



**41 DAY PRAYER  
& DEVOTION GUIDE**

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Pray for One 41 Day Prayer & Devotion Guide  
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**GIVE ME ONE**

## CONFESS

They say that confession is good for the soul.

I'm not exactly sure who "they" are, but I can confirm from personal experience that tremendous freedom is derived from confession.

We tend to store things up in our souls. We pack the good and the bad of life's experiences into our core being. We hoard the good like private, hidden treasures and lock away the bad deep within in hopes of protecting our dirty little secrets.

God designed our souls to be more clearinghouses than storehouses. Experiences come in and are processed. Lessons are learned. Memories are made. Emotions are examined.

An outlet of expression is needed to prevent the soul from becoming overcrowded and bogged down. Confession is God's provision for an uncluttered soul.

There are two primary types of confession. The first is a profession of truth or belief. In Christian circles this is often referred to as a "confession of faith." The second is admitting wrongdoing. This would be the "confession of sin." Both are essential for streamlining the soul to allow for maximum spiritual efficiency.

These two types of confession are represented in the first chapter of 1 John.

*"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning*

*the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.*

*This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”*

**1 John 1:1-10**

Regularly confessing the authentic nature of Christianity prevents subtle detours of faith. We proclaim what we have experienced in Christ and confess His goodness, grace, mercy, and love. This type of confession prevents pride by continually making Jesus the focal point of faith.

**Likewise, confessing sin delivers us from the fantasyland of holier-than-thou make believe.** This allows us to be living testimonies to the ultimate truth we profess. When we acknowledge our sins and trust God to handle them, our souls are released from oppression and are free to dynamically echo God's grace.

Confession demolishes the dams of self-reliance and ego-centric faith so that a raging river of life can run through us. This living water refreshes all who we come in contact with.

We begin with confession because confession is the place to start. It is a first step on the journey toward fruitful Kingdom expansion. Confession sets the stage for an entirely new worldview and ushers in a hope that will never disappoint.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Write a personal statement of faith. Who is Jesus? Who are you in relation to Him? How has God saved you? What are you saved from? What are you saved for? What purpose does God have for your life?
2. Confess your sins. Write them down. There is power in naming your sins and seeing them written down. Release them onto the paper and hold nothing back. As you confess you will find that the subtler sins of the heart will begin to rise to the surface. These can be the hardest to spot and gain freedom from. Don't stop confessing until you feel that you have emptied yourself completely.
3. How does sin distract us from the mission of Jesus?
4. Have you experienced perversions in Christianity? Write down some of the things that Christians pursue in place of Jesus and His mission.

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Begin by confessing your faith in Jesus. Tell God what you believe about Him and what He has done for you. Confess your sins to Him. Ask God to reveal anything that is hidden within your heart. Boldly seek God's purpose for your life and then submit yourself to Him. Ask God to give you One to share His love with.



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## DISCOVER

There is nothing in life quite as exciting as a genuine “Eureka!” moment.

Humans desire significance and purpose. We search for something of value beyond a temporal existence. It does not require much wisdom to know that earthly riches are an illusion, prosperity is fleeting, and the physical world is in a steady state of decay.

Hope cannot be found in material things, so the search is on.

Finding Jesus is a game changer. A true understanding of the eternal value of knowing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, produces passionate life change. There is a new aim and trajectory for existence. Jesus holds ultimate value and all other things and relationships become secondary.

Jesus described this type of “Eureka!” moment like finding hidden treasure.

*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”*

**Matthew 13:44-46**

There is no speculation involved in these two parables. The man found a hidden treasure. The merchant found a pearl of great value. The discovery was made, but further action was required to possess the treasure. Selling everything to acquire a

found treasure of great value is not risky. It is a logical and savvy course of action.

Knowing Jesus is a “Eureka!” moment, but it is not our last. We meet Jesus and surrender everything to His lordship, but there is still a search for significance. Christian people want to know what we are living for. Why are we here? What is the meaning of our continued existence? Why can’t we just die and go to Heaven now?

The answer to these questions is found in discovering the essence of God’s heart. Jesus described Himself as a shepherd and He told this parable:

*“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.’*

*Then Jesus told them this parable: ‘Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.’”*

**Luke 15:1-7**

The heart of God beats for the One who is lost. He is not willing that any of them perish. He sent His Son to save the world, and when we discover Jesus, we also discover His mission.

**Praying for One is a “Eureka!” moment because this simple prayer aligns our hearts to God’s. We treasure what He treasures and the search for One is on.**

When we ask God to give us One to share His love with, we are praying His will into our lives. Pray expectantly and confidently. You have discovered something worth living for.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. When you wake up in the morning, is there a sense of urgency in your relationship with Jesus? Are you eager for what the day might hold in regards to building God’s Kingdom? What compels you to get out of bed?
2. Have you had a “Eureka!” moment? Have you found something of great value that altered the course of your life?
3. In your continued search for significance, what do you expect to find?
4. If you pray for One to share God’s love with, do you think that He will give you One? How might your life change if your primary objective was to search for the One?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Seek Jesus. Ask Him what His will is. Ask Him to reveal your primary purpose for living. Search for that “Eureka!” moment in Him. Ask God to give you One to share His love with.

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## REPENT

Repent!

That's right...repent with an exclamation point!

Sadly, most people who see the word repent with an exclamation point think of an angry preacher screaming at them. There is some sort of post-traumatic stress disorder that sends them flashing back to an old-fashioned turn-or-burn sermon. You might have even flinched when you read the word (with the exclamation point) just now.

Repent is not an angry word. It is an exciting word. It is a wonderful word that holds great hope and new beginnings. The exclamation of "Repent!" ought to be done with a smile on the face and happiness in the heart.

Repentance does not merely mean to stop sinning. There is a much richer and fulfilling purpose for the ongoing action of repenting. **Repent means to adopt a new worldview. It provides a new lens for experiencing life and making decisions.**

Most people look at the world through the lens of self. The primary concern is about how situations will impact the individual and his or her personal goals and ambitions. This self-centered attitude is far from satisfying and is completely counter-Christ.

Followers of Jesus are in a continual state of repentance through the renewing of the mind.

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”*

**Romans 12:1-2**

Praying for One is active repentance. As you pray for One, your primary desire begins to change. You are moved beyond prayers for self and personal kingdom building. Praying for One takes the focus off of self and puts it onto building Christ’s eternal Kingdom.

God’s will becomes clear. Confusion is eliminated as you begin to desire what God desires. His good, pleasing, and perfect will is to seek and save the lost. Praying for One thrusts you into the middle of God’s will, and life explodes with passion and purpose.

When you pray for One, you will find that you are on the ready. There is an expectancy that comes from praying God’s expressed will into your life. Every situation and person will look different to you. You will be asking questions like, “Is this my One?” and “Could this be a pray-for-One moment?”

Every encounter becomes divine as you ask God to move His love through you to others. Praying for One is repentance at its finest.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Is “repent” a word that you are familiar with? At first glance, what emotions did the word evoke? In light of today’s devotion, can you get excited about repenting?
2. Describe your current worldview. How do you process information and make decisions? What are your top three priorities?
3. Carefully examine your prayer life. When you pray, what do you ask for? Are your prayers focused more on self or on building God’s Kingdom?
4. How do you think your view of the world would change if Christ’s mission were constantly at the forefront of your mind?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God for a new worldview. Ask Him to show you the beauty of repentance. Seek the will of God as you pray about what Jesus desires most. Ask God to give you One to share His love with.



[illegible]



**ONCE YOU  
NAME IT...  
YOU ARE  
RESPONSIBLE  
FOR IT**

## ANYONE

“God, give me One...ANYONE. I don’t care who it is...just give me One.” God’s love cannot be contained. It must be expressed.

**God’s love is meant to flow into the heart and out of the heart. It is a raging river of life that cuts across the landscape and refreshes everyone.**

When God’s love is not expressed, a dam is created and the waters begin to stagnate. People who do not actively share God’s love end up with shallow pools of death inside. They are not refreshed nor can they refresh anyone.

God’s love is living water. As long as it is flowing, it carries sustenance, energy, and transformational power. When one is connected fully to God’s love, there is an urgency to find an outlet of expression. His love cannot be held in. If it is not shared then a disconnection will occur on the other end. We pull away from God when we do not allow His love to flow through us.

It is impossible to grow in Christ when you are not actively sharing His love with others. A relationship with God is very much a communal experience. Our relational God longs for us to connect to Him and to others. His love is the bond that holds us all together. You cannot love God and not love people.

The story of the woman at the well in John chapter 4 is a great example of how God’s love flows. The Samaritan woman Jesus encountered was alone and most likely ostracized from her community because of her life experiences. She received love from Jesus and immediately went and shared that love with anyone who would listen.

*“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’*

*‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’”*

**John 4:10-14**

*“Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?’ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.”*

**John 4:28-30**

Living water flows. If you are connected to Jesus, then you are attached to an everlasting supply of love. You will never run out of love. There is no need to store it away or hoard it. Be desperate to share God's love. Plead with Him to give you One...anyone...to share His love with today.

A general prayer for One will put you on high alert for who God might put before you each day. Anyone could be your One. Life gets exciting when you are on the steady lookout for opportunities to express God's love. Pray for One, and living water will flow through you.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. Have you ever seen a stagnant pool of water? How did you react to it? Could you imagine drinking from it or using it to clean and refresh yourself? Describe what you feel when you picture water that is dead.
2. Have you ever put up a dam, blocking the outflow of God's love from your heart? What kinds of attitudes and behaviors create these dams? What is the impact on your relationship with God and others?
3. What do you think about praying for anyone? How could God use that prayer to change the way you look at people?
4. Are you open to sharing God's love with anyone? In what ways could God move you out of your comfort zones by praying this prayer?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to give you One...ANYONE. Tell Him that you don't care who it is...just ask Him to give you One. Plead with God to destroy every dam you have built so that His love can flow through you like a rushing river of life.

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## SOMEONE

There is nothing in life quite as exciting as a genuine “Eureka!” Praying for anyOne to share God’s love with will always lead you to someOne.

God will lay a specific name on your heart. Chances are that there is a family member, friend, neighbor, co-worker, etc., in your life who does not yet know Jesus. As you pray for One, you will end up praying for someOne by name.

Praying daily for that person by name will cause you to look at him or her differently. That person will become your One. You will not give up on that person. You will not stop praying for that person. You will take active steps to repeatedly share Jesus with that person.

This is simply the nature of God’s love. It is universal and personal at the same time. God sent His Son Jesus because He so loved the world. Jesus came to save the world. The global expression of God’s love though is revealed through individual encounters. This is why Jesus told stories about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. **God is consumed with finding lost people and restoring them to His family One at a time.** Every individual is important, and the search will not cease until all are found.

The focal point of the prodigal son parable in Luke 15 is not the action of a wayward son but the undying love of a father. Sons go wayward. It is what they do. That part of the story is not shocking in the least. The father’s response is what would have elicited a reaction from Jesus’ audience.



*“Jesus continued: ‘There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, “Father, give me my share of the estate.” So he divided his property between them.*

*“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.*

*“When he came to his senses, he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.” So he got up and went to his father.*

*“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”*

**Luke 15:11-20**

The father was looking for his son. He saw him from a long way off and was filled with compassion for him. Just picture a loving father scanning the horizon daily in hopes that his son would eventually return.

When the father spotted his son, he immediately took off running to him. This father was gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and rich in love. The father in this story is our Heavenly Father. He looks for us, runs to us, and restores us to His family.

The Father never forgets about his lost son and neither should we. As you pray for One, God will give you someOne. He will

give you a name that you are to pray for and search for daily. God will fill you with compassion for your One and He will use you to help bring him or her back home.

It may take years of faithful prayer and actively sharing God's love before your One comes home to the Father, but when God gives you someOne you just can't give up.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Who do you know that is far from God? Who is the first person that comes to mind? Why do you think you thought of that person first? What is special about him or her or about the relationship you have with that person?
2. Have you ever thought that someone was so far from God that he or she would never come back? Have you ever been tempted to write somebody off as so lost that they could never be found? How do you think God feels about such sentiments? How does God want you to feel?
3. How will praying for someOne specifically by name every day change your relationship with that person? What are some ways that God will show His love and compassion through you?
4. How do you think your attitude will change toward your One?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Pray for One...anyOne...but as you do, pay attention to any names that pop into your head. When God gives you someOne, pray for him or her daily by name. Ask others to join you in praying for your One and then be on the steady lookout for opportunities to share God's love.

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## RESPONSIBLE

Humans are created in God's image and are called to share in His work. In Genesis chapter 1, God gave Adam and Eve authority to rule over His creation. In Genesis chapter 2, God allowed Adam to name every living creature.

*"Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals."*

**Genesis 2:19-20**

God did the work of creation and then invited man to participate in the creative process. In allowing Adam to name the creation, God bestowed on him authority and responsibility over creation. The old adage is true: "Once you name it, you are responsible for it."

It is kind of like having a stray dog that hangs around your house. You can try to ignore it, but if it sticks around long enough, you will give it a name of some sort. Eventually you will refer to the dog as Dog, Mangy Mutt, Spot, Fluffy, Buster, or some such variation. As soon as you name that dog, you become responsible for it. You will show the dog affection, put out food and water, and try to look for its owner or find it a home.

When parents have a child, one of their very first responsibilities is to name that child. Considerable thought goes into naming a child because names are a big deal. Parents name their children, and then they are responsible for them. No one else gets to name that child, but no one else is as responsible for the child's welfare either.

Something similar happens when we pray for One. In praying a general prayer for God to give you One to share His love with, a specific name will often pop into your head. God will give you the name of someone you know, and this person will become your One.

In addition to your general prayers for One, you will begin to pray specifically for the name or names God gives you. As you pray for people by name daily, you will sense a building responsibility for them. It will dramatically change your relationships and the way you view your Ones.

