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## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had something that so plagued your mind that you lost sleep? They can come in all forms... thoughts running rampant; anxiety holding you captive; questions hindering rest.

We all have questions that can keep us up at night. They are unwanted but are undoubtedly true. These questions should drive us to answers. This study guide is meant to help us consider biblical answers to some of these deep hearted questions.

The Crossroads Teaching Team hopes and trusts you will be blessed as you lean in and ponder what God's Word says about these questions.

## WEEK 1

## AWAKENING TO LONGING: THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE

"You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

- Psalm 16:11

#### INTRODUCTION

Imagine you and I go on a jog together. We finish our jog, and you are thirsty. I see you eyeing a puddle in the parking lot. Weird, I know. So, I tell you that I have an extra water bottle in my car. But before I can get the door open, you're already on your hands and knees sipping up water from the contaminated puddle (one of those puddles that looks like a rainbow because of all the oil in it).

What is my thought? "Wow, that may be the sickest thing I have ever seen; not only that, but it is also the stupidest!" "There is a water bottle you could have drunk from!"

This is, in contemporary terms, what Jeremiah the prophet says people often do. People often forsake God, the spring of living water—the One who alone satisfies and brings salvation—and dig their own wells, broken wells that cannot hold water (Jeremiah 2:13). People forsake God the creator of all good and turn to worthless idols—things that won't fulfill or deliver. People sadly go after worthlessness and thus become worthless (Jeremiah 2:5).

When we seek ultimate satisfaction and life in anything other than God, it won't fulfill or deliver. We will instead be left thirsty and even sick. God, as Augustine said, has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.

In Jeremiah's day, to hew out a cistern could involve cutting into rock to form a cavity where water would collect. What is wrong with this? Surely, we need water. Yes, but this "water" has been abundantly provided, "a fountain of living water."

Further, in turning from the true source of life, we have turned to that which is broken. A broken cistern can only contain stagnant water, likely mosquito larvae and other sick and destructive things. This water would be good for absolutely nothing. Yet, when we hew out broken cisterns and forsake the LORD the true source, that's the only option we have. The only source left is so-called water that will never satisfy.

What we need is the fountain of *living* water. We must realize what can quench our thirst. We may not realize it, but as the deer pants for flowing streams, so pants our soul for God. Our souls thirst for God, for the living God (Psalm 42:1-2).

Blaise Pascal, the mathematician and Christian philosopher, said that our infinite emptiness can only be filled by an infinite object, that is, only by God Himself. Even secular culture recognizes that we have a desire for more. See, for example, the Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," Bruce Springsteen's "Hungry Heart," and U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I Am Looking For."

We're all seeking satisfaction. We're all pursuing purpose. What is the *more* that the Bible calls us to? That's what we'll be looking at this week.

## **DAILY STUDY**

## **○ MONDAY**

Read: Ecclesiastes 3:11

## **Reflection Questions**

- Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "God has placed eternity in our heats." A lot of commentators believe that this verse means that humans naturally desire more than what this broken world can fulfill. Have you experienced a type of desire for more? A feeling of dissatisfaction? When? Why? What explains that feeling?
- God created us to be in relationship with Him and other humans made in His image. When God created the first humans, they were in a garden paradise with Him. We, however, are no longer in that state. How does the story of humanity's fall into sin help explain our struggle with satisfaction?

## **○ TUESDAY**

Read: John 4

## **Reflection Questions**

- What do you think the woman at the well was seeking to find satisfaction and purpose in? How do you think that worked out for her?
- What does Jesus offer the woman at the well?
- What are some created things that you are trusting for hope, happiness, significance, and security?

## ○ WEDNESDAY

Read: Psalm 16

#### **Reflection Questions**

- What people, possessions, or activities vie for your affection and would replace God as first place in your life if you let them?
- Who is God and how has He shown that He is enough to fulfill you and give you abundant life?
- In what ways is it an encouragement to you when you remember that God is the giver of every good gift (James 1:17)?

