

Jesus' Church

g r o u p s t u d y



Lesson 8
Built to Last

this book belongs to

date

Make the Most of this Study

The following recommendations will help your Jesus' Church Study Group experience the intended outcomes:

1. Each lesson builds upon the previous lesson, so work together and find a way to cover all eight lessons in as close to eight weeks as possible.
2. Invite everyone to bring their Bibles and pens.
3. If possible, sit at a table to be able to read, write, snack, and be closer to one another.

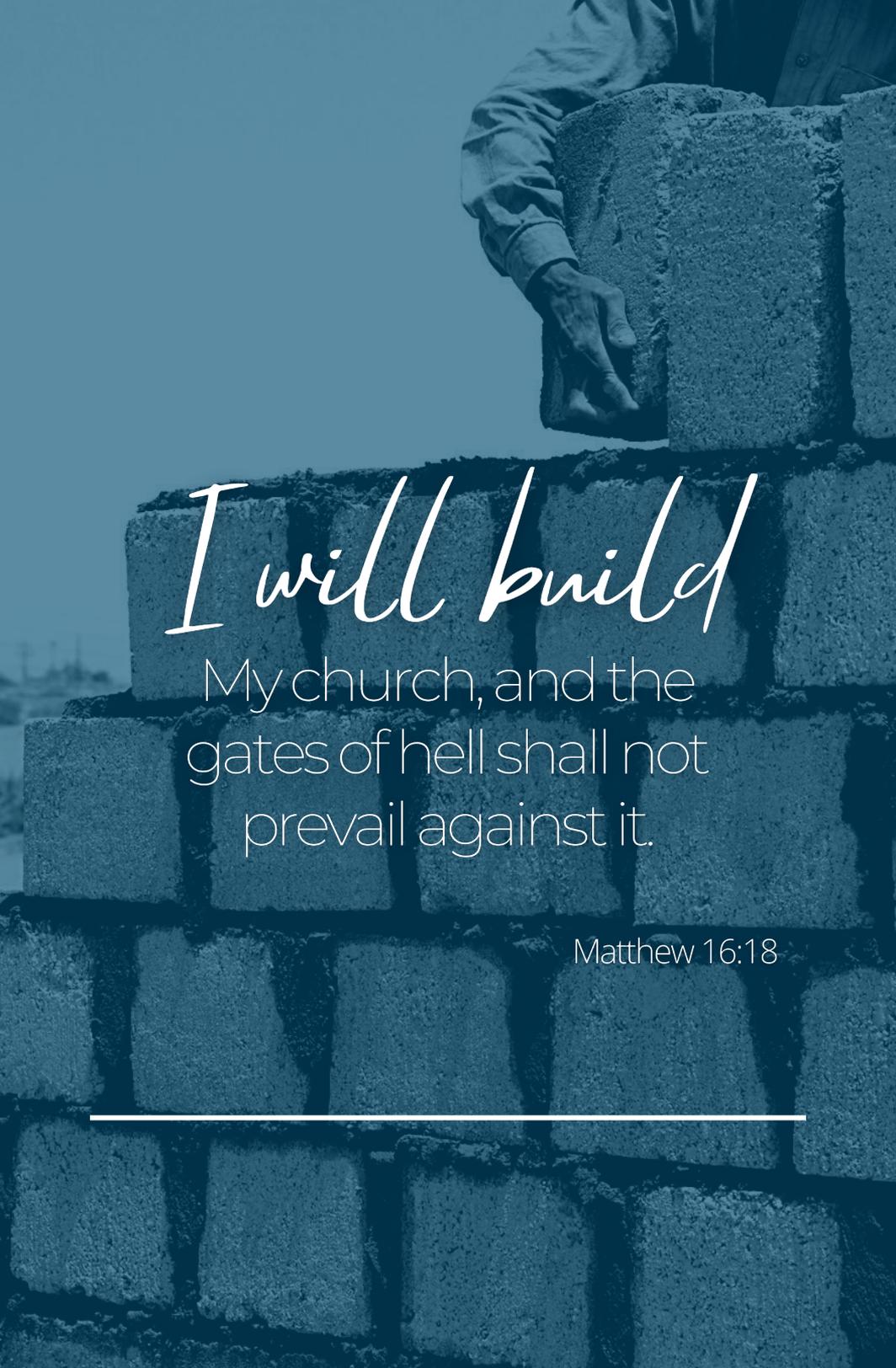
** Supplemental teaching videos and downloadable booklets are all available through the BFAM App. Visit: <https://bit.ly/BFAMapp> or scan the QR code.*



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Though the ESV and certain English versions do not capitalize divine pronouns, they have been capitalized in this resource.

