



ON THE JOURNEY

BIBLE STUDIES TO HELP YOU ON THE JOURNEY



**ON THE JOURNEY IS A RESOURCE PUBLICATION OF
THE NAVIGATORS OF NEW ZEALAND**

© 2013-2020, All Rights Reserved. On the Journey studies may be reproduced and freely used but must not be sold. www.navigators.org.nz



FOR THE JOURNEY.



INTRODUCTION

Life is a journey...

Yes, it is a well-worn cliché, but before rolling your eyes, let's suspend judgment and imagine for a moment that life really *is* a journey. What would you need for the trip?

In our walk with Jesus through this life, there are many questions that arise. Which way do I go now? How do I deal with situations as they arise? The On the Journey study is a series of short studies to be used by yourself, to help someone else on the journey, or even in a small group of friends address questions like these on this faith journey that we are on with God.

The On the Journey Bible studies deal with specific issues like taming the tongue, discipleship, how you define success, and other timely topics. Let's do this journey of life together and find the help and direction that we all need from our faithful God.



TABLE OF CONTENTS



01	CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY	PAGE 04
02	IN SEARCH OF THE DREAM JOB	PAGE 06
03	FIXING OUR BIG MISTAKES	PAGE 08
04	REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING	PAGE 10
05	SUCCESS	PAGE 12
06	STRIVING TO BE BETTER	PAGE 14
07	TOO MANY THINGS TO DO	PAGE 16
08	MORE THAN A FACEBOOK FRIEND	PAGE 18
09	HOME AND CAR DISCIPLESHIP	PAGE 20
10	SUMMARY	PAGE 22



FOR THE JOURNEY:

ON THE JOURNEY SERIES

Once we have committed our lives to Christ, there should be no turning back on the journey – indeed, if we think about it, there is nothing of real and lasting substance to which we can turn apart from Him. Despite this truth, there is an epidemic of followers of Jesus who drop out of the journey. Many begin well but finish poorly. It can be gradual through a series of small compromises or a more sudden point of departure, but any number of things can get in the way or lead us off the path on the journey to which Christ has called us to with Him and with each other.

What does it take to finish the journey well? How can we approach the journey in such a way that we can say with Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith?” (2 Timothy 4:7; Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27)?

The subjects covered in the On the Journey series are a good place to start on your journey to knowing God more closely through His Word. These are some common areas that can trip people up on the journey. Why not find a fellow traveler or group and study these timely topics together to help each other continue on the journey.

ON THE JOURNEY STUDIES:

As we mentioned above seeking to know God through His Word is worth the time and effort that we put into it. As you seek wisdom from God through the studies listed below take time before you begin to ask God to help you understand His Word.

✓ 1. Choose Your Words Carefully

✓ 2. In Search of the Dream Job

✓ 3. Fixing Our Big Mistakes

✓ 4. Remembering and Forgetting

✓ 5. Success

✓ 6. Striving to be Better

✓ 7. Too Many Things to Do

✓ 8. More than a Facebook Friend

✓ 9. Home & Car Discipleship

✓ 10. Summary



1. CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

What you say reveals a lot about you. So, what do you say?

We use words all the time to communicate with others, but we don't often stop to think about the 'flavour' of that communication. It can be easy to develop habits in the way we talk without realising what those habits are – things like being overly negative or cynical in our replies or speaking before really listening. The Book of Proverbs talks a lot about 'speaking'. This study draws from some of those proverbs with the aim of helping us take a fresh look at how we use our words. As **Proverbs 18:21** says, *"Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit - you choose."* Let us choose wisely...



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

LETTING PROVERBS 'SPEAK' TO US

- Pray and ask the Lord to get your attention on anything He may want to say to you about your speaking.
- There is a list of proverbs on the next page that relate to 'speaking'. These are grouped in proverbs that have similar themes. Start by looking at these group theme titles. Is there any group title that draws your attention? Start reading the proverbs in that group.
- Mark any words, phrases, or whole proverbs that catch your attention, for whatever reason.
- Go back over the things *you* marked to see if there are any common themes. Do you sense God saying anything to you about this?
- Note down any questions, thoughts, or practical actions that come to mind as you do this.
- As you are able, share your reflections.
- If you have time, go to the next group theme that interests you and repeat these steps.

HEART IN MOUTH

→ Read Matthew 15:11,17-20 (see text box on right).

- If, as Jesus says, your speech and heart are linked, how do you think this should affect your prayers and actions as you seek to be more godly in your speaking?
- As the Spirit changes you from the inside out, how much improvement in your speaking will happen naturally and how much will you have to work at it?
- Ask the Spirit to use the verses from Proverbs on the following page to show you areas where trust God to transform your tongue.

HOW TO READ PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs has some very useful practical wisdom. But as we read Proverbs, we need to keep in mind a few things:

- The 'Fear of the Lord' – the reverential awe of God – is the beginning of wisdom and life (Prov 1:7, 2:5, 9:10, 14:27, 19:23). This is the basic theme and underlying idea of the Book.
- Individual proverbs are designed as short, memorable statements to point you in the direction of attitudes and behaviours that will help you grow. They are more like observations and generalisations of what happens rather than black and white contract-like statements.
- Most individual proverbs are in two related parts. Sometimes those parts are opposite ideas, and sometimes the second half uses different words to say the same thing as the first half.