## **○ THURSDAY**

Read: Psalm 21:6; 31:19

#### **Reflection Questions**

- What's one of the best presents you've been given? What do you think about God storing up goodness for you? What do you think some of the "goodness" is?
- What is a blessing in your life that you can thank God for? What do you think "unending blessings" would be like?
- Why does God's presence bring joy?

## ○ FRIDAY

Read: Proverbs 12:28; Psalm 42

## **Reflection Questions**

 Do you typically think of God's commands as being good and life-giving?

- How have God's commands—"the path of righteousness"—been beneficial and life-giving to you?
- Can you relate to the Psalm 42 where it talks about panting and thirsting for God?
- What are some of the problems of placing our ultimate hope in anything other than God?

# AWAKENING TO REGRET: I WISH I COULD START OVER

"Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." - *Philippians 3:13-14* 

#### INTRODUCTION

Regret can come about for a lot of reasons. The word *regret* means "sorrow or remorse for a fault or an act." There are certainly reasons and times to feel regret, but we should not wallow in regret. Non-sinful forms of regret (like a wrong decision) can lead to lament. Lament is essentially laying out our loss to the LORD. It's taking our cries, complaints, and cares to Him.

When regret leads us to the Lord or to repentance it can be a good thing. Though, it still should not be an all-consuming thing. Regret, however, is often more like worldly repentance, than godly repentance (see 2 Cor. 7). There's a sense of loss, but not the will to change. Regret, like worldly repentance, often has sadness without the solid resolve to change. Whereas real repentance leads to life change and life, simple regret is not lifegiving (2 Cor. 7:10); it's without hope and therefore deadly. Regret doesn't take the transforming message and good news of Jesus into account.

Repentance is a biblical word and learning is a biblical word... Like learning from the wrong we've done and changing. Scripture calls us to repentance when we've done wrong. Not mere regret.

If there was someone who you think would be lost in hopeless regret, it would be the apostle Paul and, come to think of it, the apostle Peter too. Paul persecuted Jesus, and Peter denied Him—three times. Talk about regret. They didn't just ruin their life, they turned their backs on the Author of life (Acts 3:15). Wow.

Yet, this is what Paul says: he forgets what lies behind him and strains forward to what lies ahead. He presses on toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:13-14). And Peter reminds us that through Christ Jesus, we have been cleansed from our former sins (2 Peter 1:9). So, regret turned into repentance, and repentance turned into rest in Jesus and resolve to live and die for Him.

Both Peter and Paul, and you and me, have things that we regret. Yet, Jesus cleanses and recreates. If we trust in Him and repent of our sin, He makes us new. Acts 3:19 says, Repent, turn back, "that your sins may be blotted out."

So, scripture calls us to repent—change our ways by the empowering grace of God—and not wallow in regret.

The Bible does relate that there are consequences for sin. Yet, it also tells us we can start over. Jesus makes us new. When we sow seeds to the flesh, what grows up is fruits of death—enmity, anger, and animosity. Whereas when we sow seeds to the Spirit, we get the fruits of life and righteousness—peace with God and relational prosperity.

Regret looks inward, into self, and tries to find resources there. That perspective is fruitless and flawed. There is not help enough there. Repentance, on the other hand, looks outward and upward for help from Christ the Creator and Recreator. He—as the Boss of the universe—has resources to help us with our deepest and darkest regrets.

## **DAILY STUDY**

#### **○ MONDAY**

Think of three regrets in your own life. List them out. Now we're going to categorize them and consider how you should respond to them. Here are three categories of regrets:

- Sinful: what you regret was flatly wrong (e.g., stealing)
- Wrong choice: in retrospect, your choice was not the best (e.g., could have chosen a career you're better suited for)
- A confusing mix of sin and wrong choice: the situation is so extensive you can't sort it out (e.g., a marriage that ended in divorce)

#### **○ TUESDAY**

How does scripture tell us to respond to the three categories of regret?

