult Ministry

Send questions/comments to:

Content Editor by email to daniel.davis@lifeway.com or mail to Content Editor, *The Gospel Project: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide*, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0175; or make comments on the Web at lifeway.com.

Printed in the United States of America

The Gospel Project®: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide CSB (ISSN 2162-7207; Item 005461524) is published quarterly by LifeWay Christian Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2021 LifeWay Christian Resources.

For ordering or inquiries, visit lifeway.com, or write LifeWay Resources Customer Service, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113. For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, email orderentry@lifeway.com, fax 615.251.5933, or write to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.



Trevin Wax

General Editor—*The Gospel Project*

AUTHOR OF MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING
*Rethink Your Self: The Power of Looking Up
Before Looking In*

Our chronological journey through the Bible is now coming to a close. As we arrive at the end of the New Testament, we come full circle to the truths that opened the story of the Bible at the very beginning—God's people in God's world under God's gracious rule. But this time, the end turns out to be even better than the beginning. God's people know His grace and mercy in ways that, apart from redemption through Christ, they never would have experienced. Redemption and full restoration—this is the great hope of the Christian.

In this volume, you will see the endurance and perseverance of the apostle Paul, whose courage and grace was evident in his life and in his letters. You'll also hear from other apostles whose writings inspired the early church and informed them of key Christian truths that must be defended and passed down to each generation. In the end, you'll encounter the stunning portrait of Jesus we find in Revelation, a book that lifts high the name of Jesus and points us to the glorious future that awaits.

Resurrection hope is not passive. It's active in its waiting. It's moving forward on mission with our King, knowing that our labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). Our prayer is that this volume of *The Gospel Project* will help you along in your journey of trusting Jesus, hoping for His return, and loving God and neighbor as He commands. Along with John, the author of Revelation, we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!"



Jonathan Hayashi (unit 34, sessions 3-4; unit 35, session 3) is the content editor for *Metanoia*. He has written for a number of publications and is an author and editor of several books. He received his DEdMin from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jonathan lives with his wife and his three children in a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri, and is the Senior Pastor at Northern Hills Baptist Church.



D. A. Horton (unit 34, sessions 1-2; unit 35, sessions 1-2) is an Assistant Professor at California Baptist University, where he also serves as Program Director of Intercultural Studies. He also serves as an Associate Teaching Pastor at The Grove Community Church in Riverside, California. He is finishing his PhD in Applied Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Elicia, have been married for seventeen years and have three children.



Cas Monaco (unit 35, sessions 4-5) is Cru Executive Director for Gospel in Culture. She has written articles on evangelism and missiology and has authored a number of Bible studies. She holds a PhD in Applied Theology and North American Missiology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Cas lives with her husband, Bob, in North Carolina.



Trevin Wax (unit 36, sessions 1-4) is senior vice president for Theology and Communications at LifeWay Christian Resources and general editor of *The Gospel Project*. He is the author of multiple books, including *Rethink Your Self: The Power of Looking Up Before Looking In* and *Gospel-Centered Teaching: Showing Christ in All the Scripture*. Trevin received his PhD from Southeastern Seminary and lives with his wife and three children in middle Tennessee.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

A Journey Through the Storyline of Scripture

Fall 2018

In the Beginning

Creation and the Fall (Genesis; Job)
God Establishes a Covenant People (Genesis)
God Grows His Covenant People (Genesis)



Winter 2018-19

Out of Egypt

God Redeems His People (Genesis; Exodus)
God Provides for His People (Exodus)
God Receives Worship from His People (Ex.; Lev.)



Spring 2019

Into the Promised Land

God Guides His People (Num.; Deut.)
God Gives His People a Home (Joshua)
God Delivers His People (Judges; Ruth)



Summer 2019

A Kingdom Provided

God Provides a King (1 Samuel)
God Provides a Godly King (1-2 Sam.; Psalms)
God Provides a Wise King (1 Kings; Eccl.)



Fall 2019

A Nation Divided

God Speaks to His People (1-2 Kings)
God Judges the Sin of His People (2 Kings; Prophets)
God Shows Mercy to His People (2 Chron.; Prophets)



Winter 2019-20

A People Restored

God Sustains His People (Daniel)
God Restores His People (Ezra; Prophets)
God Prepares His People (Neh.; Esth.; Mal.)