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, 11 "Listen and understand. What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."...

17 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts--murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them."

Matthew 15:11,17-20

VERSES FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS ON 'SPEAKING'

Gossip	<p>11:13 A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.</p> <p>16:28 A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.</p> <p>18:8 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.</p> <p>26:20 Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.</p> <p>26:22 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.</p> <p>26:22 (MSG) Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you want junk like that in your belly?</p>
Lying & Flattery	<p>10:18 Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips and spreads slander is a fool.</p> <p>12:17 An honest witness tells the truth, but a false witness tells lies.</p> <p>12:19 Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.</p> <p>12:22 The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.</p> <p>26:23 Like a coating of silver dross on earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart.</p> <p>26:24 Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbour deceit.</p> <p>26:25 Though their speech is charming, do not believe them, for seven abominations fill their hearts.</p> <p>26:26 Their malice may be concealed by deception, but their wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.</p> <p>26:28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.</p> <p>28:23 Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favour rather than one who has a flattering tongue.</p> <p>29:5 Those who flatter their neighbours are spreading nets for their feet.</p>
Stirring up conflict	<p>10:12 Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.</p> <p>12:18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.</p> <p>15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.</p> <p>16:27 A scoundrel plots evil, and on their lips it is like a scorching fire.</p> <p>16:28 A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.</p> <p>24:28-29 Do not testify against your neighbour without cause - would you use your lips to mislead? Do not say, "I'll do to them as they have done to me; I'll pay them back for what they did."</p> <p>26:20 Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.</p> <p>26:21 As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife.</p>
Self-harm caused by your words	<p>12:13 Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk, and so the innocent escape trouble.</p> <p>18:6 The lips of fools bring them strife, and their mouths invite a beating.</p> <p>18:7 The mouths of fools are their undoing, and their lips are a snare to their very lives.</p> <p>20:17 Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but one ends up with a mouth full of gravel.</p>
Speaking too much	<p>10:8 The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.</p> <p>10:10 Whoever winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin.</p> <p>10:19 Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.</p> <p>12:13 Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk, and so the innocent escape trouble.</p> <p>12:23 The prudent keep their knowledge to themselves, but a fool's heart blurts out folly.</p> <p>15:2 The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.</p> <p>18:2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.</p>
Holding your tongue	<p>10:19 Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.</p> <p>11:12 Whoever derides their neighbour has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.</p> <p>11:13 A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.</p> <p>12:16 Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult.</p> <p>12:23 The prudent keep their knowledge to themselves, but a fool's heart blurts out folly.</p> <p>17:28 Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.</p>
Good speech blessing others	<p>10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. 10:21 The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of sense.</p> <p>11:11 Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed. 12:14 From the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things, and the work of their hands brings them reward.</p> <p>12:18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.</p> <p>15:2 The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.</p> <p>15:4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.</p> <p>16:21 The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction. 16:23 The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent, and their lips promote instruction. 16:24 Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.</p> <p>24:26 An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.</p>



2. IN SEARCH OF THE DREAM JOB

Work can be disappointing - should we expect more or is this as good as it gets?

Work is a subject that is commonly complained about. Whether it's a matter of stress, boredom, mismatched skills, unjust treatment, feeling undervalued, lack of motivation, or a range of things in between, there are regular disconnections between how it is and how we believe it should be. So, should we keep trying to find the perfect job, or is there no such thing?



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

TO BEGIN...

- If you could choose to do any job at all as a long term work option, what would you choose to do?
- What would be your 2-3 biggest reasons or motivations for choosing to do this job?

1. FALLING APART IN THE GARDEN

In the Garden of Eden, God provided a structure of **purpose, freedom, and limitation** to give shape to human living (Genesis 2:15-17). But before too long, the first people went beyond the boundaries in search of *more* than what God had given them. As a result, the trust relationship with God was broken, a healthy balance was lost, and everything started to unravel and fall apart. One of those things was *work*.

Read Genesis 3:17-19 (see text box)

- From this passage, what do you notice about any consequences of this 'falling apart' for the worker and for the work itself?

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Teacher makes numerous straight-talking observations about work and life.

Read Ecclesiastes 2 (see text box on the next page for extracts to read)

- How does the Teacher describe what the doing of the work is like for the worker?
- What does the Teacher say about how the worker feels about the results and value of the work done?
- Can you relate to any of these reflections or experiences of the Teacher? What is your experience of work?

To Adam, (God) said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." - Genesis 3:17-19

- Given the verses we've looked at in Genesis and Ecclesiastes, do you think there could be any type of work you could do that would not involve at least some toil and meaninglessness?

"Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. ²¹ Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you--although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²² For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings." ¹

- 1 Corinthians 7:20-23

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

- Colossians 3:23-24

2. REDEEMING WORK

If the effect of the Fall on our work is so wide-ranging, how does the redeeming work of God change things? There are numerous ways, but here we will consider three things:

Our value to God is not tied to what we do for work (1 Corinthians 7:20-23 see text box). In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul tells them their job will not change their status and value with God. He says if they want to and are able to change, then that's fine, but he is adamant: that will make no change to their status in God's eyes.