First, sin should always be repented of. Sin always leads to brokenness and is an offense to a Holy God. Therefore, we should turn away from all sin and ask for forgiveness. The Bible teaches that when we do this God grants forgiveness. We, therefore, don't need to live in shame and guilt. For those in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

If you have a regret to repent of, certainly do that! And even make restitution (Luke 19:8 cf. Ex. 22:1; 2 Sam. 12:6) and reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-26; 2 Cor. 5:18-19) wherever possible. But God does not call us to condemn or flog ourselves. God instead makes us new creations in Christ and forgets our sin. Do not remember something God has forgotten. Do not carry something Christ has buried. If

God has thrown your sin into the depths of the ocean never to surface again (Micah 7:19), why do you recall them? Could it be the father of lies bringing them up from the dark depths to destroy and condemn?

Second, some regrets do not require repentance, though they may require tears. I regret not spending more time with certain loved ones that have died. I regret misunderstanding when a particular assignment was due because it resulted in a bad grade. Yet, I don't need to repent of all my regrets because not all my regrets were the result of sin.

Some regrets are a source of frustration because we have more information now than we did when we made our choice. Or you may feel like you are a different person now than when you made the choice. Or... a thousand different things. But you did make the choice, and now, in some sense, you're stuck with the choice. And you regret it.

So, what do you do? How should we respond to this type of regret? Trust and lament.

We trust the Lord is with us and for us and is good, even in the midst of our less than stellar situation. Even if our life never feels finally fulfilled, or it seems like it could've been so much better if we would've made a better choice, as Christians, we know that we are not home here. Nothing will actually be a perfect choice here. Instead, heaven is our home. We are strangers and exiles here.

We know the world reels and regrets, as a result of the Fall. Things are not as they should've been and won't be until Jesus comes back to fix the world. So, in one sense, regret is natural now and expected because of the broken world that is our address.

We also lament. We talk to the Lord in song and prayer and we tell Him what we don't like and why. Yet, even as we lament and lay out our losses and regrets to the Lord, we also trust.

Third, sometimes it's hard to sort through our regret. Sometimes it's hard to label it and put it in a specific bucket. Yet, we know the One who knows our hearts better than we know our own. So, we cry out to the Lord and we ask Him to help us. We ask for direction and we trust that when we don't know the way, He does.

We also know that even while Jesus never sinned—never made any wrong choices whatsoever—He does understand where we're coming from. He does know and did experience this messy and messed up world (Heb. 4:14-16). So, He can sympathize with us.

When regret is a riddle that we cannot figure out, we can and must still lean on the Lord. We turn to Him (that's really what repentance is) and away from wallowing in despondence.

So, take your regrets, categorize them as best as you can and respond appropriately: repent, lament, or a combination of the two. But don't wallow in self-pity or condemnation. Self-pity and condemnation forget the gospel; they forget that Jesus has promised us the Kingdom and given us His righteousness.

Ultimately, the solution to regret of any kind is trusting and remembering Jesus' gift of perfect righteousness and His coming reign where all regrets will be washed away (Rev. 21:1-4).

Take some time and respond appropriately to your regrets.

#### **○ WEDNESDAY**

Read: 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

#### **Reflection Questions**

- •What is the difference between "godly grief" and "worldly grief"?
- Do you have places in your life where you have regret that is merely "worldly grief" but isn't leading to healthy life change?
- What are a few action steps that you can take to purposely and intentionally turn away from and defeat sin in your life?

#### **○ THURSDAY**

**Read:** Psalm 51:1-7

#### **Reflection Questions**

- What did king David, the author of Psalm 51, regret? (Notice the introduction to the Psalm)
- How did king David respond to his regret?
- Did David hold out hope that he could be forgiven for what he did?
- When your sin is brought to light, what is your response?