**When God gives you a name, you are responsible for sharing His love with that person. If you do not do it, nobody will.** God will call you to do this work, and His call must not be ignored. Sometimes God will give you a name of someone who is outside of your comfort zone. God did this to Peter in Acts chapter 10.

*“While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: ‘You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?’*

*Cornelius answered: ‘Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, “Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.” So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.’”*

**Acts 10:27-33**

God sent Peter to Cornelius. It went against everything Peter had ever known to go to Cornelius' house to share God's love with him. Cornelius was a Gentile and Peter was a Jew. God was working on the hearts of both men at the same time. The same thing happens when we pray for One. God prepares our hearts to go and share, and He prepares the hearts of our Ones to receive.

When God gives us specific names, He will also provide opportunities for His love to flow through us. We are responsible for being open, ready, and available to share God's love with the names He gives us.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Have you ever given a name or even a nickname to a person? In what ways did you feel more responsible for him or her after giving the name? Think about family members, friends, etc., to whom you have given a name. What do the names you gave them reveal about your relationships with them?
2. Who is God laying on your heart to share His love with? What fears do you have about being responsible for sharing God's love with that person?
3. What are some obstacles or barriers that might get in the way of God's love moving through you to that person?
4. How do you think praying for One will prepare your heart and the One's heart? Are you willing to take action to share God's love with any name He may give you? How do you think praying for specific names will change your relationships with those people?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to give you One to share His love with. Be still and silent. Listen to discover specific names God will give you. Pray for the names God gives you daily, and aggressively look for opportunities to share His love with your Ones.

[illegible]

## ENTRUSTED

Christians are not just recipients of God's grace; we are also participants in sharing His grace. God entrusts us with the greatest treasure imaginable. He saves us by His grace and then puts us to work as distributors of His grace.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

**There are specific things that God has prepared for us to do. If we fail to do those things, then they will remain undone.** The gravity of what is entrusted to us is immense. Praying for One prepares the mind for action so that we are able to recognize the good works God has prepared for us to do.

We are entrusted with the mission of Jesus. As His Church, we must continue His work of seeking and saving the lost. If we do not do it, then nobody will. The stakes are high and eternity hangs in the balance.

Jesus told a parable to describe how we are entrusted with the greatest riches of the Kingdom of Heaven.

*“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But*



*the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*

*"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'*

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

*"The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'*

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

*"Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'*

*"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

**Matthew 25:14-30**

A day of judgment awaits all humankind. On that day we must give an account for what was entrusted to us. The good and faithful servants doubled what was entrusted to them, but the wicked and lazy servant merely protected what he was responsible for.

Our salvation is not meant to be buried deep inside to be protected from worldly contamination. Salvation is a treasure that must be shared and multiplied. There are many who claim to know Christ but have zero understanding of the implications of authentic faith. Out of fear, they bury their treasure and squander their real purpose for living.

The primary reason so many churchgoers are miserable is because they are not actively investing in the Kingdom of Heaven. They sit around waiting for Jesus to come, while the world He so desperately loves remains lost and separated from Him.

You are God's handiwork. You are entrusted with the greatest treasure the world has ever known. Pray for One and do not waste your faith.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

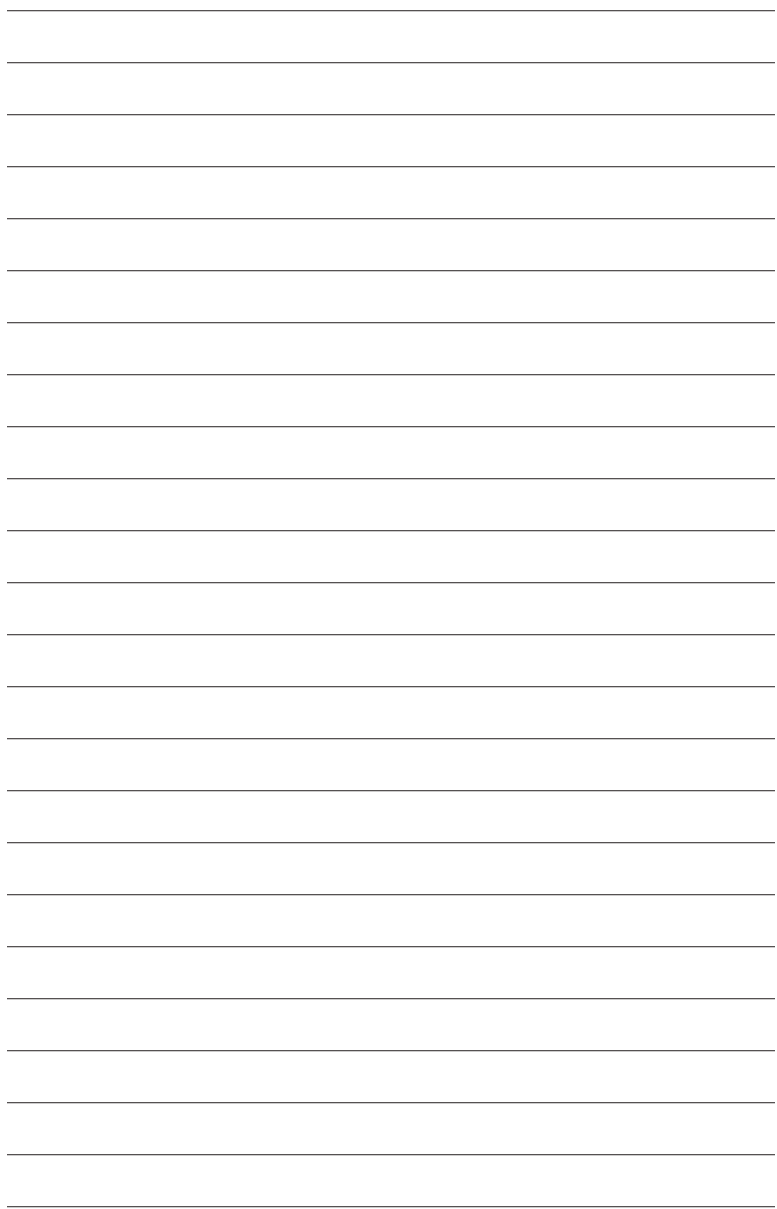
1. Have you ever been entrusted with a great responsibility? How does knowing that God has prepared good works for you to do make you feel?
2. Think about the story that Jesus told about the workers who were entrusted with different amounts of their master's money. Which of those workers' actions most clearly represent how you have invested in God's Kingdom? What are some ways that your attitudes must change in order for you to grow as a faithful servant of Jesus?

3. Faith in Jesus is not a hidden treasure. It is to be shared and multiplied. Do you sense the enormity of the mission you are entrusted with? What are some ways that people try to diminish the responsibility Christians have to share their faith?
4. How do you think praying for One can change those attitudes?

### **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Thank God for the new life He has given you in Christ Jesus. Spend some time praising Him for giving you purpose and meaning. Ask God to prepare you for action so that you will complete every good work He intends for you to do. Pray for One and invest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

[illegible]





# **EXPERTLY COMPLICATED**

## LIGHT

Light is one of the most powerful forces in the universe. It conquers darkness, reveals what is hidden, and drives out fear. Light shows the way and reveals the truth.

Light is only useful when it shines. Hidden lights are wasted energy. Denying our darkened world the light it desperately desires is despicable and disobedient. If the light of Jesus is in you, you are responsible for allowing it to shine.

*“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

**Matthew 5:14-16**

Christians often speak about the differences between religion and relationship.

Religion is typically a structured system of rules and practices that participants navigate in attempt to please their god. Religious experiences are often steeped in tradition and ritual. These practices are foreign to outsiders and can become barriers to evangelistic endeavors. In essence, when religion is the focus, it can actually hide the light instead of magnifying the light.

The relational reality of knowing Jesus removes religious barriers and allows light to shine freely and brightly. The intimidation and competition that religious environments promote are destroyed through the opportunity to have a dynamic, growing relationship with the Creator. People are easily tripped up



by the complexity of religious systems, but the concept of a relationship is something anyone can grasp.

Since all people are different, the individual expressions of relationship will have unique qualities. When we actively create and foster environments for dynamic relationships with Jesus to flourish, His light is magnified within us. People are attracted to the light. They are drawn to people who are alive with hope, purpose, and love.

Christians are relationally connected to God through the lordship of Jesus. While the relationship is indeed personal, it is never meant to be private. An authentic relationship with Jesus demands an outlet for expression. The human heart becomes a beacon of light when it is filled with the love of Jesus.

Jesus declared that you are the light of the world. If you do not shine, then darkness will prevail. This cannot be!

Accept the simple reality of who you are in Christ. Reject any religious sensibilities that you have allowed to shade the light of Jesus. **Allow God to strip away every shred of shady behavior so that His light can burst freely from you.**

Light is only good if it shines. What good are we doing the Kingdom of Heaven if we refuse to shine before others? How will they ever know Jesus if we allow them to remain in darkness?

Praying for One fixes our minds on our purpose and mission. When our primary objective is to share God's love with others, we stop defending the elements of our lives that block the light of Jesus. We are then free to shine and show others the way.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. It is easy to take light for granted. You can flip on a light switch without any thought to how much you depend on the light. What do you love about light? In what ways do you depend on light? Describe the power of light and how you utilize it daily.
2. What are the ramifications of Jesus declaring that you are the light of the world? Do you picture yourself as a city on a hill? Are you a place of refuge that people are drawn to for answers and hope? How can having the proper perspective on who you are in Christ change how others are able to experience Christ through you?
3. In what ways have you allowed the light of Christ to be hidden in you? Have you tried to keep your relationship with Jesus a private matter?
4. Do you have any religious tendencies that repel people instead of inviting them toward Jesus? What sin have you allowed to shade the light that is in you?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to remove anything that is blocking His light from shining within you. Seek a dynamic relationship with Jesus that magnifies His light and attracts others. Pray for One and make necessary sacrifices to be the light of the world.

[illegible]

## EXPERTS

Expertise is a valuable commodity. Experts are generally sought after, revered, honored, set apart, and held in high esteem. Most people strive to achieve in their given fields because expertise is rewarding. It often brings financial gains, respect, and power.

Organized religion is not different in this regard. Jesus had much to say to the religious experts of His day, and most of it was not flattering. One of His chief complaints about the Pharisees was that they complicated the Law and placed heavy burdens on the people.

This is why Jesus said:

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**A relationship with Jesus is not cumbersome or complicated. It is a simple affair that anyone can understand and excel in.** Jesus came to remove obstacles that prevent people from connecting to God. One such obstacle is the faulty notion that expertise in following Him is achieved through navigating an ever-growing complexity of rites, rituals, and religious mumbo-jumbo.

The New Testament book of James is essentially a summary of Jesus’ teachings. It is a fantastically straightforward book that is easy to understand and apply. It defines religious expertise in this way:

*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.*

*“Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”*

**James 1:22-27**

True religious experts have a childlike faith that is accompanied by obedient action. They excel at demonstrating God’s love without regard for reciprocation. The allure of earthly reward lacks luster because the Kingdom being built is not of this world.

As we strive toward expertise in following Jesus, may it be with a growing sense of simplistic conviction. Praying for One strips away the hierarchy and competitive nature of organized religion by leveling the playing field. Every Christian is a valuable participant in building God’s Kingdom. Advanced academic degrees, fancy titles, and various vestments are not the calling cards of Jesus-following experts. God’s love flowing unencumbered is the mark of authentic disciples. They will know us by our love.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. When you think of religious experts, what comes to mind? What similarities do you see between the religious experts of Jesus' day and what Christianity has evolved into today?
2. Describe what you think life looks like for authentic Jesus following experts. What evidence should exist to demonstrate ever-growing devotion to Jesus and His Kingdom-building work?
3. How does knowing that you can (and should) be an expert in following Jesus impact you? Do you feel empowered?
4. What lingering doubts do you have regarding how God intends to use you to build His Kingdom?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God what He thinks about you. Spend some time prayerfully reflecting on how you can be an expert in sharing God's love. Pray for One and commit yourself to allowing God's love to flow through you.

[illegible]

## SIMPLE

Simple does not mean shallow, and complex does not mean deep.

There is a fallacy in religious circles that promotes complexity as a pathway to spiritual depth. This type of thinking flies in the face of Jesus' teachings about childlike faith. Jesus warns us that unless we become like little children, we will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

*"And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'"*

**Matthew 18:3**

There is a temptation to complicate simple matters. Sometimes this is done so that there can be an excuse for disobedience. If we claim that we cannot understand something then how can we be held accountable for not doing it? Pride is another driving force for complicating simple matters. Many complex systems of thought have developed based primarily on the premise of establishing some sort of power or control.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day certainly fell victim to this type of thinking. Jesus was often harsh in His dealings with these experts of the Law. He scolded them for weighing down the people with heavy burdens of complex nonsense. The religious system was so full of rules, regulations, interpretations, adaptations, and misinformation that it was impossible for anyone to navigate.

People were lost. Jesus said that they were like sheep without a shepherd. They had no hope and could not connect relationally



with God. Jesus called people to Himself and into a simple relationship that would allow for tremendous depth.

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**Sadly, much of today’s Christianity has moved away from the simple beauty of knowing Jesus and into the shallow pools of religious complexity.** Academics replace obedience. Knowledge overrides love. Pompousness drives out humility. Judgment belies grace.

Returning to the simple beauty of Christ’s mission makes Jesus accessible to everyone. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.”

Praying for One restores us to a childlike faith that allows for limitless depth.

When our primary desire is to see more people in the Kingdom of Heaven, we press hard after Jesus. Praying for One connects the dots between loving God, loving people, and inviting others to know Him. There is transformational depth in this simple prayer. It aligns your heart with God’s and provides a simple worldview to guide you in following Jesus.