God is the Lord and ultimate authority over every aspect of our lives, including our work. Whatever the work, we are to do it as an expression of our love and service to God. He is our audience, our chief reference point, our boss (Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Cor 7:22-23 see text box). God rarely eliminates difficulties, but instead calls us to faithfulness in the troubles. Success and meaning can be found in focusing on him in the work and following his lead.

Enjoyment is a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25, 3:13, 5:19, 6:2). Ecclesiastes reminds us that enjoyment from work doesn't automatically come with the type of work we do. It is a gift from God. And sometimes the gift is there, but we just don't take advantage of it.

ECCLESIASTES 2

"I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. 8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well--the delights of a man's heart. 9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. 10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labour, and this was the reward for all my toil. 11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun..."

20 "So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labour under the sun. 21 For a person may labour with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. 22 What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labour under the sun? 23 All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless. 24 A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, 25 for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?"

- Ecclesiastes 2:4-25

CHOOSE ONE OF THESE IDEAS AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Given the ongoing presence of 'fallen-ness' in work, how might this idea help me live with contentment and meaning within the 'mixed bag' of my actual work situation?
- What practical things can I do to help me see my work differently and do my work in a way that pleases God?



THOUGHT TO FINISH

Work in a fallen world will to some degree be frustrating, unjust, tiresome, and lacking meaning and value. But the Good News changes things. Jesus didn't avoid tough things. Rather, he confronted opposition and painful death and came out the other side alive. So too we can find meaning, order, and beauty out of the brokenness of our work. One day, God will restore a rightness to everything, but until then, our best chance of finding a dream job will be to follow the lead of the Dream-Maker.



3. FIXING OUR BIG MISTAKES

When you make a mess of life – trust in the mercy & grace of God

Stealing. Speaking cruel, brutal words to another. Betraying a trust. Having an affair. Falling yet again to an addiction. Being violent in its many forms. Killing someone... These are things that happen in life. Some of these are things we have done. We may have lots of reasons why we did what we did, but that doesn't change things: once done, we can't undo our actions. So, is there no comeback from this? Do these failures of ours mean that we are doomed to live ruined lives?

This study looks at some of the people in the Bible who made a mess of their lives and how they got out of the hole they were in. If you have stuffed up badly – or know of someone who has – and can see no way out, then this could be a life-changing study for you.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The Jewish kings in the Old Testament were a real 'mixed bag'. Some were good, but generally, most of them failed in significant ways. Here are 4 of their stories.

REHOBAM

Rehoboam was Solomon's son. He was the last King of a united Israel, and on his watch, the country was split in two: Judah in the south, and Israel in the north. A rival, Jeroboam, took over the larger kingdom in the north, while Rehoboam had to work hard to create the new Kingdom of Judah in the south. Once he had done this, Rehoboam abandoned following God's ways.

➔ **Read 2 Chronicles 12:1-12**

- How did Rehoboam respond to the Prophet's rebuke? And how did God respond to the response of Rehoboam?

"the LORD says, 'You have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak.' The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, 'The LORD is just.' When the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah: 'Since they have humbled themselves, I will not destroy them but will soon give them deliverance...'"

- 2 Chronicles 12:5-7

"Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day..."

- 1 Kings 21:29

AHAB

Ahab was a king over the northern Kingdom of Israel for 22 years. From a faith perspective, his reign was disastrous. He was credited with doing more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any before him (1Kings 16:29-33). As background to the passage, we will read, Ahab wanted to buy his neighbour's land from him so he could turn it into a vegetable garden. His neighbour, Naboth, refused because it was the inheritance of his ancestors. Ahab had him killed and took over the land by force. At this point, the Lord sent Elijah the Prophet to confront him.

➔ **Read 1 Kings 21:17-29**

- What was Ahab's reaction to Elijah's message for him? How did the Lord respond?

MANASSEH

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was King over Judah for 55 years. He chose not to follow the Lord, and instead welcomed many different religious practices into his kingdom, including making altars for Baal, worshipping

the stars, and sacrificing his children in the fire. At that time, Assyria was the superpower and in response to Manasseh's actions, the Lord used the Assyrians to invade the Kingdom of Judah and capture Manasseh, taking him to Babylon.

→ **Read 2 Chronicles 33:1-13**

- What did Manasseh do following his capture? How did the Lord respond?

JOSIAH

Josiah became a King of Judah at 8 years old and reigned in Jerusalem for 31 years. When he was 16 he started to seek the Lord, and by the age of 20, he was removing Baal worship and Asherah poles from his kingdom. A few years later he ordered a clean-up of the Lord's Temple in Jerusalem, and in the process, the workers found a copy of the Book of the Law (their Bible). Somehow, it seems, they didn't already have a copy, and when they read it, they realised how far they had drifted from what the Lord was asking them to do.

"In his distress (Manasseh) sought the favour of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed to him, the LORD was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea..."
- 2 Chronicles 33:12-13

→ **Read 2 Kings 22:8-20**

- How did Josiah respond in his heart and actions when he heard the bad news? How did God respond to him?