Spring 2020

Jesus the Messiah

Jesus Comes into the World (Luke)
Jesus Begins His Ministry (Gospels)
Jesus Among the People (Gospels)



Summer 2020

Jesus the Servant

Jesus the Healer (Gospels)
Jesus the Teacher (Gospels)
Jesus the Miracle-Worker (Gospels)



Fall 2020

Jesus the Savior

Jesus and the Kingdom (Gospels)
Jesus the Savior (Gospels)
Jesus the Risen King (Gospels)



Winter 2020-21

The Mission Begins

The Holy Spirit Comes (Acts; Epistles)
Fundamentals of the Faith (Acts; Epistles)
New Life in Christ (Acts; Epistles)



Spring 2021

The Church United

Living Like Jesus (Acts; Hebrews)
The Sent Church (Acts; Epistles)
Don't Forget (Acts; Epistles)



Summer 2021

All Things New

Paul in Prison (Acts; Epistles)
Facing Adversity (Acts; Epistles)
Jesus Will Come Again (Revelation)



Daily Study

Day 1: Read Ephesians 1:3-23

After a brief greeting, Paul praised God for all He accomplished through Christ for our redemption and restoration (vs. 3-6). Paul thanked God for the believer's assurance in faith in Christ. By His glorious grace, people chosen from before the foundation of the world have come together at the presence of His glory in Christ (vs. 6:12-14). He acknowledged the Ephesian believers are grounded in God's grace by evidence of their faith, love, and hope through the gospel.

Prayer and worship is a byproduct of receiving wonderful things from God. Praise and adoration are made of God's grace on sinners, and for that reason, they ought to be a natural part of a believer's walk with Christ. God's grace awakens a song of adoration in those around whom God has shown unmerited favor through the forgiveness granted in the blood of Christ.

Finally, after thinking and praising God for what He has done, Paul opened in a form of prayer (vs. 17-23). He prayed that these believers would be full of spiritual wisdom and spiritual strength. He prayed that the hope of the gospel in Christ would enable the believers to walk with patience and joyful thanksgiving in the days to come.

How can Paul's prayer inform the way that you pray?

Day 2: Read Ephesians 2:1-3

The readers of Ephesians are reminded in these verses of their relationship to God before their conversion. Indeed, apart from Christ, every person on earth is spiritually dead and lost to mercy and sin. But what does it mean that we were "spiritually dead"? People are separated and alienated from God because of sin. Because, apart from Christ, we live in this spiritually alienated condition, we follow the way of the world by default (vs. 2).

People live naturally according to their value system. Satan, who is called "the ruler of the power of the air," also plays a role. Under his influence, we are doubtfully and rebel against God—if we needed any help. As a result, we see objects and recipients of God's work (vs. 3).

Like everyone outside of Christ, we were under God's wrath waiting to receive divine judgment at the end of this age. Without God's redeeming grace, there would be no escaping this judgment of destruction. We would be hopeless. But God...

What areas of your life are most keeping you from wholly living for Christ?

Day 3: Read Ephesians 2:4-10

Aren't you glad the truth doesn't end at verse 3? Against this bleak backdrop of absolute hopelessness apart from Christ, Paul proclaimed the glorious news of God bringing His love, mercy, and grace upon sinners in Christ. His mercy restores His wrath because of His great love for us (vs. 4).

God is His great mercy has made His people alive together with Christ (vs. 5). The Holy Spirit graciously made them partakers of Christ's victory through no merit of their own. All in Christ means someone is raised with Christ to experience resurrection power in the spiritual realm—God has "sealed us with His own promise in Christ Jesus" (vs. 6). Why? Because of His rich mercy, God has provided salvation that is to be secured by grace through faith (vs. 8). This salvation is to be our great work done by Christ's work alone on the cross so that no one may boast and claim the credit.

Why can we never overemphasize the role of God's grace toward us in our salvation?

34

Daily Discipleship Guide

Unit 24, Session 3

35

3

During the week following the session, use the five **Daily Study** devotions to build on the foundation laid during the "Group Time." These devotions will help you get into God's Word for yourself and take initiative in your own discipleship. Read the Scriptures, respond to the questions, and grow in the faith.

Day 4: Read Ephesians 2:21-3:21

Because of Christ, the church is made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers who have borne witness to the heavenly realm of the wisdom of God's eternal plan (3:10). Jesus has broken down the barrier and removed the division between Jew and Gentile believers as none considered one more man in Christ (2:15).