Simple does not mean shallow. In fact, simple is a depth driver. If you long to go deeper in your relationship with Jesus, keep it simple!

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. What are some ways you have seen Christianity morph into a complex religious system instead of a dynamic growing relationship?
2. Describe what you think childlike faith in Jesus looks like. How would you express that kind of faith?
3. How can you be a maturing believer in Jesus while remaining childlike?
4. Are you ever tempted to complicate Christianity? Why do you think people are tempted to turn the simplicity of knowing Jesus and making Him known into a complicated mess?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to help you keep it simple. Prayerfully seek to discover any ways in which you have complicated your relationship with Jesus. Pray for One and commit yourself to the simple mission of Christ.

[illegible]

## PURPOSE

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

His purpose is clear. Regardless of your personal feelings on evangelism and the nature of the evangelical church, the mission of Jesus remains the same. It will not change until every single One is found and restored to the Father.

Consider our most famous verse of scripture. You know what I am referring to. You have seen it at sporting events, heard it in countless sermons, and probably even memorized some version of John 3:16.

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

**John 3:16-17**

The Father sent His son Jesus to earth to save the world. Jesus came to save the world. The purpose of Jesus is to save the world.

After Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, He ascended into Heaven and left His Church here to continue His mission. Jesus gave us His Holy Spirit to empower us to do His work. The Holy Spirit provides supernatural gifts and spiritual fruit to everyone He indwells. The purpose of the gifts and the fruit is to advance the mission of Christ’s Church.

It is imperative that we refrain from squandering these precious resources by wasting them on anything other than the pursuit of Christ’s purpose. God’s heart beats for the One who is lost. When we pray for One, we intentionally align ourselves with

God's will and get in rhythm with His Spirit. **A passionate, unstoppable desire to find Ones who are far from God drives us deeper into a transforming relationship with the Creator. We want what He wants, and our only ambition is to fulfill His purpose.**

In Luke 19, Jesus had an encounter that reveals His heart for Ones who are lost.

*"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.*

*When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.*

*All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'*

*But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'*

*Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.'"*

**Luke 19:1-10**

Mutter as they may, the delusional and self-righteous cannot change the purpose of Jesus. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. The Church is the body of Christ and we remain on earth to fulfill His mission. The Church's every endeavor ought to be connected to our ultimate purpose.

Praying for One connects the dots between growing in Christ and growing Christ's Kingdom. They always go hand in hand, and you cannot have one without the other. Disciples make disciples when disciples do what Jesus did.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What do you think about those people who “muttered” about Jesus going to the house of a sinner? Why do you think they were confused?
2. Have you ever witnessed or participated in similar muttering?
3. Does your personal ambition align with Christ's purpose? Do you want what God wants? What are some goals and desires that pull you away from doing God's will?
4. Can you connect the dots between growing in Christ and growing Christ's Kingdom? How is God doing this in you?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to make His purpose your greatest ambition. Align yourself with God's will by praying for One. Ask God to make His greatest desire your greatest desire and commit yourself to live for His purpose.

[illegible]





# **THE COST OF FREE**

## IDENTITY

God is totally self-sufficient and self-sustaining. He needs nothing.

God does not need your sacrifices, time, efforts, or money. In short, God does not need you.

But He wants you.

Want is better than need. God desires you. He created you to be with Him in His eternity. God longs for you so deeply that He sent His Son to die for you. God only requires one thing in exchange...everything.

Now you may be thinking, "Hold up there, mister. I thought God's grace was free."

Yes, grace is free. Grace is the gift of unmerited favor. You cannot earn grace, but grace demands a response.

Salvation changes identity. A saved person experiences metamorphic transformation. The core identity of the person is changed from sinner into saint, from imperfect to perfect. That transformation then radiates outward from the center, and behaviors change to match the new identity.

God wants all of you, not just a piece of you. His love is a consuming fire that will purify every element of your being.

**Grace is free, but discipleship will cost you everything. You cannot follow Jesus and hold something back. Your full identity must be surrendered to Him.**

Jesus had an encounter with a man who decided that the cost of discipleship was too great. In the story of the Rich Young Ruler, a man of considerable power and wealth approached Jesus and asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus responded by telling him to keep the commandments and the man proudly declared that he had indeed done that.

*“Jesus looked at him and loved him. ‘One thing you lack,’ he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.”*

**Mark 10:21-22**

The man went away sad, but Jesus did not chase him down to renegotiate. There is no doubt that Jesus truly loved the man and wanted him to be His disciple, but discipleship is costly. It is impossible to follow Jesus while holding onto a former identity. In order to be a new creation, the old must be let go.

God longs for you to come to Him and lay down your life at His feet. You are the one thing God wants. Hold nothing back and give Him everything that you are. Then, and only then, authentic discipleship can transpire in your life.

Your identity is the only thing of eternal value you possess, and it is the only thing that God desires. Give yourself fully to Jesus and spend every moment on earth investing in eternity.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What do you value the most? What captures your heart and affections? What do you daydream about and hope for?
2. Is there any part of your identity that you hesitate to give to God? Are there parts of your life that are off limits to His lordship?
3. How do you feel about the fact that God wants you?
4. Are you willing to respond daily to His grace? In what ways have you already experienced metamorphic transformation?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Offer yourself fully to God. Give Him every part of your identity. Ask God to make His desires your desires. Pray for One and commit yourself to building His Kingdom today.

[illegible]

## KNOW

Do you know Jesus?

Now that is a fantastic question. It is one worthy of deep consideration and honest response.

We live in a culture that has information at our fingertips. We never have to wonder about anything for longer than a few moments because we hold the world in the palm of our hands. A simple Internet search can reveal anything we want to know.

We used to engage in conversations that were full of personal revelations, open-ended questions, and lively debate. Today, most interactions are shut down when someone says, “Hold on...I’ll look it up.”

Knowledge is a powerful thing, but the readiness of information has added to the growing confusion of knowing versus knowing. It is possible to know all manner of facts about a subject without knowing how to think or apply that information. **Many people know all about Jesus but do not know Jesus.** Relational knowledge is different from factual knowledge. You could read a good biography or even an autobiography about a famous historical figure, but no amount of factual knowledge can add up to knowing the person.

Facts, dates, important events, and amusing anecdotes can certainly enhance relational knowledge, but they can never replace relational knowledge. I have met numerous people over the years that studied Jesus but did not know Him. They knew their facts and could quote the Bible with great intellectual fervor. They were able to pick apart the subtle nuances of scripture and could wax eloquently on a wide range

of theological topics. But all of that knowledge was worthless without knowing Jesus.

So, back to the original question...do you know Jesus?

Is He your friend? Is He your master? Is He your Lord? Is He your savior? Who is Jesus to you?

If you fully know Jesus, then your answer is a beautiful mosaic of all types of relational components. A relationship with Jesus is dynamic and progressive in nature. A key phrase that anyone who knows Jesus will arrive at when describing a relationship with Him is "I love Him."

*"We know that 'We all possess knowledge.' But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. But whoever loves God is known by God."*

### **1 Corinthians 8:1-3**

God is calling all people into a relationship with Him. He wants us to know Him intimately and eternally. Be certain and secure in your relationship with Jesus. Allow study and biblical knowledge to feed your love for Jesus and guard your heart against substituting information about God for a relationship with God.

Praying for One is a catalyst for knowing the heart of God. When your predominant prayer is a request for God to unleash His love through you, a deeper relational connection is sparked. You begin to want what God wants and love for Him grows.

This simple prayer can drive you into ever-increasing depths of God's love. And whatever knowledge you happen to gain along the way will be put to good use by helping other Ones know Him too.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Describe the differences between knowing about someone and actually knowing the person relationally.
2. What is required to have a relationship with someone?
3. Have you ever encountered someone who knew about Jesus, but did not know Jesus? Have you ever personally disengaged relationally from Jesus and replaced intimacy with Him with knowledge about Him? Why do you think people do that?
4. How can you know for sure that you are relationally connected to Jesus? What evidence should be present?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to reveal Himself relationally to you. Seek to know Him and to love Him. Ask God to give you One to share His love with. You cannot share what you do not have, so praying for One opens you up to receive God's love. Know God and make Him known.



[illegible]

## CONSUMED

Following Jesus is a consumptive proposition.

Jesus invites us to love Him with every fiber of our beings. We are to love Him with all of our hearts, minds, and bodies. Nothing is held back or placed off-limits. Authentic lordship is all or nothing. We are either all in, or we are not in at all.

Jesus will not be a sometimes Lord, a partial Lord, or a when it's convenient Lord. Jesus is Lord. One day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ Jesus is Lord. Everything is under His authority, and all will be consumed by His glory.

But is He your Lord?

That is THE question.

Do you know beyond any shadow of a doubt that Jesus is indeed Lord over your life? Have you fully surrendered your identity to Him? Are you consumed heart, mind, and body by Him?

Salvation is a transformational process. We are saved and we are being saved.

Salvation occurs when the core identity is changed from sinner to saint. The Holy Spirit indwells and takes over control. The sinful nature is put to death and rendered powerless. We take on God's identity and then begin the process of living out our new reality. **The change that God originates at the center of our beings radiates outward and consumes every element of identity.**

Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is and His response was crystal clear.

*“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’*

*‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’”*

**Mark 12:28-31**

We are created to love God with everything we’ve got. Praying for One is a way to do this intentionally and daily.

When we pray for One, we align our hearts with God’s heart. We want what He wants. We ask for His perfect love to move through us.

When we pray for One, we fix our minds on God’s thoughts. We think with eternity in mind. We see beyond the here and now and are able to process information and prioritize appropriately. We think of ourselves as objects of God’s mercy that are redeemed for His purposes.

When we pray for One, we offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God to use as He desires. Our strength, energy, and time are surrendered to God to build His eternal Kingdom.

Pray for One and allow God’s love to consume you. The end result will be ultimate soul satisfaction and more people in the Kingdom of Heaven.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. Are you ever tempted to compartmentalize your life with Jesus? Do you give Him full reign in certain areas, but place others off-limits from His Lordship? What are the toughest things in your life to surrender to Jesus?
2. Has God changed you at your core? Has He given you a new identity? How do you know? What evidence do you have? Is there anything hindering the acceptance or living out of a new identity in Jesus?
3. What fears do you have about the consuming nature of lordship?
4. Are there parts of you that you are hesitant to surrender? What troubles you about becoming consumed with living to fulfill Christ's mission?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Identify anything that you have withheld from God and purposefully acknowledge and offer each thing to God. Pray for One with the understanding that God will transform you heart, mind, and actions. Ask God to give you a picture of what being consumed by Him looks like.

[illegible]

## RESPOND

Declarations of love demand a response. There is no silence more deafening than in the moment after a bold declaration of love. Will there be reciprocation? Will love be unrequited?

God has declared His love for you.

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

**John 3:16**

The cross of Jesus is the most wonderful expression of love the world has ever witnessed. Jesus gave His life in order for you to know and love Him for all eternity. His death, burial, and resurrection are an invitation for you to become united with Him in His mission to redeem the world.

There is a proposal on the table.

Will you accept?

Yes or no?

There is no maybe. Maybe is just an indecisive no. No is your answer until you say yes.

But what does yes entail? When you say yes to Jesus' proposal, what exactly are you agreeing to?

Jesus was crystal clear on this issue. He did not sugarcoat it or leave things open for negotiation. Jesus basically stated that

responding to His love requires everything. You cannot respond to His love without offering Him everything that you are.

*“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?’”*

**Luke 9:23-25**

It makes no sense to withhold anything from Jesus. There is no gain in this world that compares to the ultimate soul satisfaction of being united with your creator. **God loves you completely and He wants you to respond completely.**

Offer God your mind and allow Him to give you a new worldview as you see everything through the lens of lordship.

Offer God your body as you are immersed in His consuming love and are reborn into new life with Christ.

Offer God your heart as you pray for One and make His ultimate desire your ultimate desire.

Get in rhythm with God’s will and do not waste a single second, resource, or bit of energy on fruitless pursuits. God has a mission for you. When you say “yes” to Jesus, He transforms you into a seeking and saving Kingdom- building machine!

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Have you ever been in a moment when love was first declared? Were you the declarer or the recipient? Imagine being in a moment like that right now. What does it feel like? How crucial is a response?
2. In what ways has God declared His love for you? What are some specific examples of His declarations?
3. How have you responded to God's love?
4. Have you given yourself fully to Him? If so, how do you know? If you have not, what is holding you back?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Thank God for declaring His love for you in an undeniable way. Spend some time responding to His love. Offer your life fully to Him and hold nothing back. Pray for One and ask God to make His ultimate desire your ultimate desire.



[illegible]



**ONE PRAYER  
DOES IT ALL**

## CONNECT

The fundamental disconnect within much of Christianity is that those who claim to be disciples of Jesus are not actually producing the fruit that Jesus produced.

Jesus made disciples. It is what He did. If we follow Jesus and do what He did, then we will make more disciples.

The logic is simple, but the excuses abound. People often defend their lack of production with pharisaical zeal.

Why defend that?

We ought to be grieved over the masses of people who do not yet know Jesus. We ought to be broken-hearted and compelled to take action. We ought to never waste a single ounce of energy on foolish excuses while the lost are still hopelessly adrift upon the sea of sin.

God took drastic action, and if we are truly His followers, so will we. When we connect with God, His desire moves through us and becomes our dominant desire. We become consumed with what consumes Him, and we will not stop until every One is found.

In John 15, Jesus speaks about the critical nature of bearing fruit. **Reproducing spiritually is not optional. If we are deeply connected to Christ, it is inevitable.** If we remain connected to Him, we will bear fruit. Nonproducing branches are removed because they hinder the vine's ability to grow.