"These are the ones I look on with favour: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word." - Isaiah 66:2

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."
- Micah 6:8



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- We are told that in one way or another these people 'humbled' themselves, which was more than just saying 'sorry'. From these accounts, how would you describe what it means to genuinely 'humble yourself'?
- For these kings and their people, there were still consequences as a result of their wrongdoing. So what do you think was the benefit of them humbling themselves?
- What is it about people 'humbling' themselves that so moves the Lord to save people from their self-inflicted disasters? What does this say about what God is like? (Consider also Matthew 11:28-30, John 13:12-17, Philippians 2:3-11, 1Peter 5:5-7)
- Given what we've looked at, do you think there is anyone that God would not be moved by if they humbled themselves, regardless of what they did?
- Do you think having this humility might help us to not make future big mistakes? What can we do to make humility a feature of our way of living and being?



THOUGHT TO FINISH

We all make mistakes. Not just innocent errors, but also intentional decisions to do things that cause damage to ourselves, others, or our world. And these things also bring pain to God. At some stage, when we realise the significance of what we've done, we find ourselves in a moment of decision: will I say "It doesn't matter" or "It's just too late to change" or "I can fix this"? OR will I acknowledge I have done wrong, I'm out of my depth and I need God to do something to fix this mess I've made? The stories from the Bible remind us that it is **never** too late nor are my mistakes too bad to be able to come back from. There are consequences for our wrongdoing, but **no-one** is beyond the redeeming love of God. In humility, when we seek help from God, He is always there to lift us out of the mess. His love for us is deep. He is the Fixer of big mistakes.



4. REMEMBERING & FORGETTING

What we remember and what we forget changes everything

The Bible regularly calls people to remember what the Lord has done in their lives and in human history, and occasionally it also tells us what we should forget. But for us, it seems too easy to forget what we should remember, and remember what we should forget. This study addresses these issues.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

To begin, here are a few *memory* questions to think about...

- Do you have a system for remembering future events coming up in your day/week/month ahead?
- When it comes to experiences from your past that have been important to you (eg significant events, personal interactions, milestones), what do you do to help you remember these things?
- Generally speaking, would you say you tend to think more about things coming up in the future or about things that have already happened?

1. FORGETTING WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER

Let's look at what the Bible has to say about what we should remember. We will use Psalm 103 as our main passage. **Read Psalm 103** (see text box)

REMEMBERING GOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES

Psalm 103:2 encourages us to praise the Lord and 'forget not all his benefits'. Verses 3-5 then describe some of those benefits, including: forgiving, healing, redeeming, crowning, satisfying and renewing.

- Think back to a significant moment where you sensed God positively impacting your life in some way. Reflect on this for a few minutes. How might it help us to regularly remember these type of moments?
- What gets in the way of us remembering these moments?
- What can we do to help us get better at *regularly* remembering what the Lord has already done for us?

PSALMS 103

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. 7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: 8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. 15 The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; 16 the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. 17 But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children-- 18 with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. 19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. 20 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. 21 Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. 22 Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, my soul.

REMEMBERING GOD'S INVOLVEMENT THROUGHOUT ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY

In **Psalm 103:7-10** the big story of faith is remembered as the Psalm recalls the account of Moses discovering more about who God is and what he is like (see *Exodus 33:18-34:7*). The Israelites were regularly told by God to remember the Exodus story (e.g., *Deuteronomy 7:17-19; 24:17-22*). In the New Testament, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection becomes the central story to remember.

- What things do you do to help you remember the Good News story of Jesus and his kingdom?
- Do you feel that what you do and how often you do it is enough to help keep the Christian story central for you as you live each day? If so, great! If not, what could you change?

REMEMBERING THAT GOD REMEMBERS US

Psalm 103:13-18 tells us that God remembers we are dust. These verses then contrast the world - which will quickly forget us (v15), with the Lord - who keeps us in mind and in his love from everlasting to everlasting (v17).

- What difference might it make to how we live if we know we will be forgotten by our world but always remembered by the Lord?

"No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more"
- Jeremiah 31:33-34

2. REMEMBERING WHAT WE SHOULD FORGET

Most of this study focuses on our need to remember, but there are also some things we should forget.

Read Isaiah 43:18-25 and Jeremiah 31:33-34 (see text boxes) For further reading see also: *Isaiah 54:4; 65:16-17*

In these verses, the Lord makes a point of telling his people he will forgive and no longer remember their sins – not in terms of forgetting what happened, but rather in terms of eliminating the negative effects. As **Psalm 103:12** also tells us, he will remove these sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

- What might be some of the harmful effects for us if we keep remembering our wrongdoings even after God has 'forgotten' these and forgiven us?
- What can we do to help us 'forget' our wrongdoings in the way the Lord has already 'forgotten' them?

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past... See, I am doing a new thing! ...I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."
- Isaiah 43:18-25



THOUGHT TO FINISH

Too often we *consume* time in the way we consume other things. We 'use' the moment, and when that moment is over, we forget about it and move on to the next moment. True consumers! But we can get more than 'one use' out of our moments of time. Like an empty can of drink, we can recycle it! In normal language, this is called 'remembering'. God has already done much in the world and in our lives and it is a great loss if we don't remember these things. But even when that happens, we can take heart knowing that, although the Lord forgets our sins, he will never forget us. We are engraved on the palms of his hands (*Isaiah 49:15-16*).



5. SUCCESS

How do I know if I'm succeeding in life?