## **○ FRIDAY**

**Read:** Psalm 51:8-19

## **Reflection Questions**

• David clearly regretted his sin. Yet, he wasn't totally hopeless even though his sin was terrible and tragic. In the verses you read, where do you see signs of hope?

## AWAKENING TO HELP: I CAN'T DO THIS ON MY OWN

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

- Ephesians 2:8-10

#### INTRODUCTION

The beauty of children is their innocent dependence. They start out in this world with an innate understanding that they can't do it on their own. As a father, I'm reminded day-in and day-out of the immense need of my children. "Dad, can you help me build this?" "Can you reach this for me, Daddy?" "How do you do this, Dad?" "Daddy, I'm hungry!" "I need help with my homework, Dad." Dad...Dad...Dad... you get the picture. Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about. It is relentless and can be overwhelming and yet it is this type of mentality that Jesus encourages.

On one occasion, when Jesus and his Disciples were together, it was asked of Him who the greatest in the Kingdom was. To the Disciples' shock, Jesus put before them a child. He looked at these men, most of which were willing to die for their country, and said, "if each of you do not humble yourself like this child, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Entering into and ranking within God's Kingdom has little to do with action, whether it be military prowess or a willingness to die, nor does it have to do with one's own good works and accomplishments for God. Rather, Jesus' point is this: it is solely based on a humble submission and trust in God's authority, character and provision. Just as my children submit and trust in my character, provision, and authority (most of the time). Jesus was asking the Disciples implicitly, "Is your confidence like that of a child trusting in the goodness of our Father, or is your confidence in yourself?" We must ask the same question!

It is common for a person to experience the "dark night of the soul" or hit "rock-bottom." These life experiences can be very transformative. Especially if we didn't know Jesus. It is often our moment of salvation. We turn to Him with nothing to offer, yet everything to gain as we repent and believe in Him! We heed Jesus' call to be joined with Him as He promises the deep rest for our souls that we all long for. We enter into the relationship based on God's great grace and mercy for us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus!

Many of you may have a similar experience. And yet this freedom and living in the grace and trust in our Father that we first experience can fade away. The joy we had resting in Jesus seems too good to be true. As we mature from a child to an adult in our faith, we can lose the very child-like faith that was needed to begin with! As a growing child, we want to "show God" how much we can do for Him, or we might think that He expects us to grow in our independence just as we expect our children to mature into independent adults. But that couldn't be further from the truth.

In a grand irony, the more mature we grow as followers of Jesus the more dependent we become on the Father, not less. Paul, rather bluntly, hits at this point in Galatians. He writes, "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:2-3)

Paul's point is clear: were we saved by works or by faith (that is, humble dependence and trust in Jesus)? And if we were saved and received the Holy Spirit by such faith why would we ever think that we will grow in our salvation apart from faith? Paul is beside himself, and yet this is our tendency, isn't it?

We want to work for it or believe we *have* to work for it. May we be awoken from such lies and rather awaken to the help—God's grace—that brought us to faith and carries us on in faith which will come to completion in eternity! We were not saved by works and we don't stay saved by works, but by the humility of a child. Surrender. Submission. Trust. Dependence.

## **DAILY STUDY**

## **○ MONDAY**

Read: Matthew 11:25-30

## **Reflection Questions**

- What was Jesus' point in thanking God in Matthew 11:26-27? How should this affect our demeanor and seeking of the Lord?
- Jesus calls all who are "heavy laden" and "labor" to come to Him. Why? Because He provides true rest for our souls.
   What areas of your life do you feel worn down, beat up, and exhausted in your laboring? Take a moment right now to seek Jesus; to "come to Him" as a child with all of your pains, heartaches, and struggles and lay them at His feet.
- Not only does Jesus call the burdened to Himself, but He then calls them to action. But it's not action that feels overwhelming or unattainable. He calls people to yoke themselves with Him. The yoke was a wooden tool that hooked to animals together for agricultural work. Think of two oxen walking side-by-side together in the field. Jesus calls us to yoke ourselves with him. Instead of dreading a difficult day in the field, Jesus says His yoke is easy and what He calls us to is light. Why is being yoked to Jesus "easy"? If it feels like a struggle, what are we missing?