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more*

*fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.*

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*

### **John 15:1-5**

Praying for One is a practical way to connect daily to the heartbeat of God. When your dominant prayer is laced with the desire to seek and save the lost, your connection to God becomes paramount. It is impossible to bear fruit apart from Him, and it is impossible not to bear fruit when connected to Him.

Examine your life. Are you fully connected to God? If you are unsure, ask God to show you. Ask Him how He is using you to help others connect to Him.

Christians are to be the light of the world, but a light is useless if it is not plugged into the power source. Our first priority every day is to connect to God in prayer. Before doing anything else, we must humbly seek Him and exalt Him as Lord. As we do this, we position ourselves to be used by God. An expectation arises that the day will not be wasted. Hope springs forth that God will use us as a part of His divine plan to save the world. His desire begins to pulsate through us, and we are prepared and compelled to take action.

Aligning your will to God's will in prayer is critical. We will never experience the abundant life that Jesus promises without first having the desire to do His will. Without this critical connection, we will have the wrong expectations and will experience perpetual disappointment. But when the

connection is present, we will want what God wants and this never disappoints.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What do you pray about the most?
2. Do you feel connected to God through prayer? Why or why not?
3. Is God using you to make more disciples? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What did Jesus promise would be the end result of remaining in Him? Is it possible to produce any eternal fruit apart from Him? What is your life producing now?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Intentionally connect to God. Exalt His desires over your own. Ask Him what He wants and then ask Him to change your heart. Pray for One and set the proper expectation for your day.

[illegible]

## GOD

The accepted line of thinking goes something like this: “If I behave myself and act like a good person, then nothing bad will happen to me.”

How is that working out for you?

When Christianity becomes about pain avoidance there is zero hope of actually being able to follow Jesus. Pain avoidance puts the focus on me. If my prayers are primarily about my comfort, success, welfare, and so on then who should I assume is my lord? Jesus is not Lord when your primary concern is not to honor and obey Him.

Lordship is a daily issue for those who claim to know Jesus. We must die to self daily by laying down our lives and taking up crosses to follow Him. It is absurd to think that because that decision was made at some point in the past that we do not need to make it again each day. It is impossible to follow Jesus without purposefully setting Him apart as Lord in your heart each day. Failing to do this results in reverting to primal instincts of self-preservation.

That is simply the natural order of things, but God is calling us to be a part of the supernatural. By connecting with God, we have the opportunity to transcend self to become participants in building His eternal Kingdom. A true connection with God always puts self on the backburner. We are no longer first. In fact, we are not even second. Authentic lordship ensures a third place finish at best.

God is first. His mission is primary. Any exaltation of self over Him blocks that connection. People are second. You cannot expect to follow Jesus without putting the needs of others



above your own. Sacrifice is normative. **Why would Jesus tell us to take up crosses if He did not intend for us to use them?** Our surprise and anger regarding personal sacrifice reveals fatal lordship issues.

Praying for One sets the mind on what God desires and prepares us for action. It is a classic “thy will be done” prayer. We ask God to use us even though we know it is going to involve sacrifice and suffering because our primary concern is to do His will.

When Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal, it was not the first time that His life was in jeopardy. There had been several other attempts on His life, but it had not been His time. In one occurrence Jesus simply walked through an angry mob and they did not touch Him. At other times, the scriptures simply say that He slipped away. That night in the garden would be different. His time had come, so He prayed.

*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*

**Luke 22:42-44**

Our God understands our struggle to put His will first. He is gracious and compassionate as He allows us to meet with Him in prayer to firmly establish whose will wins out. Real connections with God take us to the place of relinquishing our wills to His. Prayer is no longer about attempts to manipulate God to do our will, but is about being aligned with His will.

Praying for One facilitates this connection by making our

primary prayer concern an issue of His mission to save the world. “God, use me,” allows for a much stronger connection than “God, bless me.”

If you are connected to God, you already are blessed. If you are saved, you are blessed. Christians do not seek God’s blessing, we are God’s blessing. Connect to Him and He will bless others through you.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Have you ever been frustrated with God because of some difficulty you were facing? What produced the frustration? How did you deal with it? How did it impact your relationship with God?
2. What do you think Jesus meant when He said that in order to follow Him we must take up our crosses? What are some ways that you can sacrifice so others can know Him?
3. What do you think it means to be blessed by God?
4. Are you blessed? Does your relationship with Him ensure eternal blessings for you? What is the best thing you could do with God’s blessings?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Echo the words of Jesus in prayer by saying to God, “Not my will but yours be done.” Connect with God by acknowledging that you are indeed blessed and then ask Him to use you to bless others. Pray for One.

[illegible]

## PEOPLE

People need people.

We are created with deep relational needs, but sin destroys relational intimacy. Loneliness is a condition that plagues humanity. Even people who have a high degree of social interaction struggle with loneliness. Most people deeply fear baring their souls to one another.

The fear is real and justified. We know that people are judging us because we judge others. We assign value to people based on what we believe they can do for us. When others fail to meet our expectations, we devalue them and at a certain point, determine that the relationship has a negative value.

Trying to connect with people is impossible with this type of worldview. People will always let you down because all people are flawed. They can never measure up, and relationships remain in a perpetual state of brokenness due to faulty expectations.

But what if we looked at people differently?

What if we assigned value based on God's love for each person? What if we saw others as objects of God's love, and we viewed ourselves as the distributors? Relational connectivity could flourish in that kind of environment.

Praying for One lays the groundwork for this shift in thinking to occur. Anyone could be your One. **When your only expectation for another human is for them to be an object of love, the relationship dynamic changes dynamically.**

Jesus gave us a new command. He told us to love one another. This is our paramount responsibility when it comes to relationships and it is a game changer.

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

**John 13:34-35**

When your primary purpose for relationships is to love like Jesus loves, you are set free from the broken pattern of this world. You allow yourself to love others selflessly. The return on your love investment is not reciprocated love, but joy and satisfaction from allowing God’s love to move through you.

This critical shift in relational thinking becomes the driving force for healing, restoration, and sustainability. Consider how families could be transformed if even just one member would love like this. Authentic, Christ-centered love is compelling and contagious. People long to love like this but do not know how. It is so radically different from everything we have experienced and learned.

Praying for One sets a course for new behaviors. When you view people (even difficult people) as answers to prayer, you stop expecting them to do anything for you because by existing they have done enough. Their mere presence is sufficient because your primary desire is to allow God to love on them through you. There is no personal offense if God’s love is rejected. There may be sadness and disappointment, but love does not cease. You are free to sacrificially extend yourself as an agent of God’s love without worrying about a broken heart.

This is not wishful thinking. This is truth. God wants to use you to love people. Ask Him to give you One, and your eyes will be opened to see as He sees. EveryOne has value. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. Will you allow God to give His Son’s love through you?

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What relational fears do you have?
2. What are three ways you typically assign value to others?
3. Think about a broken relationship you have experienced. What harmed the relationship? What factors led to the relationship's demise?
4. How have your expectations negatively impacted your ability to relate to other people?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to show you how you have contributed to relational brokenness. Offer yourself fully to God as a dispenser of His love. Pray for One and ask God to help you look at everyOne like He does.

[illegible]

## MISSION

Life with Jesus cannot make sense when His mission is not our primary objective. This is the grand frustration that plagues everyone who accepts salvation but rejects the new identity and purpose that comes from being united with Christ.

The joy of salvation fades as the process of stumbling after Jesus proves to be more arduous than we ever anticipated. We begin to question the commands of Christ. We wonder if the sacrifice required to follow Him is worth it. We start to think that we could be happier if we did things our own way.

In some regards, we are correct. If we are not consumed with seeking and saving the lost, then actually following Jesus will produce little to no satisfaction. Without a dramatic shift in missional philosophy we are left to assume that being a Christian will make us healthy, wealthy, and wise. It is impossible to deal with frustration and difficulties when the primary motivation is wrong.

Me-centered Christianity cannot work. It is a lie that deludes the mind and dilutes the power and purpose of the Church. **Following hard after Jesus is never primarily about me becoming a better me. It is about being used by Him to do what He came to do.**

We are resources that Jesus purchased through His death on the cross. We belong to Him to be used for His purpose. We are reborn into an eternal Kingdom and are deployed by Jesus to do His will.

I have heard it argued that the primary purpose of Christians is to glorify God. I will not debate that premise, but I will point out the abstract nature at its core. Glorifying God is great, but



how do you do that? How does that abstract become tangible? What evidence can we expect to know that God is indeed being glorified?

God's glory resounds. It echoes and grows. When He is glorified in us through obedient, purposeful lives, reproduction will occur. Praying for One sets a glorification expectation. When we constantly ask God to use us to share His love with others, we become obsessed with His good, pleasing, and perfect will. Following Jesus makes sense because it is no longer abstract. Ones are being saved. Obedience and sacrifice add up to something of eternal value.

Praying for One is a daily reminder of who we are in Christ Jesus and of the mission He calls us to.

*"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

**Ephesians 2:10**

The rebirth of a Christian brings a transformation in purpose. There are good works that God has prepared for us to do. Failure to obey brings catastrophic consequences. It is tempting to rationalize that our disobedience only harms us, but that is ultimate foolishness. If you were to flip that argument then you would assume that obedience only blesses us.

We are not who are at stake. If you are saved, then hallelujah... thank you, Jesus! Salvation is by grace through faith and not by works so no one can boast. Jesus saved us for His sake, and following Him is all about fulfilling His mission. The true joy of salvation can only be realized through connecting with the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What are some ways that you can glorify God?
2. What could following Jesus cost you? Make a list of five specific things.
3. Is obedience to Jesus worth the cost? Why or why not?
4. What should you expect the blessing of obedience to be?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Thank God for saving you. Spend a few moments reflecting on how great His salvation is. Commit to sharing His salvation with others. Pray for One and remember that you are God's handiwork.

[illegible]



# CHURCH IN 3D

## ATTRACTIVE

God is attractive.

Humans are drawn to their maker. We long to connect to God and to be in His presence. God is love. His very nature is the ultimate thing we all desire. He beckons all people to come to Him to find purpose and true life.

Grace is attractive.

The forgiveness of sin and the redemption provided through Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross compel people to surrender. The promises of rest and reconciliation draw us into Christ's eternal Kingdom. His salvation is beautiful, and His unmerited favor resonates deep within all who understand the nature of their own depravity.

Worship is attractive.

Recognizing the presence of God and responding appropriately by exalting Him are exhilarating. In meaningful moments of worship, time stands still because we are experiencing the eternal nature of God's presence. Worship is a little glimpse of heaven on earth. God is revealed through the worship of His people.

The Church is attractive.

The Church is Christ's body and physical presence on earth. There is nothing in this world like the Church. The local church is powerful and has authority in the name of Jesus to do mighty things. Jesus uses His Church to make His appeal to all those who are separated from Him. People long to belong,

and the Church is where our common identity in Christ can be expressed in victory and freedom.

Are you attractive?

If you are a Christian, you need to understand how important that question is. Eternity is at stake. God is making His appeal through you! **It is crucial that Christ followers allow God to strip away all of our ugliness and shame so that Jesus can be revealed through us.**

*“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”*

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

Think about some of the unattractive character traits that often plague Christians. Things like hatred, bitterness, fear, legalism, self-righteousness, pride, and being judgmental are essentially grace-repellent. When we allow these things to continue in ourselves, we become unattractive. When the Church is unattractive, God is unattractive. We cannot allow this.

The church is designed by God to grow, and it actually takes work to make it unattractive. When we pray for One and understand that each day’s destination is the gospel message, we allow God to make us beautiful. The world will be in awe of the beauty of Christ that is revealed in you if you allow Jesus to use you for His glory.

*“And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”*

**Romans 10:15**

We have the best news the world will ever hear. I can think of nothing more attractive than telling the story of Jesus and His salvation. Pray for One. Ask God to give you One today to share His love with. Ask God to remove all ugliness from your character so that Jesus can be seen in you.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What do you think would compel a church to be intentionally unattractive?
2. What are some ways that churches could be more attractive?
3. What are some things in you that need to change so that Jesus can be seen more clearly through you?
4. Make a list of all the attractive qualities you see in God. Highlight the qualities you see Him producing in you. Circle the ones that you see lacking in your life.

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Thank God that He attracted you to Himself. Praise Him for His grace and salvation. Ask Him to make you salt and light in this world. Pray for One and ask God how you can be more attractive to those who are far from Him.



[illegible]

## RELATIONAL

God is relational.

He is all about relationships. God's primary concern is for every person to be in an eternal relationship with Him. Jesus came to restore the broken relationship between humankind and our creator.

Consider the effort that God puts into relationships. He holds nothing back as He goes to extravagant measures to engage all people relationally. God's relational desire for us is so great that He gave His one and only Son as a sacrifice to create a way for us to be with Him.

Our relational God is now being revealed to the world through His Church. We must prioritize relationships and realize that they have great purpose and value. Healthy, dynamic relationships reveal God's love to the world.

*"But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!'"*

**1 Corinthians 12:18-21**

I have known people who disengaged from the church because they thought that they did not need the church. First of all, they were wrong. We all need the church. Secondly, even if they did not need the church, the church needed them. God reveals Himself through His Church, and we need the full body to fully represent God's love.

I think that churches have made mistakes in the ways we promote relational connectivity. When launching small groups or encouraging people to build relationships within the church, the promotional focus is almost exclusively on how being in a group will help the individual grow spiritually. That is a recipe for disaster! If you enter a group with that expectation, you are sure to be disappointed.

The primary purpose of our relationships is not to have our needs met but to share God's love with one another. There is no disappointment in that. You can be in any group and purposefully share God's love. God will be honored and revealed through that love, and His Kingdom will expand. When we pray for One there is relational expectation. We fully expect that God will answer our prayers and provide someone for us to love. We become relationally driven as we view every appointment as divine. Praying for One will connect you relationally with others.