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I will build

My church, and the
gates of hell shall not
prevail against it.

Matthew 16:18

08 | Built to Last

Welcome to “Built to Last,” the Jesus’ Church group study recap! Let’s open in prayer and ask God to teach us today about Jesus’ Church. [Open in prayer.]

Before we begin this week’s lesson, let’s each take no more than 30 to 60 seconds to share something we received from this past week’s scriptures. [Invite everyone to share.]

Thanks to each of you for sharing. At the end of this lesson, you’ll find this week’s 7-Day Plan. Once again, we’ll take 10 to 15 minutes a day to read a short Scripture passage, write the answer to a question or two, and pray that God will use us that day to minister to people.

Okay, let’s begin the Jesus’ Church recap lesson called, “Built to Last.” This lesson will both walk us through a review of what we’ve studied—including a few updates not in the original lessons—as well as help us ensure we have a firm grasp on the most important takeaways from each lesson.

Lesson 1 – THE FOUNDATION

In the New Testament, the word “church” speaks of “assemblies of believers,” whether the Church worldwide, a local or house church, or a grouping of house churches such as “the church of Ephesus,” or a church network.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, “On this rock [petra] I will build My church.” This tells us three things: that Jesus builds His Church, that the Church belongs to Jesus, and that Jesus builds His Church on a solid “rock” foundation.

What is that solid rock foundation?

In both the Old and New Testaments God speaks of Jesus as the foundation. Isaiah 28:16 says, “Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for the foundation” (NASB), and 1 Corinthians 3:11 says, “No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” So Jesus Himself is the foundation of Jesus’ Church.

But how are we, the Church, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ?

Here's how Jesus explained it in Luke 6:47–49:

“Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock [petra]. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Salvation and the forgiveness of sins come by grace alone, and there is nothing we can do to earn them. We can only accept them by faith. However, becoming a solid believer who is firmly built on the foundation of Jesus Christ as part of Jesus’ Church requires follow-through. Jesus explains that this happens when we’ve truly made Him our Lord so that we regularly come to Him, hear His words, and obey them. Having the foundation of a life submitted to Jesus and God’s Word assures that we will not be swept away by hard times, nor by the floods of lies, deceptions, and false beliefs of society.

Lesson 1 Takeaways:

That each of us believes that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world and has confessed Him as our Lord and Savior.

That each of us has committed to follow Jesus and His Word, and not the ways of the world.

Lesson 2 – THE POWER

The Holy Spirit is the power behind Jesus' Church. It's simply naïve to believe that we can do the ministry of Jesus without the power of the Holy Spirit. Not even Jesus did that.

The Holy Spirit was the power behind the ministry of Jesus.

After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, Acts 1:4–8 tell us this:

“[Jesus] ordered [the apostles] not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, 'you heard from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' ... 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Jesus knew that His Church could not carry out His ministry on earth without the power of the Holy Spirit, so He ordered them to wait in Jerusalem until they received it. Jesus was very intentional to teach His disciples about the baptism with the Holy Spirit and power.

Jesus knew that His Church could not carry out His ministry without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then, about seven days later, we read this in Acts 2:1–4:

“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind ... 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Then, in Acts 2:16–18, Peter told a large crowd of people that the prophet Joel predicted this. He said:

“This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on My male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out My Spirit, and they shall prophesy.”

Every member of Jesus' Church needs the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the ministry of Jesus, but why is it so important to Jesus that His followers speak in tongues and prophesy? The apostle Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 14:4:

"The person who speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but the one who prophesies builds up the church" (CSB).