## TUESDAY

Read: Galatians 3:1-7; 5:16-26

## **Reflection Questions**

• Paul is upset with the Galatian believers. He calls out what I

think we're all tempted to do. Work out our own salvation in our own strength by being obedient to rules, laws, and the like. When have you experienced this in your own life? Did you feel rested or burdened? What was missing?

• Later in Galatians 5, Paul shows us how we ought to live... "by," "in step with," and "walk by" the Spirit of God! He says to do the opposite is to live and operate in the flesh! Do you see the works of the flesh in your life? When have you seen the fruits of the Spirit in your life? How were you able to walk by the Spirit? How can you grow in this?

#### **○ WEDNESDAY**

Read: 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

#### **Reflection Questions**

- Although he was an apostle and did much work for Jesus, Paul still says that it wasn't of his own strength or merit that he was worthy. Who made Paul "sufficient"? Who makes you sufficient? Do you believe this? Or do you believe that you must prove yourself to Jesus?
- What hinders you from believing that you are qualified, competent, and enough because of Jesus and even in spite of your weaknesses? Write them down and surrender them to the Lord.

## **○ THURSDAY**

Read: Ephesians 2:8-10

## **Reflection Questions**

Probably the passage with the most succinct statement about

how we are saved, Ephesians 2 shows us that our salvation has *nothing* to do with our efforts. Why? What does Paul say salvation by grace removes? In your walk with Jesus, when have you felt prideful in your works?

 Grace, faith, and a gift. Some of these words seem too good to be true. It goes against all we've known and strips us of our pride to be good enough and work hard enough. Have you noticed a difference when you walk in the works God has for you versus working hard to please God? I challenge you for the next 5 days to pray every morning for God to show you the works He has for you that day.

#### FRIDAY

**Read:** Philippians 2:12-13

#### **Reflection Questions**

- This oft quoted passage is used to encourage us to not be slothful in our faith! But, we are probably most familiar with the phrase, "Work out your own salvation..." Yet Paul adds the encouragement that it is God who is working in and through us! Are you aware that it is God, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that is working in and through you for His glory? If not, why not?
- How can you begin to remind yourself that you are a vessel of God and that you will do more work when you become more dependent upon Him?

## WEEK 4

## AWAKENING TO FORGIVENESS: I CAN FORGIVE

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

- Matthew 6:14-15

#### INTRODUCTION

"He who cannot forgive another breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself."

-George Herbert

Years ago, my wife and I bought our very first "married couple" car. We were young, dumb, and living on love—and not much else. Having just gotten my first "career" job that would move us 2,000 miles from home, we needed a vehicle that would make the trip and last us for several years until we got our feet under us financially. So, we did what so many of us do. We took on the debt of a car payment. We financed a Pontiac Grand Am (the only sports car 21-year-old newlyweds could afford) for five years to ease the burden of the monthly payment.

Over the course of four years and nine months, we made our payment without ever missing a month. We incurred a debt we agreed to pay back and so we did. But toward the end of that last calendar year something peculiar came in the mail from my credit union. We were just two months shy of paying off our remaining balance. It was a letter stating our debt had been forgiven.

The credit union informed us that they were in danger of making money as a non-profit organization and they needed to "forgive" the remainder of our loan. That a lending institution would write off the hundreds of dollars we were indebted to pay was unfathomable to me. I didn't ask for it, but I was happy to receive that mercy. Needless to say, we were grateful for forgiveness and spoiled each other a little more for Christmas that year.