When you pray for One you will love your spouse and children more deeply because they are Ones. They are objects of God's love moving through you. When you pray for One, you will become more relationally inclined. You will take relational risks because you desire to be a part of sharing God's love. You will become less concerned about what others can do for you and more concerned about how God can use you as a blessing.

Praying for One changes every relationship you have. It is impossible to view people as you once did. Generally we assign value to people based on what we think they can do for us. That evaluation determines the amount of relational energy we will expend on that person. Praying for One changes that by seeing people primarily as objects of God's love. Their value is that Jesus died for them and that God will love them through us.

**Deep relationships are birthed out of deep desires. Valuing others based on what they can do for you is shallow and will only lead to shallow relationships.** Praying for One flips a switch and allows you to look at others more deeply. When everyone is seen as a potential object of God's love moving through you, you will experience relational depth and His Kingdom will grow.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Have you ever been told that you should join a small group at church? If so, why were you encouraged to do so?
2. What are some shallow relational desires? What kind of relationships can you expect to have if your primary relational desires are shallow?
3. What are some deep relational desires? What kind of relationships can you expect to have if your primary relational desires are deep?
4. Churches must have relational depth to be effective in building God's Kingdom. What can you do to foster relational depth in your church?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to move you through His deep, relational desires. Think through every relationship you have. Ask God to help you view each of those people as Ones. Pray that all of your relationships will reveal God's love and reflect His relational desires.

[illegible]

## MISSIONAL

“If you do not know what you are aiming for, you are never going to hit it.”

“Aim at nothing and you will probably hit it.”

“Keep your eye on the target.”

You have probably seen variations of all three of the above quotes. They look great on the inspirational posters featuring cats, sailboats, and majestic mountain scenes that line cubical walls and dentist offices. They are reminders that failing to determine the goal guarantees failure.

In other words, “Failing to plan is planning to fail.”

The first step on any journey is to determine where you are going. You cannot have a journey without a destination. **When there is no clear destination, you cannot mark your progress, check to see if you are on course, or be motivated to continue when the going gets tough.** Walking with Jesus is a faith journey and the destination is His missional purpose.

Consider the final words that Jesus spoke to His disciples before ascending into heaven.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

**Acts 1:8**

The power of the Holy Spirit is given for a purpose. Jesus intends for us to be His witnesses. When we refuse to accept and live on mission, it is a tragic abuse and waste of power. Praying for

One reminds us that the gospel is each day's destination and that we live to bear witness to Christ's salvation.

In Ephesians 6 we are told to be strong in the Lord in His mighty power and to put on the full armor of God. The armor includes having feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. Feet are what move us, and the gospel must advance. There is no retreat or stagnation. We are told to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Word of God is the gospel. It is the story of Jesus and His salvation. Our feet move us into enemy territory where we wield the sword of the Spirit to set the captives free. Each day is an opportunity to take ground from the enemy by advancing the gospel.

Christians have purpose, but when we refuse to accept and live for that purpose, life becomes miserable fast. Instead of enjoying the journey of life with Jesus, we are stuck in the stagnation that comes from directionless living. Jesus' great and precious promises no longer make sense and are not experienced because we are not on the same path as Him. Christianity without following Jesus is pointless.

Jesus did not die for us so that we could waste our lives in the pursuit of nothing. If you are in Christ, then you are a part of His mission to redeem the world. Never give yourself to less than that. You are a Kingdom-building resource that Jesus longs to unleash on your Ones.

What will you do? Will you pray for One? Will you live today with the aim of reaching the world for Christ? Step out in faith on the greatest missional journey the world has ever known.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What are you aiming for in life?
2. Have you received the Holy Spirit with power? How do you know?
3. Are your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace? Are you eager to share the story of Jesus and His salvation?
4. How does God need to adjust your aim? What changes need to be made in order for you to be free to fully embrace the mission of Jesus?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to give you a plan to pursue His mission. Pray that God would unleash His Church with missional purpose so that the entire world can know Jesus. Pray for One and allow the gospel to be today's destination.



[illegible]



**WHY NOT  
DOUBLE?**

## FEAR

It is perfectly reasonable to expect a church that prays for One to double in size. When a local congregation prays for One, God opens the doors for His love, grace, and mercy to flow. People get saved and evangelistic momentum builds.

As the church fulfills its functional purpose, people are encouraged and emboldened to participate in building God's Kingdom. Things will snowball quickly, and many find this scary. Rapid growth triggers fear because of the changes that unfold. Praying for One transforms the church in many ways, and being aware of the fears that you and others might face on this journey is helpful for overcoming them and trusting God.

It is crazy to think that we might allow a little thing like fear to keep us from fulfilling God's mission for His Church, but fear is one of the biggest obstacles to overcome. I have always found that one of the best ways to deal with fear is by naming it. We fear the unknown, and when what we fear is ambiguous, it has greater power over us. **Naming fears allows us to determine how valid the threat really is and helps in setting a plan of action to overcome the fear.**

So, what do we fear in regard to our church doubling in size and growing rapidly?

We fear change.

A church that prays for One will change. As people become consumed with the mission of Jesus, the programming changes. The church will use its resources to reach people with the gospel. This produces discomfort for anyone not praying for One because they do not understand it. They want things to

stay the same. In their minds, their church exists to meet their needs. They bought into the lie that the church is supposed to revolve around them. They shopped long and hard to find the best possible church. You know the church: with the type of preaching they like, the kind of music they like, the best programs for their kids, and the one that has other people who look, act, and think just like them. Praying for One changes all of that. When you pray for One, your only concern in being a part of a local church is thinking about where you can reach the most people for Jesus.

We fear sacrifice.

Praying for One always leads to sacrifice. Reaching people is costly. You can ask God about that. He so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. Churches that pray for One and prepare for exponential growth must sacrifice. You will sacrifice your personal desires, agendas, time, and finances in order to reach your Ones. Sacrifice is a scary thing, and those who do not pray for One, will not understand. I have heard it said that sacrifice is giving up something you love for something you love more. Praying for One puts the mission of Jesus at the forefront of the heart, and sacrifice becomes a normal expression of faith to build God's Kingdom.

We fear the loss of control.

Dynamic church growth produces an uncontrollable situation. How will we control all of these new people? How can we make sure that they all do what they are supposed to do? How can we meet all of their needs? Exponential growth really is impossible to manage. The church must take the risk of allowing the Holy Spirit to be in charge. Imagine the day at Pentecost when 3,000 people became new followers of Jesus.

*“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*

**Acts 2:41**

Can you imagine the logistical nightmare of 3,000 new believers in one day? What if your church reached 3,000 new people next Sunday? Movements of God are experienced, not controlled. We are called to participate in what He is doing and should never allow fear to stop the work of the Holy Spirit.

Praying for One puts fear in check. The desire for more people in the Kingdom of Heaven overrides the many fears that well up. Risk becomes normative as the church leverages all its resources to reach the most people in the shortest time. Do not be afraid.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What are some things that churches have been afraid to change in order to reach more people?
2. Do you have any fears about praying for One? Are you afraid of who God might ask you to share His love with or sacrifices you may need to make?
3. What does God say about fear? Should we allow fear to be a primary motivator?
4. What do you think praying for One will cost you?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Acknowledge your fears to God. Ask Him to help you to trust Him. Pray for your church to be a local body of believers who are all in for the mission of Jesus. Consider what praying for One might cost you and submit yourself to God's will.

[illegible]

## EXPECTATIONS

We all carry expectations. Faulty expectations produce disappointment. Appropriate expectations prepare us for success.

Christians often carry many faulty expectations.

We think that if we obey God bad things will not happen to us. This expectation is a recipe for disappointment. Jesus did not promise His followers pain-free lives. In fact, He said the opposite.

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

**John 16:33**

Jesus wants His followers to have appropriate expectations. He warns us that following Him will often lead us into trouble. Life will not be all rainbows, candy canes, and lollipops. We are called to follow Jesus and do what He did. Jesus laid down His life and told us to do the same.

*"Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."*

**Matthew 10:38-39**

Life with Jesus is an adventurous journey. It is filled with passion, purpose, and power. There is meaning in the pain that is experienced. None of it is wasted. God reveals Himself through His followers and draws others into His Kingdom. It is truly a life worth living. Jesus' admonition to "take heart" is one that all of His followers should eagerly cling to daily. He



has indeed overcome the world, and we will as well.

But we must have proper expectations.

Praying for One sets Christ's purpose in the hearts of His followers. When our predominant prayer is to fulfill His mission, we genuinely begin to seek His will. **Life can no longer be a charade of pain avoidance. Christians will throw themselves headlong into trouble when it means that people will be saved.** Christians joyfully sacrifice when it means that people will be saved. Christians faithfully steward the resources of time, talents, and treasures when they know that more people will be in the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is why it is critical for local churches to have the heartbeat of Jesus. Praying for One is good on the individual level, but it is great at the group level. When Christians have appropriate expectations for the church, they are set up for amazing Kingdom success. There is an understanding that the church is the light of the world. It is a city on a hill. The church is to shine and draw the lost and weary home. Success is measured in people being saved because that is the communal expectation.

People are often disappointed with their local church. Over the years I have heard numerous disappointments expressed. People say things like, the preacher is boring, the music is too loud, the youth group is not big enough, I'm not being fed, and so on. Churchgoers almost never express disappointment by saying, "Our church isn't reaching lost people."

If your church will pray for One, they will expect people to be saved. Appropriate expectations lead to success. When the expectation is right, God moves through His people to do great things. The Kingdom of Heaven will grow exponentially as God's people refuse to settle for less than His best.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. What do you think churchgoers expect from their churches? List the top three expectations.
2. What does Jesus expect from His Church? Do you think that Jesus' expectations match the common churchgoers' expectations?
3. What disappointments have you experienced or heard from others regarding being a part of a local church? What do you think produced those disappointments? Were there faulty expectations involved?
4. Imagine if everyone in your church prayed for One. What would your church look like if the primary communal expectation of the church were to reach the world for Christ? What would change?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Confess any faulty expectations you have. Ask God to reveal false expectations that are hidden in your heart. Pray for One and allow God's expectation to set you up for success. Take heart! Jesus has overcome the world.

[illegible]

## MATURITY

There is a fallacy in many Christian circles that spiritual maturity can only occur over extended periods of time.

This simply is not true.

Rapid spiritual transformation is a biblical norm that ought to be expected in our churches. The New Testament is full of stories about people who had encounters with Jesus and were radically changed on the spot.

The Woman at the Well in John 4 meets Jesus, and on the same day testifies to her entire village that He is the Christ.

The apostle Paul in Acts 9 was blinded by Jesus on the road to Damascus, and after having his vision restored and being baptized, he at once began to preach that Jesus is the Son of God. Paul went from persecuting the Church to building the Church in three days.

In Luke 19, Zacchaeus climbs a tree in order to see Jesus. Jesus invites Himself to dinner at Zacchaeus' house. People muttered about Jesus hanging out with an awful, tax-collecting sinner like Zacchaeus, but on that same day Zacchaeus stood up for Jesus and gave half of his possessions to the poor and paid back four times the amount he had cheated people out of.

In Acts 8, the Ethiopian Eunuch heard the gospel from Philip and responded by declaring that he should be baptized. There was no waiting period, no series of classes to attend, no hoops to jump through. Philip explained who Jesus is and the Ethiopian Eunuch saw some water and was baptized on the spot.

The disciples only knew Jesus for three years before He entrusted them with His mission. They received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and immediately began to preach. The result was pretty positive...3,000 people were saved that day!

I personally cannot stand it when people label new believers as “baby Christians.” It is condescending and perpetuates the myth that maturity only happens over time. There are people who have spent lifetimes in churches and do not possess a lick of authentic spiritual maturity. They are bitter, hateful, resentful, prideful, and foolish. The fruit of the Spirit is not present, yet there is some demented belief that they are mature in Christ because they have put in their time at church.

Time does not equal maturity.

**Lordship and surrender to the Holy Spirit are what produce mature believers. There is no reason to believe that this cannot happen quickly.** When we release people to live for Jesus and build His Kingdom, the results are fantastic. Christianity is not difficult to understand or explain. In fact, Jesus said that we are to have child-like faith.

*“He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’”*

**Matthew 18:2-4**

When there is an expectation that rapid maturity and growth will occur, people respond. Put the gospel in their hands and set them loose to reproduce spiritually. Stop making simple things complicated. Drop the pretenses of church hierarchy and let Jesus work miracles in people.

In fact, why not let Jesus work a miracle in you? What's stopping you from being radically transformed today? You do not need to wait years and years to become a mature follower of Jesus. The marks of maturity in Christ are loving God, loving people, and reproducing spiritually.

Pray for One and watch what happens. Praying for One sets the stage for rapid growth in Christ because the predominant desire becomes building His Kingdom, and we refuse to settle for less.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Are you a mature or maturing Christian? How do you know?
2. How do you think the common belief that maturity only happens over time holds people back from transformational growth in Christ?
3. Disciples of Jesus make disciples of Jesus. If you are in Christ, how is Jesus using you to make more disciples?
4. What is holding you back from experiencing transformational growth today?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to give you and your church His perspective on maturity in Christ. Seek Him to understand His will for His followers. Ask God to reveal any attitudes or beliefs in you that stifle maturity. Pray for a miracle of radical transformation in your life today.

[illegible]

## OBSTACLES

It is fun and exciting to be part of a local church where people are getting saved on a daily basis. There is a shared sense of urgency within the church to reach people, and there is a stubborn refusal to settle for less than God's best. The church is alive and passionate when new people are responding to the gospel. Momentum builds with each life that is redeemed and set apart for God's purpose.