So praying in tongues builds yourself up, and prophesying, which is speaking what God wants to say to other people, builds them up. Jesus wants each of us to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit to be empowered to strengthen and build ourselves up, build up one another, and reach the world.

Lesson 2 Takeaways:

That each person asks our heavenly Father to fill (baptize) them with the Holy Spirit.

That each person continues to be filled with the Holy Spirit, build themselves up daily by praying in tongues, and minister to other people by the power of the Spirit

Lesson 3 – THE TEACHING

The early church in Jerusalem was deeply devoted to and impacted by the teaching of the 12 apostles of Jesus. Acts 2:42 says:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching."

Why was the church so devoted to what the apostles taught them? The New Testament had not been written yet, so the 12 apostles were the most reliable source of how to live as New Testament believers. They had been personally chosen, discipled, and mentored by Jesus for about two and a half years. So there was no need for anyone to guess how Jesus wanted the people of His Church to live, worship, care for each other, and reach the world. These men already knew.

Though these apostles have now died, God inspired some of them, along with others who were not part of the original 12, to accurately write many of their teachings with the help of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21 says, "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (NASB). Now all of us have "the apostles' teaching." It's called the New Testament. The New Testament teaches us how Jesus wants us, the members of His Church, to live our lives.

Just as the apostles taught the early church in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit teaches us today through God's Word. 2 Timothy 3:16–17 says:

"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."

When we read, study and listen to the Scriptures, God speaks to us in real-time. He teaches us, corrects us, and trains us in righteousness so that we may be complete and equipped for every good work that God wants us to do. That's how powerful and alive God's Word is.

*When we read, study and listen to the Scriptures,
God speaks to us in real-time.*

The early church in Jerusalem went to the temple every day to hear the apostles' teaching. Acts 2:46 says, "Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple" (CSB).

We live in a world that pressures people to comply with modern-day beliefs and lifestyles, many of which are prohibited by God. Unfortunately, many believers are caving to these pressures and approving of what the Bible calls sin.

This is why God wants us to read and study our Bibles every day, especially the New Testament. Feeding on God's Word daily as individuals, and then studying and discussing the Word together, strengthens us, guides us, and ensures that we're hearing what God is saying to us. Like the apostles in the early church, God gave us His Word to be our most reliable source, with which we can discern what is true and what is not. By learning from God's Word, and knowing His ways more intimately, we can identify and reject every lie, deception, and false belief. We, the members of Jesus' Church, must cling to God's Word every day so that we follow the ways of Jesus.

Lesson 3 Takeaways:

We must all read our Bibles every day, especially the New Testament.

We must also regularly study God's Word with other believers so that we better understand what God is saying to us.

Lesson 4 – THE FELLOWSHIP

The second priority of the early church in Jerusalem was “the fellowship.” The Greek word translated “fellowship” in Acts 2:42 is *koinonia* (koy-nohn-ee´-ah). *Koinonia* is a term that conveys a sense of commonality, solidarity, and shared responsibility.

Koinonia is used about 20 times in the New Testament to describe how the members of Jesus’ Church should love, share, participate, partner, and give. This teaches us that the fellowship is much more than socializing.

Jesus Himself was devoted to the fellowship of His Church. In fact, He sacrificed for it long before asking anyone else to. And now we have been invited into the very fellowship that Jesus started. And here’s the best part: Jesus is still participating in the fellowship. The apostle John wrote in 1 John 1:3 that “our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Though John wrote this letter over 50 years after he and the other apostles had walked with Jesus, they were still enjoying that same fellowship with Jesus.

The New Testament teaches us that the fellowship of believers includes sharing both natural things and spiritual things. Read what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:26:

“Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything is to be done for building up” (CSB).

This tells us that the New Testament church was not a gathering where a few gifted people sang and spoke while everyone else watched and enjoyed. It was, rather, intended to be like a spiritual potluck, where each member contributes different kinds of spiritual nourishment.

The church was . . . intended to be like a spiritual potluck,

This is virtually impossible in a large gathering, but church gatherings in the New Testament primarily took place in homes with smaller groups of people.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul lists nine gifts or ways that the Holy Spirit manifests Himself to help believers strengthen and build up one another. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 says:

“A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good: 8 to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, 9 to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, different kinds of tongues, to another, interpretation of tongues. 11 One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each person as He wills” (CSB).