Now imagine that a friend owed me for the cup of Starbucks I bought him that very same week. He said he would Venmo me the money, but the \$6 transaction never came. And the next time I saw him, I chastised him and refused to forgive him for not paying me back. That would be infantile and ridiculous, wouldn't it? I mean, I had just been forgiven for so much! What is a few dollars compared to that?!

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus illustrated for His disciples the kind of forgiveness we should offer with the parable of the unforgiving servant. Before sharing His parable, Jesus was approached by Peter asking Him if forgiving someone seven times was enough. After all, Jewish custom held that forgiving someone just three times was overly generous. To forgive someone seven times would seem magnanimous!

Jesus set the bar high for His disciples and said that they should forgive seventy times seven. Jesus basically told them to forgive as many times as it takes. And then He goes on to tell a story of a king who wanted to settle accounts with one of his servants who owed him an insurmountable debt—a debt that could never be repaid. The servant begged for forgiveness and the king had pity on him and forgave his entire debt! Just imagine owing someone several billion dollars and that person releasing you from the obligation to repay it. It's inconceivable!

That same servant, after being forgiven of much, immediately went out and found a fellow servant that owed him very little he couldn't repay, and he refused to show mercy and had him thrown in prison. The master received word of what had happened and called the servant who he had forgiven wicked because he refused to go and do likewise. He then had the servant thrown in jail. So, the servant who had been forgiven of so much could not find it in his heart to forgive another of very little and lived the rest of his days in bondage because of his unforgiveness.

This is a story for us today because we are the debtors who have been forgiven of so much. We each have a sin debt that God's justice demands be paid and our Master, by sending His Son Jesus, forgave our debt. And we refuse to offer forgiveness to others who wrong us. So many Christians live in spiritual bondage because they refuse to forgive. While withholding forgiveness feels good in the moment, eventually it leads to a life of bondage.

Second Corinthians 2:10-11 refers to unforgiveness as the "design of Satan." This is one of his schemes to ensnare us in his trap of sin and create division among us. He makes people think that if they forgive, they'll get taken advantage of, but in reality, unforgiving people are being taken advantage of by Satan. Yes, unforgiveness is a bitter pill. It makes you think it will satisfy but like a cancer, it eventually corrupts entirely and eats away at your soul.

It's no wonder we lack peace. It haunts our thoughts and keeps us up at night. It's a barrier to our relationship with God and with others. There are real spiritual and relational consequences to refusing to forgive when we've been forgiven of so much.

Forgiveness plays a major part in displaying our understanding of what God has done for us. Pastor J.D. Greear said in his book, *Just Ask*, "The

gracelessness of so many Christians shows that many have likely never experienced the power of the gospel... If you don't recognize that the debt of yours that God canceled is greater than any offense against you—if you don't forgive others because you don't appreciate how much God has forgiven you in Christ—then you need to ask very seriously whether you are a Christian at all."

## **DAILY STUDY**

## **○ MONDAY**

**Read:** 1 John 1:9

#### **Reflection Questions**

 Have you ever stopped to consider how much you have been forgiven of? On a separate piece of paper make a list of the major sins throughout your life that you know went against God's will and ways. Once you've done that, take a lighter to that paper. Literally burn it because God, in Christ Jesus, has forgiven and forgotten those sins.

#### **○ TUESDAY**

**Read:** Psalm 32:1-2

#### **Reflection Questions**

• Now that you've recalled your past sins and transgressions, it likely brought up some painful or unflattering memories for you. Satan loves to use our past as a reminder of how bad we were and how little we deserve forgiveness. But you burned that list and God forgave and forgot that list. In the Bible, David was a man acquainted with sin and rebellion against God, but he also knew what repentance and forgiveness tasted like. Now, get out another separate piece of paper. On that paper make a list of all the ways you are blessed because you have been forgiven by God. Tape that note to your bathroom mirror, your steering wheel, your desk, or your refrigerator. You could even take a picture of the list and make it the lock screen image on your phone. Let it serve as a constant reminder of God's goodness toward you.