Praying for One creates a shared expectation and desire for exponential Kingdom impact. A local church that prays for One is unified around the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost. There is great power in shared vision.

Leadership is emboldened to take on obstacles with confidence and hope. Praying for One does not remove obstacles that prevent growth, but it does position the church to deal with growth barriers efficiently and expeditiously. The shared aspect of the church praying a unified prayer positions the church to overcome barriers by leveraging the collective power of the people.

There is nothing in this world as powerful as the local church. We have Kingdom authority to storm the gates of Hell to set the captives free. The Church prevails. Jesus wins. Ultimate victory is His, so why not dwell in daily victory as well?

There will always be obstacles to growing God's Kingdom. We ought to expect it and rejoice in the face of adversity. When the going gets tough, the Church gets going! The local church does its best work under pressure. When resources are stretched, when the deck is stacked against us, when everyone is needed to pull off the God-sized vision the church has decided to pursue...that's when the local church is at its best.



*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

#### **Philippians 4:4-7**

Many people cling to faulty theology that promotes the notion that if we are in God's will, then there will be no difficulties. They sit back and passively wait for God to open doors or quickly abandon worthwhile endeavors over simple problems. Entire generations of God's people have wasted precious opportunities, sitting on the sidelines of faith, when they should have been advancing into enemy territory proclaiming the salvation of Jesus.

Too many Christians view the gospel of Christ like a velvet lifeline that we occasionally extend to the poor, suffering saps below in hopes that someone might grab hold and be lured to freedom. **The gospel is not a velvet lifeline. It is a battering ram that demolishes strongholds and every pretense set in opposition to the heart of God.** The gospel is the sword of the Spirit, and we are called to advance the Kingdom with warrior-like zeal.

Praying for One sets our hearts ablaze with the mission of Jesus. We are compelled to sacrifice and overcome obstacles. There is a shared sense of opportunity as the church is moved from entitlement to responsibility. We understand the gravity of what is entrusted to us.

I implore you to pray for One, but do not do it alone. Share this with your family, friends, and church. Pray together for

God to give each of you One to share His love with. Talk about obstacles and strategize together to overcome anything in the way of people knowing the Way.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What are some common obstacles that you personally face in sharing Jesus with others?
2. What prevents churches from seeking and saving the lost? What are some practical issues that must be overcome to reach the most people in the shortest time?
3. Can you see the collective power found in the local church praying for One? What benefits are there for the Kingdom when believers pray with united hearts?
4. What is your personal attitude toward obstacles? How could praying for One help you to recognize when God is leading you to demolish obstacles to set the captives free?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Pray for your local church. Ask God to unite the church around His mission. Pray that the church will faithfully utilize every resource available to expand God's Kingdom. Ask God to use you to reach Ones who do not know Him yet.

[illegible]



# **RISKY BUSINESS**

## DANGEROUS

Following Jesus is going to entail some risk. It is insane to expect otherwise.

Christians, by definition, are followers of Jesus, and He led a pretty dangerous life. Jesus did not try to maintain the status quo. He never played it safe. Jesus ruffled feathers, upset political and religious powers, and knowingly positioned Himself to be executed.

Hey, I've got a great idea...let's follow that guy!

**It is totally wrong to assume that following Jesus will never lead you into dangerous places. Safety is not at the top of Jesus' list and therefore should not be at the top of yours.** It is impossible to produce Kingdom- building fruit when safety is a top priority. Evaluating God's will based on personal safety guarantees failure.

The first disciples certainly struggled with this. They were preparing to fight a physical battle to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish people. They envisioned the Messiah as a military, conquering king who would overthrow the Roman government. Try to imagine how insanely difficult it was for them to follow Jesus as He prepared to die.

There was no way that Jesus' plan of self-sacrifice could have made sense to them, yet they were compelled to follow Him even when walking into the face of obvious danger. In John 8, Jesus claims to be God. The religious leaders heard this and considered it blasphemous and punishable by death.

*"Very truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!' At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds."*

The disciples saw this as a very close call, but it was not the only one they faced. Early in His ministry, Jesus returned to Nazareth and upset the people so much with His preaching that they drove Him outside of town to throw Him off a cliff. Luke 4 describes how Jesus simply walked through the angry mob and went on His way. In John 11, Jesus hears that His friend Lazarus is sick and informs His disciples that they will be going back to Judea to see Lazarus and his sisters. The disciples balk at this plan because of a safety issue.

*“So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, ‘Let us go back to Judea.’ ‘But Rabbi,’ they said, ‘a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?’ Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.’”*

**John 11:6-10**

Jesus led His disciples right back into the face of danger. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, things got even more precarious. The Jewish leaders went from wanting to kill Jesus to trying to kill Lazarus as well.

*“Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.”*

**John 12:9-11**

Lazarus could not help but tell the story of how Jesus had raised him from the dead. What about you? Are you willing to tell others about what Jesus has done for you? What stops you from

sharing the best news the world will ever hear? What are you afraid of?

Praying for One moves us from fear to faith as we cannot help but share God's love with others. Personal safety is no longer the primary motivator for where we go and what we say. Advancing God's Kingdom takes precedence over easy living. When God captivates your heart with His salvation, He will move you into uneasy situations. Your faith will be tested, but passing the test means Ones will be saved. Do not fail by playing it safe.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. How do you feel about the reality that following Jesus might put you into a dangerous situation? How does that thought align with your beliefs about being a Christian?
2. Have you ever allowed fear to stop you from going or doing something to glorify God? What kinds of fears have you experienced in this regard?
3. Imagine facing what the first century Christians faced. They were killed for their faith. Do you know that more people are killed today for faith in Jesus than at any other point in history? Martyrdom is a present day reality. How do you feel about this?
4. How far is too far? Where does your faith end in following Jesus? What is the point where you say enough is enough and you will not follow Jesus anymore?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to help you understand what it means to be fully His. Seek to understand how following Jesus can indeed be dangerous. Commit yourself to following Jesus regardless of the cost. Pray for One and ask God to make you strong and very courageous.



## This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small gaps between them. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## COSTLY

If your faith costs you nothing, it is probably worthless.

Grace is free, but faith is costly.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

Salvation is a gift that is experienced through faith. Faith is defined in Hebrews 11 as “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see.” Faith compels followers of Jesus to act boldly and courageously. Faith moves us out of comfort zones and onto the front lines of advancing the gospel. Faith is what positions us to do the good works that have been prepared for us to do.

*“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”*

**James 2:17**

Faithful action is costly. Resources are required to share the gospel. Following Jesus demands that everything at our disposal be made available to Him for His purposes. Lordship says, “Nothing is mine because everything is His.”

Cheap faith is what you get when you become stingy with your resources. If your money, time, or energy is not available for God to use to build His Kingdom, then the testing of your faith will reveal little to nothing of value. When God places One in your path, you will have nothing worth sharing. We are not

compelled to share cheap faith because we have no confidence that it will make a difference.

This is the primary reason why the average person who claims to know Jesus as Lord and Savior will never lead another person to faith in his or her lifetime. The unwillingness of most to sacrifice produces a muddled mass of misfits. Their knowledge of Jesus separates them from this world, but their refusal to follow Him bars them from building the world to come. They are stuck in limbo claiming to cling to a faith that holds no value for today or tomorrow. It is misery at its worst. This is precisely why so many Christians exude no joy. **Cheap faith has left them empty and kept Hell full.**

WARNING: Praying for One changes this.

As your primary prayer desire moves from petty issues of self-indulgence to participating in the ultimate mission of Christ, the cost of your faith rises exponentially. God will have Ones cross your path who are needy. They will require your time when you are busy. They will need physical help when you feel your resources are diminished. They will demand energy when you are exhausted.

Ones never seem to come when it is convenient, but blessed are the interruptions. Blessed is the holy moment when God's love moves through you and moves another human to faith in Him. Blessed is the moment when miracles happen because you are generous with faith. Blessed is the moment when you realize that your faith is more precious than silver and more costly than gold. Then, and only then, will we understand the true value and power of faith in Jesus.

I pray that your entire life will be a continuous string of blessed interruptions. I pray that you enter heaven with nothing more

than an army of Ones following close behind. I pray that your faith will cost you everything.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What has your faith in Jesus cost you?
2. What are some things that you are afraid to sacrifice?
3. Realistically, where do you draw the line with generosity?  
How do you determine how much is too much?
4. What needs to change in your life in order for the true value of faith in Jesus to be revealed in you?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to reveal to you the value of your faith. Seek Him to discover how He wants to use you to build His Kingdom. Pray for One and begin to celebrate the interruptions.

[illegible]

## CRAZY

If you are going to pray for One, you are going to have to get a little crazy. Normal patterns of thought and behavior will no longer apply. Praying for One is so transformational that you will begin to align yourself in greater and greater measure with the eternal things of God.

Friends and family will start to accuse you of taking this God thing a little too seriously. The dramatic shift in worldview that comes from praying for One will elicit discomfort in those who refuse to join in on the adventure. Scoffers scoff. It is what they do.

*“Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.”*

**2 Peter 3:3**

It is better to be out of our minds for Jesus than to follow the pattern of this world straight into oblivion. You do realize that what this world values is ultimate foolishness? People spend entire lifetimes in pursuit of things that bring no pleasure today and no hope for tomorrow. Praying for One provides purpose for today and production for tomorrow.

Escaping the ridiculous pattern of this world will appear crazy to those bound by the here and now. Your desires will change. The way you measure success will be markedly different. You will celebrate eternal victories while barely noticing the foolishness that captivates the affections of the world. Peace will reign in your heart in the midst of great turmoil. When others panic, you will be steadfast. Jesus will make you a beacon of light that draws Ones to safety out of the most turbulent seas.

The new identity that Jesus provides will set you apart. Jesus makes you holy. **Holy people are different. They do not fit into the humdrum rhythm of this world. They march to the beat of a different drummer.** The Holy Spirit is in charge and life looks different.

*“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.”*

**1 Peter 2:9-11**

Just to be clear, this is the good kind of crazy. In fact, it is the best kind of crazy. Enlightenment is a glorious thing. When your heart is beating in rhythm with God’s heart, life will finally start to make sense. You will understand your purpose, calling, and reason for living. The struggle of life is not in vain but produces obvious eternal fruit.

The joy that comes from being a co-laborer with Christ is crazy good. It is contagious and compelling. The otherwise sane people of this world will experience an awakening through you. God will use you as a wakeup call for your Ones who previously have experienced life as merely a steady march toward death. Life in Christ declares that death is not the end and eternity is experienced today.

I cannot imagine that there is a way to pray for One without becoming a little crazy. It produces a crazy love for Jesus and a crazy devotion to His mission. Pack your bags. We are moving toward the lunatic fringe.

God, give us One.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. How concerned are you about what others think? How do you feel about people thinking you are over-the-top devoted to Jesus?
2. What are some ways that crazy love and devotion to Jesus should be expressed? What are the positive outcomes?
3. What are some ways that crazy love and devotion to Jesus should not be expressed? What are the negative outcomes?
4. Is there anything about your relationship with Jesus that others find a little crazy? What needs to change in your life in order for it to be crazy good?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to give you a vision of what it looks like to be fully surrendered to Him in this life. Seek Him and boldly pray that your heart would beat in rhythm with His. Pray for One and live the crazy good life

.



[illegible]

## UNPREDICTABLE

When the Holy Spirit takes over, anything can happen.

*Anything* can happen.

*Anything* can happen.

Fools put limits on the Holy Spirit. The foolish choose to believe that there are certain people who cannot be saved, that there are certain places God would not ask His people to go, and that there are certain situations that are beyond God's reach. The only limits imposed on the Holy Spirit are the ones we place on Him by our stubborn refusal to yield to His leading.

Jesus described people who are born of the Spirit as being like the wind.

*"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."*

**John 3:8**

How do you restrain the wind? How do you stop the wind from blowing? How do you direct which way the wind will blow?

You don't.

You do not control the wind. You just experience the wind.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit must be free to move us wherever He chooses. Every limitation we place on God carries consequences. How many Ones have not been reached because they did not fit into our preconceived notions of whom God would save? In how many places and situations was the gospel

not introduced because we could not conceive of going there or being a part of that? How many times have we said “no” to God because His order simply did not fit within our narrow framework of possibilities?

Our God is the God of impossibilities! We must cease from confining Him to our ways of thinking. God’s ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. He has perspective, power, and authority to do more than we could ever ask or imagine. It is to the impossible people, places, and situations that we must go.

If you do not do it, who will?

Nobody.

And if nobody will go, then people will not be saved.

Please allow the gravity of our calling to settle upon you. Refrain from shrugging it off. Lose the excuses, justification, and false expectations. **You are the Church. The Holy Spirit is in you. Where you go, He goes. When you speak, He speaks. When you act, He acts.**

Allow God’s Spirit to blow you wherever He chooses. Miracles will happen. You can either fight against the wind or be carried by the wind. One is exhausting and futile. The other is refreshing and exhilarating. Yield to the Holy Spirit and be blown away by what God does.

Praying for One unleashes you from foolish restraints by changing your core expectation. When you pray for One, your baseline desire is to build God’s Kingdom. You become unwilling to settle for less than living for things of eternal significance. You look for opportunities where previously you only saw closed doors. No person, place, or situation is beyond

God's reach because you will go anywhere anytime in order to reach anyOne.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Describe a type of person that people would normally think is beyond God's reach. What does he/she look like, think, do, etc.?
2. What are some common limitations people put on God? How have you personally experienced this?
3. How do you feel about your personal responsibility to go, speak, and act whenever the Holy Spirit leads? What are some things He might ask you to do that would be difficult to obey?
4. You can either fight against the wind or be carried by the wind. Which would you rather and why?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to search your heart and reveal to you any limitations you have placed on His Spirit. Confess those things and repent by acknowledging that God can do anything. Pray for One and ask God to carry you on the wind of His Holy Spirit.