Whenever we come together we should take time to pray and allow the Holy Spirit to use us to minister to one another with the power of the Holy Spirit. It could happen any time and often works well after singing worship and praise to God and with some music playing.

Lesson 4 Takeaways:

Each of us should be committed to the fellowship of Jesus' Church, and therefore to one another as members of His body.

Whenever we come together, we should allow for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and each person should pray that the Holy Spirit will use them to humbly minister to others.

Lesson 5 – THE BREAD

On the Passover of all Passovers Jesus instituted a new and simple practice which is often called, “Communion” or “the Lord's Supper.” This simple meal was to commemorate Jesus being killed as the long-awaited sinless, human, Passover Lamb who paid for the sins of the world. The Lord's Supper is often referred to in the New Testament by the terms “break bread,” “breaking bread,” or “breaking of bread.” Though the Lord's Supper was typically practiced during a regular meal, the term “breaking of bread” specifically refers to the Lord's Supper portion of that meal.

Acts 2:42 tells us that the early church in Jerusalem devoted themselves to this practice. The breaking of bread, as simple as it was, was always intended to play a major role in Jesus' Church.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 11:23–26:

"The Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (NKJV).

Jesus initiated the Lord's Supper during a meal and it seems that celebrating the Lord's Supper during a meal continued to be the norm during the first century.

Jesus began by giving us a simple way to remember Him using a very common and available resource, bread. After giving thanks, Jesus took unbroken bread and broke it in front of His disciples as a demonstration. He also spoke words to ensure that the message was clear. He said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you." We are to remember that we were those whose bodies should have been broken for our own sins, but Jesus gave His body to be broken in our place. He not only did this to spare us from punishment and eternal death, but He also wanted to pay for our healing, peace, restoration, and wholeness.

After supper, Jesus took a single cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." Just as the bread symbolized Jesus' body, so the "fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29) in the cup symbolized Jesus' blood, the only innocent blood in the world. Not only was His innocent blood poured out for our forgiveness (Matthew 26:28), but He said He would also be swearing an oath with His blood to keep a new covenant. Drinking while discussing these truths is intended to build our faith to receive everything Jesus paid for.

Along with sharing regular meals together, Jesus wants us to regularly share the Lord's Supper to remember Him and what He did for us, as well as what He has now called us to do because of His sacrifice.

Lesson 5 Takeaways:

We should find times to share regular meals together with our church family.

We should regularly—and often—celebrate the Lord's Supper with each other, with or without a regular meal.

We should look for ways to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a similar manner as Jesus did; but also by sharing in conversation about what His sacrifice means for us, as well as the new covenant.

Lesson 6 – THE PRAYERS

God's will does not always come to pass on the earth. Although God is sovereign over the entire universe, He chose to give human beings dominion over the earth. This is why Jesus taught us to pray to the Father saying, "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Jesus taught His disciples to give much time to prayer. In Acts 6:4 the apostles insisted, "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." They knew that if they did not pray, the will of God would not come to pass. This is why the Acts 2 church devoted themselves to "the prayers" (Acts 2:42). Jesus had convinced the apostles that prayer is what releases the powers of heaven, and the apostles then convinced the Acts 2 church of this truth. Now, Jesus is convincing us.

The early church was not simply devoted to praying—they were devoted to praying the various ways the apostles taught them. Prayers mentioned in the New Testament include praise, thanksgiving, worship, confession, petition, supplication, intercession, agreement, praying in the Spirit (tongues), healing, deliverance, and blessing.

Jesus taught His disciples to give much time to prayer.

One of the reasons prayer is so powerful is that it exercises authority over the kingdom of darkness. Jesus said in Luke 10:19:

“Behold, I give you the authority . . . over all the power of the enemy” (NKJV).

What good does it do to have authority over our enemy if we don't use it? We must pray.

The Bible doesn't teach that God answers every prayer but, rather, the prayers that meet certain criteria. One important criterion is that we pray for things in God's will. 1 John 5:14–15 says:

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him” (NIV).