We want to do well in life. We want our lives to count for something. We want to be successful. But when it comes down to it, what does that look like? And in particular, who should decide what is and isn't 'success'? In this study, we will explore these questions.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

To begin, make a quick list of what you judge to be the 5 most successful people of the last 5 years.

- Why did you consider these people more successful than others?
- What criteria do you use to judge whether or not you are being successful in your life?

PAUL IN CORINTH: SUCCESS BY WHOSE STANDARDS?

Paul started the church in Corinth (Acts 18:1-18), but his relationship with the Corinthian believers soon became strained. Some Corinthians questioned his authority because he didn't fit their expectations of a 'spiritual' leader. In **1 Corinthians 4**, Paul addressed this issue of who should judge whether he is doing right or not. We will use this passage to help us think about what is success, and who makes that decision.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (see text box on right)

1. JUDGED BY OTHERS TO BE SUCCESSFUL

In verse 3, Paul says he doesn't care how others evaluate him. The Message version puts it this way: *"It matters very little to me what you think of me, even less where I rank in popular opinion"* (v3).

- Other people around you will have criteria for what they think makes someone successful. Are there particular groups of people you feel under more pressure to conform to than others?

- What are some of these criteria you feel you need to measure up to in order to be successful?

2. JUDGED BY SELF TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Paul says he doesn't judge himself (v3) – and even though he has a clear conscience, that isn't the final measure as to whether he has done well or not (v4).

- Do you judge yourself often? Is your self-judgment based on comparing yourself with others?
- If you had to guess, would you say you tend to be more critical or less critical than the Lord would be of how well you are doing?

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. ² Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ³ I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

- 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

3. JUDGED BY GOD TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Paul says that, as a servant of Jesus (v1), Paul has been given tasks to do *by him* (v2), and so the only evaluation that matters is the one given by the Lord (v4-5). Similarly, regardless of what work we do, we also are encouraged to see ourselves as working for the Lord (Colossians 3:23 – see text box).

- What might be some of the differences for us if we lived and worked *for the Lord* as our ultimate ‘boss’, rather than for our human boss (or coach, peers, family,...)?

4. JUDGED BY WHAT CRITERIA?

Paul says that what is required of us is to be faithful (v2) to the trust or to the tasks that are given to us.

- Being faithful is not necessarily the same thing as ‘*getting the results we want*’. How important are tangible results to you as you measure success? In what ways might faithfulness be a better measure of success than tangible results?
- What trust or tasks has the Lord given you to do?
(for a reminder on foundational things, see Micah 6:6-8 and Matthew 22:36-40 in the text box.) If we take these as key areas to be faithful in, how could we tell if we are doing well or not?

5. WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

Ultimately the Lord is the one who defines success, not others or ourselves. And for us, success is being faithful to the trust and tasks that God gives us.

- In light of what we’ve covered in this study, are there any things the Lord has got your attention on? Is there anything you believe you need to do as a result?

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

- Colossians 3:23-24

“With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ... He has showed you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” - Micah 6:6-8

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

- Matthew 22:36-40



THOUGHT TO FINISH

In the passage we’ve been looking at in **1 Corinthians 4**, Paul says we should not judge the success of things too early, but rather ‘wait until the Lord comes’ (v5). In a given moment, something may appear to be a disaster, but in the fullness of time, we may see that the Lord powerfully used it for good. Equally, at the moment, we may think something is good, but in a bigger perspective, we may see it as a negative. Ultimately it is not for us to judge. The Lord alone sees all hidden actions and motives (v5) and is the definitive source of meaning. He alone has the right to call something successful or otherwise. Therefore, let us faithfully do what he calls us to do today. This is all we have, and it is all we need to live a successful life.



6. STRIVING TO BE BETTER

We climb the ladder to success, but is it leaning against the right building?

It seems a natural thing to strive to want to be better. But who has the right version of what it means to be 'better', and how do you know when you've finally arrived at the 'better' you are trying to achieve? Whatever it is, we certainly spend a lot of time and energy chasing after it. This study scratches the surface on what we are aiming for in life and how that matches with the expectations of society and the expectations of God.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

TO BEGIN... Consider the box on the right. It contains a list of some of the different segments of life.

- Rank the areas listed in the box according to how you think mainstream society as a whole would rank them, from 1 (most important) down to 12 (not as important).
- Do you think most people feel they have achieved their aims in these areas or do you think they believe they still have some way to go?
- For you personally, rank the areas listed in the box from 1 to 12. Have you 'arrived' at where you want to get to in any of these areas? For the other areas, how close are you... 30%, 50%, 80%? You don't have to share your thoughts on this.
- Compared to people in mainstream society, do you think are you more likely or less likely to feel like you've achieved your aims (regardless of what the aims are)?

Education	Location	Housing
Employment	Income level	Faith experience
Friendships	Health/fitness	Community involvement
Relationship status (single, couple, married, with children,...)	Bucket list experiences (eg travel, climb a mountain,...)	Other? (eg latest technology, clothes, car...)

1. PAUL THE OVER-ACHIEVER

In a letter to the believers in Philippi, the Apostle Paul wrote about a significant change in the way he understood and valued things. In the past, according to what was of value in the Jewish world he had lived in, Paul was at the 'top of his game'. But when he met Christ everything changed for him.