This is the church, a community elected for eternal unity to love, fellow, learn, and worship God together. Through the gospel—through the grace of Jesus—one who only an human being reconciled to God has also to one another. The gospel breaks down barriers and unites those who have remained in Jesus for salvation. Jesus has reconciled all who believe in Him into one body.

Because we have been joined together as one church in Christ, we work at restoring our bodies inside the church that divide God's people so well to outside the church that hinder the gospel's advancement.

What do your actions communicate about the unity believers share together in Christ?

Day 5: Read Ephesians 4:1-6:24

The heart of the second half of Paul's letter is a practical description of growth in the Christian life. The second half is all about application, namely, showing how doctrine translates into the conduct of believers. Because of Christ's great work, God's people now can experience common unity with the diversity of the body (4:6). But if the Ephesian believers could have this peace, Paul commanded them to set their minds on things above and put to death the things of this world (4:7-8).

Believers are not capable of these actions on their own but require the work of God. As a result, Christians should be marked by thankfulness. As Christians grow in spiritual maturity, their is accomplished to love their time. Paul begins with the marriage of husband and wife, which is the central relationship in society (5:22-33). He then moved outward from these personal and core on-discernment relationships (6:1-3). Paul then concluded his letter by encouraging the believers to have a Christ-centered life in battling against the principalities and powers of the present age (6:9-20).

What is one step you can take today to have a more Christlike relationship with your spouse, children, friends, or coworkers?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- United in Sin (Eph. 2:1-3)
- United in Christ (Eph. 2:4-10)
- United in One Church (Eph. 2:14-16)

How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

Why should we naturally feel a commonality with fellow sinners and especially one with fellow Christians?

When have you seen or experienced reconciliation within the body of Christ?

Notes

36

Daily Discipleship Guide

Unit 24, Session 3

37

4

Finally, **Encourage One Another** provides a brief guide for small groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. Meet up with a group once a week for fellowship, encouragement in the faith, and mutual accountability.

Unit 34

Paul in Prison

Acts; Epistles

Memory Verses

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!”

—EPHESIANS 2:4-5

Persevering in the Mission

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: God calls His people to fulfill their mission of faithfully preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: Acts 18:23–21:14

“I just want to know God accepts me even though He knows all the wrong I’ve done in my life.” A young man shared this with me as we were having a conversation. God had led our paths to intersect, and I had the joy of sharing with him what Jesus had done to make sinners both accepted and eternally welcomed in God’s family, in short, the gospel.

Then I asked him if he wanted to make a profession of faith: confessing his sinfulness, his inability to pay off his sin debt, and his faith that the work Jesus did in His crucifixion and resurrection was all that God required for him to never face God’s wrath. I informed him that the moment we trust in Jesus, not only does God declare us eternally “not guilty” for our sins but we receive credit for Jesus’ perfect life, His righteousness covering us throughout eternity. From the moment he embraced Jesus, God the Father accepted him, has forgiven him, and eternally adopted him into His family.



How has God planned your steps so that you have had opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus?

Group Time

Point 1: Preach the message of the gospel with clarity (Acts 19:1-7).

¹ While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples ² and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” “No,” they told him, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

³ “Into what then were you baptized?” he asked them. “Into John’s baptism,” they replied.

⁴ Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus.”

⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy. ⁷ Now there were about twelve men in all.

John the Baptist had a localized ministry in the wilderness south of Jerusalem around the Jordan River. So it’s amazing to see the reach of his message outside of Israel and Palestine as far away as the Gentile city of Ephesus. These disciples of John the Baptist had encountered his baptism of repentance, but they were not yet followers of Jesus. They needed someone to fill in the gaps regarding John’s ministry and how it pointed to Jesus being the Messiah for whom John was the forerunner. The Lord led Paul into their path with this good news.



What are some things people may base their hope of salvation on other than the gospel of Jesus?

Having heard the gospel clearly and now with knowledge of and faith in Jesus, these disciples of John were baptized into Jesus’ name, exactly as John the Baptist would have wanted. But Paul didn’t stop there. He then laid hands on these new believers and the Holy Spirit came upon them, just as Jesus promised. Through faith in Jesus, every believer receives the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit, who is God’s guarantee that we will be with God forever (2 Cor. 1:20-22; 5:1-5; Eph. 1:13-14).