## **○ WEDNESDAY**

Read: Matthew 6:14-15

#### **Reflection Questions**

• Chances are you are beyond grateful for the forgiveness you have received from God and that He has removed your sins as far as the east is from the west. What does Jesus say about your faith if you are willing to forgive others? What are the clear consequences if you are not willing to forgive?

#### THURSDAY

Read: Matthew 6:12

#### **Reflection Questions**

 Have you ever been forgiven of a debt you owed? What was the prevailing emotion when you found out your debt was forgiven?
 Who is a debtor to you that you need to forgive—whether they ask for it or not?

## **○ FRIDAY**

Read: Ephesians 4:32

## **Reflection Questions**

- Sometimes we want people to sympathize with us in our hurts.
   The truth is, sympathy can provide temporary relief, but nothing short of forgiveness can procure lasting release. Why do you think people are content to wallow in self-pity when the release of forgiveness is available?
- What characteristics in your life might indicate that you haven't fully forgiven past hurts, even if you know in your head what you need to do?

## WEEK 5

## AWAKENING TO LIVING: NOW THIS IS LIVING

"And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." - John 17:3

#### INTRODUCTION

The other day I was watching a *Star Wars* series called *Boba Fett* and one of the characters spoke a line that really struck me. I paused the show, grabbed my phone, and made a note of the statement. The quote was, "Persistence without insight will lead to the same outcome." Think about that.

We can be devoted to something and persistent, refusing to give up, and even stubborn. But if we don't stop to evaluate, to think, we will end up back where we started. It is no different in matters of faith. As people born again, we must have insight, or we will return to the life we had before. We must be intentional about how we live. However, Christianity is not a set of rules by which we are to live, but a new way of living that we are awakened to.

We were never meant to have a feeble life, nor were we ever meant to live a life overwhelmed by stress and burden. Rather, we were meant to have a life full of abundance. We were meant to follow Jesus and to find joy and rest in Him. Personally, the times when I have felt the most burdened in my life were not times of trust or rest in the Lord. I took on those burdens either assuming that they were what God wanted or not including God in them at all.

In Philippians, Paul wrote extensively about joy. His joy was based on the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He found joy in situations that most of us would describe as discouraging or worse.

Why was he so joy filled? Because he knew the secret of contentment, the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord. That secret changed his life from a persecutor of God's early church to an apostle who proclaimed the gospel without fear and who God spoke through to write His Word. Abundant life for us is found in that same secret. The surpassing worth of knowing Jesus has not changed since the days when Paul lived. Knowing Him gives life fullness and purpose.

## **DAILY STUDY**

## **○ MONDAY**

Read: Matthew 11:28

#### **Reflection Questions**

- What are the types of lifestyles belonging to the people Jesus is teaching?
- What does He command them to do?
- What promise does He make to them?
- How does this connect to your life?

#### **○ TUESDAY**

**Read:** Matthew 11:28-29

## **Reflection Questions**

- What does Jesus command in verse 29?
- What is a yoke?
- How does Jesus describe Himself?
- What does He promise?
- How can a yoke bring about rest?

## **○ WEDNESDAY**

Read: Matthew 11:28-30

#### **Reflection Questions**

- How does Jesus describe the work He has for you to do?
- Why do you think He describes it this way?
- This is contrary to the way our culture thinks of work. Why do you think

His yoke is easy?

What does it mean for a burden to be light?

#### ○ THURSDAY

Read: John 10:10

#### **Reflection Questions**

- In the verses surrounding this passage, Jesus describes His followers as sheep. In what ways are we called to be like sheep?
- What was the purpose statement that Jesus made?
- · What does it mean to have life?
- What does it mean to have an abundant life?

## ○ FRIDAY

Read: John 17:3

## **Reflection Questions**

- What is the ultimate purpose of our lives?
- How does this purpose impact living day to day?
- What helps you to focus on this purpose?



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