Read Philippians 3:4-16 (see text box over the page)

In verses 4-6, Paul describes what made him such a model citizen:

- Heritage** (born a Jew, Paul was clearly able to trace his lineage)
- Education** (completed his training and qualification as a Pharisee)
- Ability** (consistently able to live according to the requirement of Jewish laws)
- Drive** (zealously persecuted Christians, showing his initiative and dedication)

- As you think about our society, what sort of *heritage, education, ability, and drive (or characteristics)* might make someone highly valued?
- Do you think you are highly valued according to the standards of our society?

2. FINDING A NEW 'BETTER'

In verses 7-9, Paul describes his new way of seeing things following his encounter with Jesus. Re-read verses 7-9.

- What must Paul have seen or experienced for him to come to the conclusion that everything he had achieved up to that point was 'garbage'? How does someone make such a dramatic change in values like this?
- For someone at the 'bottom of the heap', this is good news: you are highly valued because of what Jesus has done for you, not because of any (lack of) merit or assets you have. But if you are already highly valued by society, does it mean you have something to lose? How can this also be good news for these people?
- What are some of the things people do just because they believe these things will make them more valuable in the eyes of society? What can help you identify when you also do these things with this wrong motive?

3. STRIVING FOR A NEW 'BETTER'

In verses 10-16, Paul talks about not having completely 'arrived' in his experience with God. Rather, he 'presses on' and 'strains toward' it.

- How does Paul's idea of working hard match with his idea of being acceptable to God just on the basis of faith?
- Practically speaking, what might it look like for you to work hard in your life with God while also walking by faith?

...If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh (ie 'in myself'), I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. ⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ--yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained." - Philippians 3:4-16



THOUGHT TO FINISH

Paul had a formidable CV. He was a rising star amongst his generation in his society. But his encounter with Christ changed all that. What he previously thought to be major personal assets, he now recognised as irrelevant. When he met Jesus he experienced a new life and a different way of seeing things – he saw how *God* saw things. His identity and value system turned on its head. For Paul – as for us – heritage, education, ability, and drive may be valued by society, but they add nothing to our identity or worth before God. There is genuine merit in striving to be better, but it's striving to become a more *fully human* version of us – a version that is already loved and accepted by God because of Jesus. Our efforts are just to 'live up to what we have already attained'.



7. TOO MANY THINGS TO DO

Dealing with the tension of multiple commitments

‘Busy’. It’s a word we use often to describe the state of our lives. Although we may sound negative about it, we would probably be more worried if our lives weren’t so full. So, should we be as busy as we are? And if we are to do less, how would we know what we should leave out? This study is based on Matthew 6 and explores some of the potential motives we may have in doing the things we do. It’s a good place to begin if we are to consider taking things out. Hopefully, you have time to do the study.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

To keep it concrete, take a moment to think about your activities for the coming week (or two). *These may include: work, faith commitments (e.g., mentoring, small groups and/or Sunday church service), people you intentionally see regularly, sports practices (either yours or your commitment to getting your children to theirs), socialising, supermarket shopping, hobbies (eg book reading groups), flat meetings, regular family gatherings....*

Keep these in mind as you consider the questions that follow.

Read Matthew 6:1-34.

1. LOOKING GOOD IN THE EYES OF OTHERS

Read Matthew 6:1. Jesus goes on to illustrate this verse with regards to financial giving (6:4), praying (6:6), and fasting (6:18), each time saying “your *Father*, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you”. Jesus warned them not to do things just so they would look good in the eyes of those around them. That may increase their status with others, but not with God. God was to be their primary audience, and by rewarding those who did things in secret, it was a helpful check on their motivation.

- We have mixed motives about everything. As you think through the list of things you do, which things are more motivated by how they make you look in the eyes of others?
- To put it another way, if you knew it wouldn't change the way these people think about you or value you, are there things you would no longer do?

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven...”

- Matthew 6:1

2. MOTIVATED BY MONEY

Read Matthew 6:24. Money isn’t evil in itself, but here Jesus warns that God and money can compete to be the primary motivator for us. One will always serve – or be in submission to – the other.

- As you think through the things you do, is it possible you might be doing more things than the Lord would want you to do so that you can either make or save more money? (e.g., working in a well-paid but ill-fitting and overly demanding job)

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

- Matthew 6:24

3. KEEPING BUSY TO EARN OUR VALUE

Read Matthew 6:26. Unsure of our own worth, we can be tempted to try to earn value with God by doing value-able activities.

- Are there things you do in order to make you feel as though you are more acceptable to God? Given that God highly values you whether you do these things or not, what things could you stop doing?

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

Matthew 6:26

4. WORRYING

Jesus tells his listeners not to worry so much (v25,27,28,31,34) because ultimately worrying won't create anything of substance (e.g., 6:27 it won't add an extra hour to your life).

- Do your worries cause you to do more things than you would otherwise do if you didn't worry?
- Do your worries create extra 'brain activity' so that your mind feels more full and occupied than it would be without the worries?

5. RUNNING AFTER THINGS TO MEET OUR NEEDS

Read Matthew 6:31-32. Jesus says not to worry about the things others 'run after'. Instead, we are to trust the Lord to meet our needs.