Personality of the Holy Spirit: The Bible not only affirms the full

_____ of the Holy Spirit but also His _____.

Point 2: Persevere in the work of the gospel (Acts 19:8-10).

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three months, arguing and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some became hardened and would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew from them, taking the disciples, and conducted discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

Paul's gospel ministry in Ephesus demonstrated perseverance on a number of levels. One, this was Paul's second time to visit Ephesus (Acts 18:19). He made a stop in this city as his second missionary journey was winding down and promised to come back, if the Lord willed it so (18:21). Two, on his third missionary journey, Paul did return and remained in Ephesus over two years preaching and teaching the gospel and making disciples of Jesus (20:31). Three, even though Paul experienced opposition, he continued to share the gospel, beginning with the Jews and then reaching out to the Gentiles.



What are some ways believers can demonstrate perseverance in the work of the gospel?

Another aspect of perseverance is being faithful to the message and implications of the gospel. Paul used Ephesus as a home base for reaching out to all the inhabitants of the region of Asia (modern-day Turkey), and all heard “the word of the Lord”—the gospel of Jesus. Furthermore, Paul committed himself to teaching and training the disciples under his care. He did this in person and he did it through his letters. His Letter to the Ephesians, for example, gives us insight into how the gospel shapes those who persevere in it.



What are some specific examples you have witnessed of believers persevering in the work of the gospel?

Voices from the Church

“If we want to know how we can see cities changed and wonder how the affections of idolaters can be changed, we need to preach the Word of Christ. Doing so is key ... Just keep explaining and applying it—in small groups, in large groups, one-on-one, in lecture halls, in homes, under a tree in Ethiopia, or anywhere else. For hearing it really does ‘renew one’s life’ (Ps. 19:7).”¹

—Tony Merida

Point 3: Pursue transformation through the power of the gospel (Acts 19:18-20).

¹⁸ And many who had become believers came confessing and disclosing their practices, ¹⁹ while many of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them in front of everyone. So they calculated their value and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread and prevailed.

The Ephesians who embraced Jesus made life-altering decisions, beginning with confessing their sins to one another. For some, this included the practice of magic, a normal part of life in Ephesus and big business. Yet people were choosing to leave that life behind and follow Jesus in obedience. When we embrace Jesus by faith, we receive a new identity—no longer are we slaves to the sin that once defined us; now we are saints with a new master, Jesus, who loves us.

Through the power of God on display in miracles and especially through the powerful “word of the Lord,” people in Ephesus acknowledged Jesus’ authority to rule over their lives, and this included His authority to make renovations in their hearts. From the moment one believes in Jesus for salvation, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, begins a progressive process of renovating us from the inside out. We call this work *sanctification*. And just as the Word of God brings us to the place of salvation by faith, it is the primary tool of God for shaping our hearts according to His (Heb. 4:12).

New Identity of the Believer: When a person places faith in Christ, that person undergoes a fundamental _____ of identity. Anyone who is in Christ is a “new creation” in whom the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive and _____, becoming more and more like _____.



What are some ways believers can pursue transformation in their lives?

My Mission

Because Christ endured rejection, suffering, and death to bring about our salvation, we persevere in sharing the gospel with others while hoping that they too will trust in Jesus and experience transformation.

- **How will you pursue transformation through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ?**
- **What are some ways your group needs to pray for and encourage one another, specifically for the purpose of perseverance in sharing the gospel?**
- **With whom will you share the good news that Jesus is the Savior we all need to be saved from our sins?**

Voices from the Church

“Presenting the gospel in new and pioneering ways is in keeping with the New Testament model; concealing the gospel to keep from offending our hearers is not. Taking the pragmatic approach to doing ministry is human-centered and reveals a lack of confidence in the sufficiency of preaching the Word of God.”²

—James T. Draper Jr.
and Kenneth Keathley

Notes


Daily Study

Day 1: Read Acts 18:23-28

In this text we see Paul beginning his third missionary journey. His heart was always to provide encouragement to the disciples in every city he had visited previously. May we too consider how we can check in on the body of Christ.

How can we encourage believers if they're struggling in their walk? How can we support them with the ministry of prayer? Maybe we could send them a gift, a letter, or an email to build them up somehow and let them know God is the One who impressed it upon our hearts to serve them in this way. After all, God is the One who gives every good and perfectly timed gift (Jas. 1:17). The practice of continued oversight and accountability with fellow believers in our churches is not a formality or extracurricular activity but an essential component of Christian disciple-making.