So, knowing the will of God is important to praying prayers of faith. The good news is, God sent His Word—the Bible—to reveal His will, so we should pray according to the Word of God.

Praying alone can produce great results. James 5:16 says, “The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect” (CSB). This is why 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to “pray without ceasing.”

Jesus also taught us that praying in agreement with others is extra powerful. He said in Matthew 18:19–20:

“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.”

This is not a prayer of hoping or wishing but a prayer of absolute agreement in faith. In this prayer everyone prays, everyone agrees, and everyone believes.

Lesson 6 Takeaways:

We should each be spending daily time in active prayer.

We should also have regular times of prayer together, at least weekly.

Lesson 7 – THE MISSION

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines a mission as “a specific task with which a person or a group is charged.” So what is the mission of Jesus’ Church?

Though Jesus gave many teachings and commands during His ministry on earth, He focused on one specific command just before His ascension. It’s commonly known as “the Great Commission.” Said plainly, the Great Commission is Jesus commissioning His Church with their mission.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19–20:

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (NIV).

Let's highlight a few things. First, Jesus told them to "go and make disciples." Jesus didn't teach them to focus on gathering crowds, but rather on making disciples of individuals.

Second, Jesus told them to make disciples "of all nations."

Third, He told them to baptize every new disciple in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, He told them to teach the disciples to obey everything He had commanded them, which would certainly include this commission to make disciples of all nations.

Jesus wasn't only commissioning His disciples, He was commissioning every person who would ever put their faith in Him to make disciples.

The most effective strategies God is using today are called Disciple-Making Movements (formerly Church Planting Movements). The focus of Disciple-Making Movements is not on growing large churches but rather on making disciples. In other words, they focus on quality, not quantity. But how effective are they at reaching people?

Jesus was commissioning every person who would ever put their faith in Him.

According to Missions Frontiers, the average campus-style church in America before the Covid-19 pandemic had about 75 members. In contrast, the average Disciple Making Movement has about 100,000 members and is still growing rapidly.

BFAM Movements is a ministry that provides free training, resources, and support to believers, churches, and ministries to start Disciple-Making Movements. These resources are available on the BFAM App as well as the website www.BFAMmovements.com.

The BFAM Strategy is a strategy that individuals, churches, and ministries can use to train disciples to make disciples that make disciples, leaders to train leaders that train leaders, and churches to plant churches that plant churches.

We recommend that house churches study through books of the Bible, beginning with the Gospel of John, the book of Acts, and the book of Romans, in that order.

There are also two other foundational group studies we recommend for each house church to help launch The BFAM Strategy:

- **Jesus' Gifts Group Study** – a study of the leadership gifts that Jesus gave to His Church.
- **Jesus' Commission Group Study** – a study of how to carry out the mission of Jesus' Church—the Great Commission—to make disciples of all nations.

Jesus sacrificed His whole life for us, He commanded us to make disciples of all nations, and He said in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will obey My commandments” (GW). If we are truly His Church, we simply cannot refrain from pursuing Jesus' Commission.

Lesson 7 Takeaways:

Each of us should be actively discipling at least one person.

When we meet together, we should pray for more disciples, and for new churches for these new disciples.

Discussion Questions

1. Which takeaways in this lesson do we need to work on right away?
2. As we move into the Jesus' Gifts study in the coming week(s), is our meeting time/place still workable for everyone?
3. Have we decided if this group is an ongoing house church? If so, what ministry or network is it a part of?
4. What prayer needs do you have this week that we can pray for?

7-Day Plan | Week Eight

Day 1 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Matthew 16:13–20

Write: Considering how you might have grown in your understanding since week 1, who do you now say that Jesus is?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

James 1:5

Day 2 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:1–5

Write: Should you increase in your personal practice of praying in tongues? Should you pray more to speak prophetically?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 3 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Write: How valuable is God's Word for your life, personally? How can you make more time for it?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 4 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:26

Write: When you "come together" with other believers, do you ask to be used by God to build someone else up? Is it possible that your gatherings would be even better if you expected to be used by God?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 5 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Write: If we "proclaim the Lord's death" in communion, does that mean that we are active or passive participants in the Lord's Supper? What does that mean to you?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 6 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Matthew 18:19–20

Write: Should you make corporate prayer a regular part of your life? How and with whom? Could you reach out to someone right now to set that up?