[illegible]



**AND THEN IT  
GETS WEIRD**

## NORMAL

Normal?

Really? You think that normal is what you want?

Are you kidding me?

Normal is no good. Normal is joining the masses on a joyless death march. Step in line, shuffle through life, put in your time, and die. In the end, some relatives and friends can gather together, make a few clichéd remarks about your unremarkable life and then adjourn for a delicious funeral potluck. If you're lucky, someone might bring jello salad. Jello salad will be the best part of that day.

Why in the world would you pursue a normal life? People are deceived into thinking that they want to be just like everyone else. Don't you know that normal people are lost and aimless? They are going through the motions and pretending. The most exciting times in life are when a new season of their favorite show comes on. Happy, happy, joy, joy.

Really? Is that what's going to do it for you? I don't think so.

Jesus did not die for that. He came to set you free from the pattern of this world. Do not receive His grace in vain and cheapen it by wasting your life in the foolish chase to be normal. Jesus' heart breaks for the normal.

*"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"*

**Matthew 9:36-39**



The workers are few. There are not a lot of abnormal people. There are not a lot of people who live overcoming lives that produce the eternal reward of more people in the Kingdom of Heaven. Normal people just don't do that. Normal people are desperate for some crazy Christians to enter into their world to crack the façade of phony living.

If you give your life to normal, you won't matter. Life will be wasted. This is your one and only life. What are you going to do with it? We all give our lives to something. You can join the crowd and waste your most precious resource on pain avoidance, steady sailing, and the slow drift into oblivion. Or you can wake up from normal and throw yourself headlong into danger, rocked boats, and the fast track to eternity.

The choice is yours. **Normal or Jesus? Which will it be? It cannot be both. Jesus will not share you with normal, and normal will not allow you to follow Jesus.**

Praying for One produces a holy discontent. The allure of living some sort of fantasy world, Hollywood dream dissipates with every plea for One. Life has to be more than the 9-to-5, pay-the-mortgage, hustle-and-bustle struggle for who knows what. Praying for One establishes a new course. It sets a new aim. Walk on that path for a while, and it is definitely going to get weird.

Weird is good. Trust me. It is good. You have been told your whole life that weird is bad. You have probably rejected weird, made fun of weird, and done your best not to be weird. But you are weird. You are a unique individual with a personality, talents, and gifts that your Creator placed in you. He made you to be weird. Normal is just another rejection of God's authority and direction.

Buckle up. The crazy train is leaving the station. Are you on board?

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Everyone has a picture in mind about what a normal life should look like. Describe a normal life. What do you picture when you think about just living a normal life?
2. Do you struggle with the notion of being weird? Why or why not?
3. If you could make one major change in your life right now, what would it be and why?
4. How could your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers benefit from you being weird? Do you think it is possible to be a participant in building God's Kingdom without being weird? Why or why not?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to reveal to you what you are actually living for. Are you more like a sheep without a shepherd or like one of the workers sent into the field? Ask God to give you One today to share His love with. Ask Him to deliver you from normal so that you can be sent to set the captives free.

[illegible]

## FEAR

Fear teaches us to avoid weird and potentially dangerous situations. It is a survival mechanism that must be appropriately controlled. The decision for fight or flight is one that Christians must make on a regular basis, but we do not make that decision based on mere instinct.

Christians must listen to the Holy Spirit. Seeing God's power unleashed produces fear because it is so weird. We cannot predict, control, or contain God's power, and many avoid what's weird at all costs.

If you choose to avoid weird, you will never get to participate in God's miracles.

Miracles, by definition, are weird. God's intervention breaks the laws of nature and raises eyebrows as people take notice. When God works, miracles happen, and miracles are weird.

Weird avoidance will keep you out of God's business. **If you turn tail and run every time it gets weird, you will never understand the true wonder and beauty of following Jesus.** Think about the first disciples. They experienced some truly weird stuff, and there were times that it freaked them out.

*"That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'*

*"He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet!'*

*Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*

*“He said to his disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?’*

*“They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’”*

### **Mark 4:35-41**

Following Jesus is not for the faint of heart. There are going to be times when you cry out to Him, “Don’t you care if we drown?” You will end up in some pretty crazy situations with Jesus. Your boat is going to get rocked by furious waves. Water will be pouring in. You will be in a panic, but where is Jesus? Is He not concerned? Is He not going to do anything?

You will pray something like this: “Look, God, we are drowning down here. We are taking on water, and this boat is going to sink. You sent us out here into this dangerous situation, but you do not seem the least bit concerned. Do something!”

And God will act. And it is going to be weird.

The disciples went from being afraid of the waves to being terrified of God’s power.

Fear is what prevents people from experiencing God’s power. The fear of the unknown and the intense realization of who God is prove to be more than many are willing to endure. They run for the hills at the slightest sense of ensuing weirdness.

This is your warning. Praying for One makes things weird. You will see God do things you never imagined possible. He will put you into situations that no rational human being would willingly walk into. His authority will break through the natural realm, and miracles will occur in you, around you, and through you.

Be afraid. Oh, yes, be very afraid. Just make sure that it is Almighty God you fear and nothing else. He is the only One worthy of your fear, and true fear of God compels you to love, trust, and follow Him. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is a reverent, healthy fear that reminds us that we have nothing to fear.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What are you afraid of? Make a list things and situations that produce fear in you.
2. Why are you afraid? What purpose does fear serve?
3. Does fear control you, or does God's Spirit in you control fear? Do you make decisions from a position of fear about potential outcomes or from a place of trust and obedience to God's authority?
4. Have you ever felt like the disciples did in that boat? Describe a time when you were truly freaked out and wondered if God would save you. Does it make more sense to fear the waves or the God who controls the waves?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Confess your fears to God. Be honest about what you are afraid of. Ask God to help you to overcome fear by trusting in Him. Commit to following the Holy Spirit with the knowledge that it is going to get weird.

[illegible]

## WEIRDER

Praying for One is weird, but why not make it weirder?

I totally understand how embracing weirdness completely flies in the face of our civilized sensibilities. After all, we do not want to make anyone uncomfortable. We do not want to ruffle any feathers or cause people to get the wrong idea. The world we live in tells us that it is okay to discuss anything except the one thing that actually matters.

Christianity is a weird thing in a world where everything is right except for the one thing that makes an exclusive claim. Our society pushes the belief that all beliefs are valid as long as they do not infringe on any other beliefs. So, proclaiming that Jesus is the only way to Heaven is going to be increasingly weird and is probably going to get you into trouble.

There are a few different ways to respond to the cultural rejection of Jesus as absolute truth.

Some people become angry, fearful Christians who defend the faith with a great deal of zeal, but little compassion, empathy, or grace. Others become timid Christians who refuse to offend anyone and try to mix their Jesus with a spoonful of pop culture nonsense in hopes that some of the medicine will go down.

But there is another way...a weirder way.

You could just share the truth in love.

Can that work? Absolutely!

But you must understand where people are coming from. Acknowledge that proclaiming absolute truth in a relative truth



kind of world is weird. Prepare yourself to deal with people who will have their worldviews cave in around them as they come into contact with the reality of Jesus. Jesus disturbs and shakes people to the core. They may be frustrated, argumentative, grief-stricken, distraught, and/or afraid.

In the weirdness of that moment, go ahead and make it weirder by being like Jesus.

In John 4, Jesus has a weird encounter with a Samaritan woman at a well. The whole thing was strange from the start. Jesus asked her for a drink and she responded in an argumentative fashion. Her first response was to point out that Jesus was a Jew and she was a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans did not associate. This was weird, but Jesus made it weirder by telling her that she should ask Him for living water. Their encounter continued moving from weird to weirder as Jesus made her increasingly uncomfortable until He revealed Himself as the Messiah to her.

*“The woman said, ‘I know that Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.’ Then Jesus declared, ‘I, the one speaking to you—I am he.’”*

**John 4:25-26**

This truth completely changed the Samaritan woman’s life. She returned to her village and told everyone to come and see the Messiah, and they all believed. You do not know how powerful a weird encounter getting weirder can be. **Those weird moments are often holy moments that need to be embraced. Do not run away or shut it down. Press into the moment and let the weird get weirder.**

Heaven grows exponentially in some of the weirdest ways.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. What is the weirdest conversation you have ever had about Jesus?
2. How did you feel while having that conversation?
3. What are you inclined to do when things get weird? Are you more likely to let it get weirder or do you try to move it out of the realm of weird?
4. Are you afraid of being labeled as a “crazy Jesus freak”? Why or why not? Can you be weird without coming across as totally insane and unrelatable? What would that look like?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to help you recognize holy moments where getting weirder is the thing to do. Pray for courage to move out of your comfort zone. Pray for One and expect that God will position you to share His love with others in some pretty weird ways.

[illegible]



# **A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS**

## #1

My son came home from elementary school one day and announced that he was the fastest person in his school. At first, I was impressed and congratulated him, but then I began to wonder how it was determined that he was the fastest. So I asked him some questions.

“Ace, so you are telling me that you are the fastest person in your school. Is that right?”

“Yes, Dad.”

“Okay. Did you have a race at school today?”

“Yep.”

“Was the race with the entire school?”

“Well, no. It was just my class.”

“Oh, so you raced everyone in your class?”

“No, just the boys.”

“Okay, so you raced all the boys in your class?”

“Not all the boys. There were five of us.”

“So you beat four other boys from your class in a race today?”

“No. I came in third, but I’m the fastest!”

I found the interaction amusing because I knew that my son was not intending to lie or exaggerate. He simply had a distorted

view of reality. He had convinced himself that being in third place out of a small group of boys was the same thing as being in first place out of the entire school. I could have chalked it up to childish foolishness, but then I realized that as adults we do the same thing.

We say things like, “God is #1 in my life. God is in first place. He is Lord.”

We say these things because we want them to be true. We convince ourselves that they are true, but we do not ask the tough questions to determine what is actually real. **It is easy to declare that God is #1, but what if we allowed our Heavenly Father to ask some questions?** That exchange might go like this.

“Child of mine, you are telling me that I am #1 in your life. Is that right?”

“Yes, Father.”

“Oh good. So, since I am #1, does that mean that you have time to spend with me today?”

“Well, no God. I am very busy today. There is a lot on my agenda. I’m under a ton of pressure. Today is just not good for me, but you are still #1.”

“So, since I am #1, does that mean that you have energy to serve me with today?”

“Well, no God. I am exhausted today. You know that I haven’t been feeling well, and I have just had so much to do. I really need some me-time just to relax for a bit. I will serve you when I am feeling at my best, but don’t wait around on me. You go ahead and do what you do without me.”

“So, since I am #1, does that mean that you have money to invest in my eternal Kingdom?”

“Hey...hold on there a minute, Big Guy. I thought we agreed that money was off the table. You are #1, but this is my money!”

“So, in reality, I am not #1 in your life. You have placed many things ahead of me and convinced yourself otherwise.”

Crickets.

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

**Matthew 6:33**

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Make a list of things that people put ahead of God.
2. Look at the list you made and circle the three that you struggle with the most. Why do you struggle with these? Write a sentence or two about why you allow each of these things to usurp God’s ultimate authority.
3. What specific changes do you need to make today in order for God to be authentically #1 in your life?
4. What safeguards do you need to have in your life to ensure that tomorrow you will not revert back to some form of personal kingdom building where God is not #1?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Pray for One because when your ultimate desire is to build God’s Kingdom, He is #1. Ask God to use you to build His Kingdom. Search your heart and confess any areas where God is not #1.



[illegible]

## ALL-ACCESS

There are two kingdoms. There is your kingdom, and there is God's Kingdom.

Jesus is Lord, but He is not Lord over your kingdom. He is Lord over His Kingdom. This is a crucial distinction to make.

Simply thinking that Jesus will be Lord over "my" life can produce a number of potential problems. This common phrase can set expectations that are totally inaccurate. If I believe that Jesus is Lord over "my" life, then I am tempted to assume that He will always act and lead in my best interests.

Like right now, you may be thinking: "Well, of course. God always leads and works in my best interests."

What in the world ever made you think that? It simply is not true.

God leads and acts in His best interests. He is working to build His eternal Kingdom, not your earthly kingdom. He will wreck your earthly kingdom in a heartbeat if it means adding to His eternal Kingdom.

Disturbing? Absolutely!

Bad theology has set most of us up for failure and extreme disappointment.

The manner in which most Christians pray is pretty revealing. Our prayers generally center on some element of earthly kingdom building. We pray things like, make me happy, keep me well, protect my family, increase my comfort, relieve my suffering, prevent my failure, fix my mistakes, and so forth.

Prayer becomes about all me, all the time.

Jesus is Lord. Period. He is Lord. He is Lord over all. There will be nothing that is not under His authority.

*“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

**Philippians 2:9-11**

Jesus' Kingdom is the only thing that matters because it is the only thing that will remain. Why in the world would we waste energy, time, and prayer on building our own earthly kingdoms? Jesus is not Lord over my kingdom. He does not exist to serve my every whim. He is not some genie in a bottle who, if I rub Him just the right way, will do my bidding.

Remaking Jesus into the lord we want is the sickest form of idolatry possible. We do not convince Jesus to do our will. We do not change His mind to align with our desires. We are transformed by His Lordship. He remakes us in His image. We are born again into His eternal life. This world and its desires will all pass away. Do not waste another prayer on the extreme foolishness of personal kingdom building. Too much is at stake to play that game.

You are a chosen child of God, and you were bought at a price. Jesus gave His life for you. He took your sin upon Himself and put it to death on the cross. You are set apart for holy purposes.