- In these verses, Jesus mentions food, drink, and fashion, but what might be some other things our unbelieving friends and world chase after?
- What do you think are some of the needs people are trying to meet through these things? (e.g., sense of belonging, value, security...)

"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."

Matthew 6:31-32

- Are there any of these things that you also 'run after' in order to have your needs met?

6. SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM

Read Matthew 6:33. Rather than worry about meeting our needs through many other things, Jesus encourages us to trust the Lord first and to ask him what we should do. Ultimately, he is in control; we are not, and he has our best interests at heart.

- In light of what we've covered in this study, are there any things the Lord has got your attention on? Is there anything you believe you need to do as a result?

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33



THOUGHT TO FINISH

We are complex beings! We can have such a mix of motivations that shape why we do what we do. Jesus challenges us to look to God – rather than others or ourselves – to meet our needs, whether they be emotional, intellectual, physical or spiritual. He may well meet those needs through physical things or other people, but we must not lose sight of the ultimate satisfier of our needs. Then, as we trust the Lord and ask him what we should do and not do, we will discover that our worries and activities take their right proportions in our lives. Do less – trust more!



8. MORE THAN A FACEBOOK FRIEND

True friends are essential and priceless – so what does it look like to be one of these?

These days, it doesn't take much to call someone your friend. In fact, with a simple click of <ACCEPT FRIEND REQUEST> I can become your friend. But is that really all that's required to become a friend? What does it mean to be a good friend? This study looks at two examples of friendship: David and Jonathan, who were friends as close as brothers; and Ruth and Naomi, who were relatives as close as friends.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

To begin...

- What's your definition of a friend?
(think about why you call some people 'friends' while others are just 'people you know')
- How many friendships do you think you can sustain at any one time?

1. JONATHAN & DAVID

The great friendship between David & Jonathan happened at a time when David was a commanding officer in King Saul's army and Jonathan was King Saul's son. David's popularity was growing rapidly, and this made King Saul very jealous and insecure because he knew his own position was at stake.

Read:

Jonathan relates to his father Saul who is wanting to kill David: 1 Samuel 19:1-7
After initially making peace with David (Son of Jesse), Saul again tries to kill him: 1 Samuel 20:30-35, 41-42
Jonathan meets David while he is once again fleeing for his life: 1 Samuel 23:15-18

- What are some of the ways Jonathan showed friendship to David?

2. RUTH AND NAOMI

Naomi and her husband were Israelites who lived in the neighbouring country, Moab. Their two sons married Moabite women: Ruth and Orpah. Tragically all three men died, leaving Naomi, Ruth and Orpah without husbands and without any resources. Naomi decided to return to Israel but freed her daughters-in-law from any obligation to help her or go with her. Naomi had nothing she could offer them. She was resigned to the idea that her life would end in poverty and bitterness.

Read:

After the death of their husbands, Naomi tries to stop her daughters-in-law following her Ruth 1:11-19
Ruth meets Boaz, who let her gather grain with his other workers Ruth 2:10-12
A summary end of the story after Ruth married Boaz Ruth 4:13-17

- What are some of the ways Ruth and Naomi showed friendship to each other?

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

Ruth 1:16-17

3. FRIENDSHIP: GOOD INTENTIONS AND GOOD ACTIONS

These two relationships are good examples of friendship in action: Jonathan warned his friend of danger (1Sam19:1-3) and interceded for him with his enemy (19:4-6). Jonathan put his good friend's well-being and future prospects above his own (20:31) and helped him find strength in God (23:16). For Ruth and Naomi, they both showed a willingness to forego their own security and well-being for the sake of the other (Ruth 1:11-18).

Jesus also talked about friendship with his disciples (see text box: John 15:12-15). He linked friendship with love, making it very much an expression of the Good News in action.

- From these Bible passages and any further thoughts you've had, would you make any changes to your definition of a friend?
- What would we miss in life if we didn't have friends?

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

John 15:12-15

Consider the data

- Txt message = 160 characters
- Email = 2 KB data
- Photo/snapchat = 2 MB data
- Video = 1 GB data
- Face to face meeting
(including 1000s of subtle facial gestures, body language shifts, voice tone changes and pauses, scent, & eye contact – all in split second actions and reactions)
= ??? TBs of data

What's the quality of most of the communication you have with your friends?

4. TAKING STOCK OF OUR OWN WORLD OF FRIENDS

Given your definition of a friend, consider these questions...

- Jesus says we should 'love our neighbour', but does that mean we should treat everyone with the same level of friendship? If not, then what do you think it does mean?
 - How many close, personal friends do you think you need to function well in life?
 - Social media and other forms of communication have made it easier to stay in touch with people who are not in the same location as you. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being able to stay in contact with friends even when we're in different physical locations?
- Take a few moments to consider these questions on your own, then share your reflections as you feel free to do so:
 - I may know lots of people, but am I a *good* friend to at least a few of them? Who?
 - Do I have any *good* friends that I can rely on? Who?
 - Is there a 'next step' I can take to improve one or some of my friendships?