We see an example of this love and care from Priscilla and Aquila, who took a young disciple under their wing to teach and train him so he could more accurately proclaim the truth of the gospel. Who might you disciple today?

 Why should we see following up with people's progress as disciples as a necessary component of ministry?



Voices from Church History

"For John's doctrine and Christ's was all one. For as Christ commands the apostles to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name, so we read that John moved his hearers to repentance and showed them that the grace of God and salvation was to be had in Christ only."³

—Rudolf Gwalther (1519-1586)

Day 2: Read Acts 19:1-7

As Paul entered Ephesus, he encountered disciples of John the Baptist who had never heard of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul knew they had not heard of the life and work, death and resurrection of Jesus, and he was able to discern which direction the conversation needed to move in order to make Jesus known.

Notice how Paul did not tear down the disciples because of their lack of knowledge about Jesus. Rather, he lovingly exposed them to Jesus' story by building upon what knowledge they had learned from John the Baptist. In a similar way, we must remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading when we speak with people who may have a view of God that is devoid of true knowledge of Jesus. We should refrain from tearing them down and pursue a sincere conversation while attempting to build on what knowledge they have while directing them to Jesus.



What opportunities might you have this week to turn conversations toward the gospel of Jesus?

Day 3: Read Acts 19:8-17

God used Paul in mighty ways in Ephesus. Miracles happened. The sick were healed and evil spirits were cast out. God's movement through Paul even caught the attention of men who tried to imitate his work and called out in Jesus' name. The evil spirit that these men, the seven sons of Sceva, tried to cast out stated that it knew Jesus and Paul but not these men. Thus, their plan backfired as they were overtaken and fled the house wounded and naked. Yet in the midst of this, the name of Jesus was revered by the people of the city.

Paul wrote much about spiritual warfare, and specifically to the Ephesians. In Ephesians 6:10-18, we read about how we're in a spiritual war, and we can't assume we're going to win any battle without being fully clothed in the armor God has provided us. That armor is not assembled by paying lip service to the name of Jesus; we put it on daily through a real faith relationship with our Savior. Then the demons may know our names, but more so, they will fear the One whose righteousness covers us.



What habits can you adopt to help you be more conscious of the reality that we live on a spiritual battlefield?

Day 4: Read Acts 19:18-41

Faithful gospel preaching is often met with opposition from the world. That opposition may be passive-aggressive, or it could be blatant and in our face. It's helpful to read the Scriptures to see how people responded to the persecution they faced. We should also pay attention to Jesus' instructions in this matter. In Matthew 5:10-12, Jesus said:

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

We can also glean insight and encouragement from how Paul continued to preach Jesus all the while facing persecution. Paul persevered in times of persecution because he knew Jesus and His reward was worth enduring for.



Does the way you handle hardship or the way you respond to being slighted because of your faith reflect that Jesus is worthy? Why or why not?

Day 5: Read Acts 20:1–21:14

This extended passage covers the remainder of Paul's third missionary journey. Paul traveled from Ephesus to Macedonia, accompanied by those willing to endure persecution with him (20:1-6). We then read of Paul persevering at length to preach the gospel well into the night and raising Eutychus from the dead in Troas (20:7-12). Next Paul traveled from Troas to Miletus (20:13-16), had a heartfelt conversation with the Ephesian elders (20:17-38), departed for Tyre (21:1-6), and sailed for Jerusalem, even after being warned by a prophet about his impending arrest in Jerusalem (21:7-14).

What a blessing it is to see how Luke recorded all of this information and how God preserved it for us to read during our lifetimes. Each leg of the trip was recorded in this historic itinerary. Luke, an eyewitness companion, gave firsthand insights to all that was going on. Notice in Acts 20:4 and following the shift in pronouns from "he" to "we" and "him" to "us." This helps us understand how the Bible can and should be trusted.



What are some ways God has directed you throughout your life so that you have grown in your faith and been able to share it with others?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- Preach the message of the gospel with clarity (Acts 19:1-7).
- Persevere in the work of the gospel (Acts 19:8-10).
- Pursue transformation through the power of the gospel (Acts 19:18-20).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



What are some ways people might have only a partial knowledge of the gospel in our culture?



How have you been moved to repentance recently?

Notes