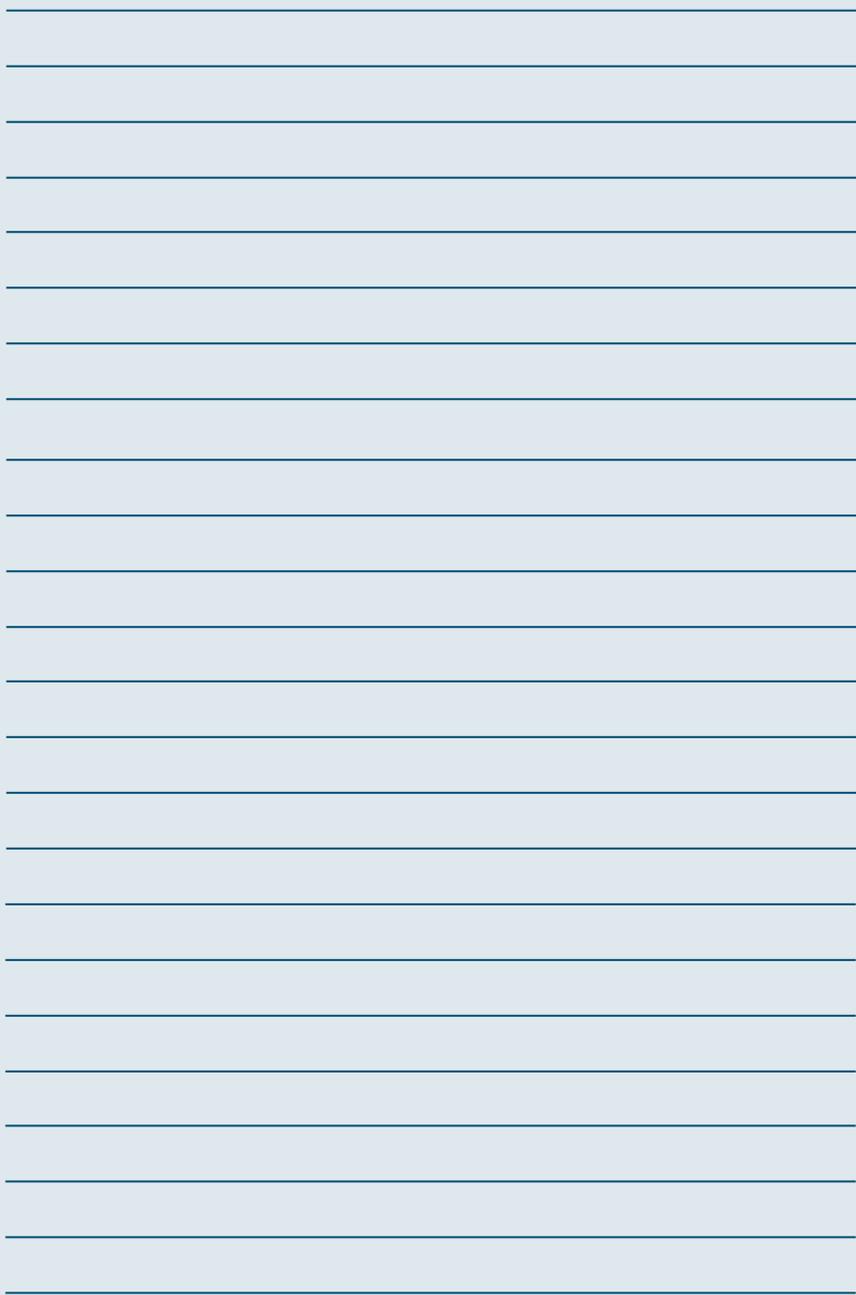
Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 7 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Matthew 28:19–20

Write: Jesus gave this commission to each of us. How do you feel you are doing at taking ownership of this command? Could you pray today to be led to begin a discipleship journey with someone?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.



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PO Box #4970

Anaheim, CA 92803

BFAMmovements.com