THOUGHT TO FINISH

"Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family" (Prov 18:24 Message Bible). Ruth & Naomi and David & Jonathan gave us examples of people who were willing to make costly sacrifices for the sake of their friends. Jesus, the 'friend of sinners', also showed us the ultimate sacrificial commitment of love for his friends as he shared with them not just his words and his time, but also his very life. These days, it seems as though the word 'friend' doesn't carry with it the same depth of meaning it used to. But in the Bible, the emphasis is on quality, not quantity. Spreading yourself too thinly devalues everything. With this in mind, let's bring some good news to our relating: be a *good* friend for someone today.



9. HOME & CAR DISCIPLESHIP

Helping our children find and follow Jesus in the flow of normal life

Children are a gift from God. The gift, however, is not actually the child. Rather, the gift is the privilege of being a parent to this boy or girl, looking after them on God's behalf. This is no easy thing! Life can be complicated and busy: pre-school, school, sports, dance practice, birthday parties, socialising, trips away, technology struggles, negotiating sleepovers, family squabbles... the list goes on. And on top of this, parents are trying to live an adult life as well. No doubt, at times it can feel as though you are running around in circles, with half your life spent in the car. So in the mix of this, what can we do to take up our responsibility of passing on faith in Jesus to our children?



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

In Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Moses talks about the commands from the Lord that the people need to follow and how they are to pass these on to future generations. Let's use this as a guide to help us think about discipling our children.

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (printed on next page) and consider the following questions:

GENERATIONS

6:2 "you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God"

- It isn't enough to just help your children. The third generation also needs to be considered. What parts of your faith and life would you want to see your (potential or actual) grandchildren holding to?

EXAMPLE OF PARENTS

6:5 "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength"

- Family members get to see more of 'the real you' than others do. What might your children have to hear and see of you for them to believe you love the Lord? Or alternatively, what might be typical signs to show them you aren't doing as well at this as you might normally do?

DIFFERENT WAYS TO COMMUNICATE FAITH

6:7 *"Impress them on your children"*

In other Bible versions, this verse says:

"tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time..." (CEV)

"Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are..." (The Message)

Verse 7 goes on to talk about different settings to do this:

6:7 *"talk about them when you sit at home..."*

- What can you do to nurture faith while sitting at the dinner table?

6:7 *"...and when you walk (drive) along the road"*

- How can you make the most of your "captured car-time" together?

6:7 *"...when you lie down and when you get up."*

- Are there some bed-time or morning routines you could try with your children involving the Bible and/or prayer?

6:9 *Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

- What messages does your home environment communicate? (paintings/pictures, books, furniture layout, ...). To help promote godliness and good relationships, are there any visual or physical changes to your home that you could try?

HEART VS GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

6:6 *"these commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts"*

- Routines can be useful but they can also cause you to get stuck in a rut. How will you know if your family has 'faith routines' that have lost connection with the heart? What can you do about it

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3 Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

- Deuteronomy 6:1-9



THOUGHT TO FINISH

In all likelihood, most of us feel we could do better to help our children know Jesus and grow in faith. Fortunately, the Lord knows our weaknesses and he remembers that we are dust (Psalm 103:14). Rather than beating ourselves up about it, let's just do the best we can with what we've got and prayerfully trust the Lord to fill in the gaps. Let's pray for something we can do this week to disciple our children, then do it. And let's pray the same again next week, and the week after. They may seem like little things to us, but the Lord is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine with our efforts to build faith in these children he loves so much. Try it. It could be the most important thing you do all week. (Don't have physical children? Apply the principles in this study with those you are discipling.)



10. SUMMARY

[14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:14–17 (ESV)



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Go back over the studies in the On the Journey studies and briefly note down the main new things you have learnt, or the things you already knew but have been freshly reminded of ...

- About God...
- About yourself...
- About your world...

God may have got your attention on one, two, or more things you need to do as a result of going through these studies. You will have the best chance of succeeding in these things if you tell someone else about them and, if possible if you practically plan when you will do these things. Write these things down somewhere that will help you to act on them!



THOUGHT TO FINISH

The spiritual life God implants within us is meant not only to permeate our beings but also to penetrate and multiply in the lives of others. Followers of Jesus who finish the journey well are marked by ongoing outreach and ministry to invest in the lives of others for their good who are also on the journey. We describe this outlook in Navigators as ‘knowing Christ, making Him known, and helping others do the same’. Those who neglect to implement or pass on the resources, gifts, experiences, and hard-learned insights God has given them miss out on many of the relational blessings that God wants to give his people. Take a moment now and ask God to bring to mind someone who you could help on their lifetime journey with Christ.

THE NAVIGATORS OF NEW ZEALAND

The Navigators of NZ is a non-profit (and non-denominational) organisation that aims to help people find Good News for their life through the story and life of Jesus. We work with people in the areas of developing character, vision and practical skills so that they can follow Jesus in their everyday world. However, this is never just for their own benefit. We help people with the aim of them going on to also help others. This resource is a valuable tool to help you and others on The Journey.

The Navigators of NZ is also part of an international organisation - The Navigators – which is involved in over 100 countries around the world. If you'd like any more info on this, just make contact with us: info@navigators.org.nz or visit our website listed below.

NAVIGATORS CONTACT



P.O. BOX 5344, Papanui,
Christchurch, New Zealand 8542



(+64) 03 351 1377
(+64) 22 351 1355



info@navigators.org.nz

WWW.NAVIGATORS.ORG.NZ