**Lordship requires full access to every corner of who you are. When you receive salvation and accept that Jesus is Lord, you grant Him an all-access pass.** Nothing is off-limits. No doors are closed. There are no dark corners to hide away in. His light

permeates through your entire being, and you are completely transformed.

Fighting His Lordship is ultimate misery. Jesus stands at the door of your heart and knocks. Don't just crack it open to take a peek. Rip that door off the hinges, chop it into little pieces, burn it, and scatter the ashes in every direction. Praying for One does this. It acknowledges that you are all His, all the time. When the primary prayer desire is to build His Kingdom, all-access is guaranteed.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. Think about how you typically pray. Do your prayers follow a pattern? If so, what does the pattern consist of? Are there things you pray for every day?
2. What percentage of your time in prayer is spent seeking God's will verses asking God to do your will?
3. What do you think about the idea that God would wreck your kingdom to build His eternal Kingdom? What could that look like?
4. Can you say with confidence that God has an all-access pass to your life? Is there anything that is off-limits? Why or why not?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. He is Lord over all. Commit yourself to build His Kingdom. Ask Him to reveal anything in you that you have made off-limits to Him. Open yourself fully to Jesus and give Him an all-access pass.

[illegible]

## FAILURE

It drives me nuts when people say that failure is not an option.

Failure is always an option.

It is a terrible option that should be avoided, but it is an option nonetheless.

**It is important to deal with the reality that we could fail to do what God asks us to do. If not, we are left to make excuses, redefine success, or simply never try to do anything significant for the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Ultimate victory is secured through Jesus, but there are daily battles to be fought, and they matter. Doing the good we ought to do matters. Seeking and saving the lost matters. Sharing God's love matters. Praying for One matters.

Far too much Christian teaching focuses on the personal benefits of following Jesus. People are taught that they will have better marriages, happier families, more success at work, stronger reputations, and healthier relationships if they just do a little more work for Jesus. I have personally encountered hundreds of people who have heard that messaging and responded by saying, "Thanks, but no thanks."

There is this look about them that communicates, "I'm good." I'm good where I am. I'm good with a less-than-stellar marriage. I'm good being a mediocre parent. I'm good putting in minimal effort at my job. I'm good with my sketchy reputation. I'm good with my toxic relationships. I'm good.

They aren't good, and they just don't care. Apathy rules the day, and unless the motivation is higher than some better version of self, they aren't interested.

Praying for One provides new motivation. When your predominant prayer desire is to share God's love so that there will be more people in the Kingdom of Heaven, you become inspired to follow hard after Jesus. The stakes are high and failure will cost far more than some temporary discomfort. If you do not share Jesus with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers, there is a good chance that nobody will.

Failure is real, and the consequences are eternal.

How is that for a kick in the rear?

*"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?"*

**2 Corinthians 13:5**

Anytime we fail to do the good we ought to do, we sin. There are consequences to sin. We are called to bring life into the world through our obedience to Jesus and through carrying out His mission to seek and save the lost. Failure to do this means that people will not know. They will continue in death.

I implore you to give yourself fully to the work Jesus calls His Church to do.

If you fail, learn and grow from it so that you will be less likely to fail again. Refrain from making excuses, redefining success, or not trying. Confess your failures. Repent of your mistakes. Allow Jesus to pick you up and put you back in the game.

Pray for One and go get One.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. Remember a time when you failed to do something God wanted you to do. What were the circumstances and the situation?
2. How did you deal with the failure? Did you own it and grow from it, or did you blow it off by making excuses?
3. What consequences came about because of your failure? What are some possible consequences that could have happened?
4. Does making the connection between obeying Jesus and how it impacts others motivate you to be more faithful? Why or why not?

## PRAY ABOUT IT

Confess your failure to God. Repent by asking Him to change how you think about the consequences of disobedience. Ask God to remind you of what is truly at stake and the eternal nature of what hangs in the balance.



[illegible]

## INTENTIONAL

Purposeful action begins with intent.

The human default mode is personal kingdom building. Left to our own devices and sin natures, we will always build temporary kingdoms that are based on personal preferences and desires. Since we are earthbound in our thinking, we cannot escape our primal instincts without receiving a higher perspective.

God sees what we cannot. He knows what we do not. His ways are different and His Kingdom is better.

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.*

*“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

**Isaiah 55:8-9**

Transformational thinking is required for participation in building God’s Kingdom. No one accidentally falls into the eternal Kingdom-building business. It is not the kind of thing that just sort of happens as you go along. It is not the normal course, so intentionality is required.

Praying for One is a thought-transforming juggernaut. When we pray for One, we recognize that our core identity and purpose are found in the eternal things of God. Responsibility is accepted for the calling at hand. Intent is clearly established as we seek God’s best instead of the temporary insanity found in creating a fleeting kingdom of worthless junk.

Praying for One sets our feet on the straight and narrow path. Our vision is aligned with who Jesus is, and the standard confusion that swirls around the meaning of life is squashed

underfoot with every intent-filled stride. Proper intent makes once-powerful distractions impotent. Things that previously pulled our heartstrings and led us astray have no power over us when our primary focus is more people in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The goal is more people in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Do not forget, forsake, or dismiss the mission of Jesus. Nothing destroys Kingdom-building intent faster than simply rejecting Christ's mission. If you do not remain intently focused on seeking and saving the lost, you will revert to some form of foolishness. You will build worthless relationships that do not reveal Jesus or lead people into relationships with Him. You will build a lifestyle that reflects what you value most and holds no value for eternity. You will build a legacy of regret that will crumble in ruins until no sign of what you built remains.

Jesus has gone to prepare a place in His Father's house for everyOne. He is building, and there is room. Our job is to invite others to dwell in His heavenly home. Expect that God will use you. Pray for One and set forth with the intent that today will not be lived in vain.

**Heaven does not notice when your personal kingdom grows. It has no regards for your possessions, portfolio, or plans.** Heaven could care less if you enjoy all the success this world has to offer. Heaven knows it does not matter.

But Heaven erupts in praise every time a lost One is found.

*"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

**Luke 15:10**

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. How does intent impact actions? Think about yesterday. What did you intend to do? Were you purposeful in your intentions, or did you merely go through the motions?
2. If you are not intentional with your purpose, what will an average day look like for you? What will you accomplish? What will be the end result?
3. Evaluate your life. What are your intentions in your relationships, work, leisure, and so forth?
4. Are you building your kingdom or God's Kingdom? How do you know?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to search your heart and to reveal any intentions you hold onto that are not from Him. Pray for One and seek God's best by committing yourself to building His eternal Kingdom.

[illegible]



**I TRIPLE DOG  
DARE YOU**

## PLANT

The basic principles of farming are pretty easy to understand.

Decide what you want to grow and then plant the appropriate seed.

That's basically it.

You can adjust the variables some by adding water, picking locations based on sunlight or soil types, and guarding against pests. But you really cannot get inside the soil and make the seed grow. All you can do is decide what you want to grow and then plant the appropriate seed.

This is what your life comes down to. What do you want to grow?

*"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."*

**Galatians 6:7-9**

So many people are thoroughly deceived. They believe that they can grow something that they never planted. **They stare at the ground in confusion and wonder why God's promises are not being fulfilled in their lives, when in reality, they planted the wrong seeds.**

Do not be deceived. Do not fall for the lie that says the crop will just magically appear. It does not work that way. Faith is only good if it is accompanied by action. God gives you seeds, but if



you do nothing with them, don't expect a crop. Disappointment rules the day for many Christians because they know enough to know that this world will never satisfy, but they don't trust enough to plant for the world to come.

God cannot be mocked. Everything will be revealed for what it is. Every church that refused to plant will give an account. Every Christian who squandered his or her life will have to answer to Jesus. Do not mock God by pretending that it does not matter. God is not amused by our foolishness. The stakes are high, and He has entrusted us with the seed of His gospel. Refusing to plant is the worst kind of mockery.

We reap what we sow. This is a simple logic statement. It is not a threat from some kind of cosmic, killjoy in the sky waiting to rain down lightning bolts on everyone who disobeys. If you spend your life planting seeds for the here and now, when the here and now is destroyed, everything you planted will be destroyed as well. The here and now will be destroyed. It will not last. This world is fading fast. One of two things will happen in your lifetime. Either Jesus will return, or you will die. Either way, the end is near! What will you have to show at the end? You reap what you sow. If you are not planting for eternity, then you will reap nothing in eternity.

Do not weary in doing good. A harvest is coming. Plant for the harvest God desires. Scatter seeds of faith. Pray for One and share God's love with others.

Only a total fool would plant pumpkin seeds and expect sunflowers to grow. But many Christians will come to the end of their lives and wonder how they managed to plant nothing of eternal value. Do not be a fool. God entrusts you with His gospel. Plant. Then plant again. Then plant some more. Plant until you can plant no more because you have left this life for the life to come.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What do you want your life to produce? Seriously think about this and answer honestly. What matters most to you?
2. What are you planting? Does what you are planting line up with what you want to produce?
3. Are you planting what God wants you to plant? Is your life more focused on producing an eternal harvest or an earthly harvest?
4. How can you be more proactive in planting the gospel in the hearts of your Ones?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Seeks God's best. Drop any defensiveness and justification. Ask God to give you a vision of what you are planting. Pray that your will would be aligned to His so that He will use you to help more people into the Kingdom of Heaven.

[illegible]

## ACCOUNT

Pay attention.

This is important.

You are going to die.

Seriously. You are not long for this world. The end is near. Death is on your doorstep. You can pretend, fight, and ignore all you want, but it does not change reality.

*“This is why it is said: ‘Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’*

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”*

**Ephesians 5:14-17**

Wake up. Do not waste the life you have left. Do not be a fool. Understand the Lord’s will.

The Lord’s will is not difficult to ascertain. Jesus was clear regarding His will.

*“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.”*

**Matthew 18:12-14**

God's will is that none would perish. God wants every lost One to be found. If you are His servant, then you must live to do His will. Living for less is not living at all. Any other purpose is merely a march toward death. Too many people are living to die instead of dying to live. When we die to self and our selfish desires, we are free to finally live eternally. We escape the confines of time, space, and mortality when our hearts align with God's and His will is accomplished through us.

A day of judgment is coming. Christ will return and each person will give an account for how they used the life that was entrusted to them. Christ's presence will burn away every impurity. Nothing temporary will be left. Only the eternal things of God will remain. **What will you have to show for your years on earth? Will your account be empty or full?**

Pray for One and grab hold of what matters most.

*"Be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire."*

**Jude 1:22-23**

Who is your One? Who is God compelling you to go share His love with? What are you waiting for? Go now. Lead a life of no regrets. No one will ever bow before Jesus and regret all the Ones they snatched from the fire, but many will bow before Jesus and mourn the Ones they let slip away.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. If Jesus came back right now, what eternal value would your life have? If all the temporary things of life immediately were burned away, what would you have left?
2. Do you have any regrets for how you have lived? What are they? How can you move beyond regrets into a life that matters?
3. Who are your Ones? What are their names? What would happen to them if Jesus came back today?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Prayerfully picture yourself before Jesus at Judgment Day. Ask Him what He will say to you? Ask Him to give you a vision of a life well lived in Him. Pray for One and ask God to save your Ones.

[illegible]

## CHICKEN

By the time this goes to print, it will probably be politically incorrect to call someone who is controlled by fear “chicken.” I understand the risk I am taking with the poultry aficionados. Those who defend the chicken as a noble bird with courageous character should probably stop reading now because I am about to ruffle some feathers.

So here we go. Chickens do not pray for One.

Chickens only care about self-preservation.

Listen to how Christians often talk to one another. What are their primary concerns? Far too much time, attention, and energy is wasted on fearful exercises of the me-centered theology they cling to.

They are afraid politically because our country is going to Hell in a hand basket as our “Christian” nation is destroyed. They are afraid economically because everyone knows that good Christians prosper financially and bad Christians struggle. They are afraid physically because declining health is a stark reminder that their hope is squarely planted in the here and now and not in the life to come. They are afraid relationally because the thought of being taken advantage of is more than they can bear so they have shut themselves off and do not allow God’s love to flow through them.

Chickens.

Then you have the religious leaders who profit from the fear. They control and manipulate their churches. They feed the chickens and keep them cooped up in their little hen houses.



**They rule the roost and lay a big fat egg. Nothing is done to build God's Kingdom. Nobody is saved.** Fear is the only thing perpetuated.

Chickens.

Chickens will write off praying for One as being too evangelistically focused. What? Think about the absurdity of that. How can anything be too focused on Christ's mission? That is an asinine notion.

Chickens will not pray for One because of the potential cost. Pastors might fear losing their jobs. Leaders might fear losing their power and influence. Members might fear losing their favorite church programs. Everyone probably fears the financial cost. Praying for One is never cheap.

Chickens will not pray for One because chickens fear change. Change is coming if you pray for One. Imagine an entire church praying for One. What would a church look like if every member was passionately focused on storming the gates of Hell to set the captives free?

Chickens.

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

**Joshua 1:9**

Do not be a chicken. Pray for One. I dare you.

Why did the Christian cross the road? To find the chicken on the other side.

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

1. What fears do you have about praying for One?
2. What does God think about your fears?
3. What obstacles might prevent you from asking God to give you One to share His love with?
4. What does God value most? What do you value most?  
What does your church value most?

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

Ask God to reveal any fears within you that prevent you from doing His will. Confess your fears to Him and ask for His courage. Pray for strength to endure any trouble that may come from praying for One.

[illegible]



**FROM BILL**

## STORY

When you pray for One, you become part of God's story.

Hopefully you have prayed for One and are aware of God's answers to your prayers. Have you experienced a pray for One moment? How did it go? Did you respond? Did you miss it? What happened?

*"As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

**Acts 4:20**

Use day forty-one to tell your story. Then keep telling your story from this day on.

[illegible]