



## INTRODUCTION

### DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER

Every Memorial Day, we remember those who have lost their lives in defense of our country. Graves are swept in veterans cemeteries, flags are planted, and the President prioritizes the laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, outside our nation's capital. Meanwhile, families will take a break from work and school, hopefully pausing to give thanks in the midst of ball games and barbecues for the freedom we enjoy due to the sacrifice of others. These are good times of rest and remembrance.

Joshua, leader of the Hebrew people, knew a little about remembering too. His people had wandered for forty years because they had chosen *not* to remember. Even the parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of the mighty Egyptian army hadn't been enough for them to remember God's goodness to them.

God was about to give the people a visual reminder of His faithfulness. Like with the Red Sea, it would involve the crossing of another body of water. Their previous leader, Moses, would have been proud of their response this time. But the privilege would now fall to Moses's protégé, Joshua. And it would be up to Joshua to follow the Lord's commands and to keep this memory alive—during his life and for generations to come.

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### *Author*

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Special Focus

LOUISIANA



# Don't Forget to Remember

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## THE POINT

*Never lose sight of God's goodness and faithfulness.*

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Most Americans are familiar with the story of the Louisiana Purchase, which took place in 1803. That one addition of territory led to a doubling of the land mass of the United States. Shortly after that purchase, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned an expedition to explore and map as much of the new territory as possible. A few of those heroes are well-known to us: Captain Meriwether Lewis, Lieutenant William Clark, and the young Shoshone woman, Sacagawea.

Someone not as well-known was Sergeant Patrick Gass. Sergeant Gass was left in charge of the expedition on many occasions, constructed important forts along the way, and even published the first book about the expedition upon the party's return. Patrick wasn't the first of the (noble) Gasses to serve in our military and he certainly wasn't the last. A long line of us have served even to the present day, including myself and two of our sons. We have served for one primary reason: we remember that our country is worth fighting for.

Another military leader much longer ago understood the importance of remembering. Joshua had seen great victories, and he had experienced his share of failure. There would be more of both in the days ahead. As he prepared to lead God's people to one of its greatest victories, the Lord would prepare their hearts by first calling them to remember His work in the past. There's a lesson here for us all here: Let's not forget to remember.

### QUESTION 1:

***Who's someone in your family tree that people like to talk about?***

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## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

### JOSHUA 4:1-3

After the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD spoke to Joshua: <sup>2</sup> “Choose twelve men from the people, one man for each tribe, <sup>3</sup> and command them: Take twelve stones from this place in the middle of the Jordan where the priests are standing, carry them with you, and set them down at the place where you spend the night.”

Joshua, son of Nun, certainly had many significant events in his life that he could remember.

- He was likely by Moses's side when the Israelites left Egypt.
- He had no doubt watched as the Red Sea parted—and then, just as quickly, enveloped the Egyptian army.
- He had served as one of only two faithful spies into and out of the promised land.
- He had led the Hebrew army in vanquishing Israel's foes.
- He had climbed Mt. Sinai with Moses and observed the idolatry of the golden calf.
- He had also served as Moses's attendant at the tent when Moses met with God.

But now Moses was gone, and Joshua had been tasked with finally leading God's people into the promised land. All the help God had promised to Moses was now true for Joshua as well. “I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you” (Josh. 1:5). Just as his mentor Moses had done, Joshua sent spies into the land to survey the situation.

The report came back positive. God had prepared the stalwart city of Jericho for the taking. The spies told Joshua, “The LORD has handed over the entire land to us. Everyone who lives in the land is also panicking because of us” (Josh. 2:24). This was yet another confirmation of the promise God had made to Joshua; it was all he needed to hear to begin executing God's plan.

Now Joshua told the priests to step into the Jordan River just as the Lord had commanded him to do. It must've seemed a lifetime ago when he watched Moses stretch out his staff, and the Red Sea parted. Why did God perform such a similar miracle as before? That's not left to our imagination. “The LORD spoke to Joshua: ‘Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so they will know that I will be with you just as I was with Moses’” (Josh. 3:7). And exalt Joshua He did. The river was overflowing its banks; it must have seemed like a sea to those few who had seen the previous miracle almost half a century before. The Lord let them see dry land once again, and the people crossed safely.

Now, before proceeding to their next victory, it was time to remember. And to continue a pattern of remembrance that would carry God's

people through challenging times. The Bible is replete with calls to remember the work of God.

- “Remember the days of old; consider the years of past generations. Ask your father, and he will tell you, your elders, and they will teach you” (Deut. 32:7).
- “Remember what happened long ago, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and no one is like me” (Isa. 46:9).

Of course, the ultimate call to remember God’s work for the Christian came at the last supper when Jesus said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). And as each local church commemorates the Lord’s Supper together, every time we eat the bread and drink from the cup, we proclaim Jesus’s death until He returns.

There are many significant occurrences I remember in life too. I remember my first day

attending school and the exhilaration I felt. I remember spelling bees I did well in or important plays I made on the football field. I remember the first time I saw my wife-to-be and knew she was the one. And of course, I remember the first time I held each child born to us, even the two who didn’t make it. I recount some of those remembrances as often as I get the chance, while others are just a wisp of a memory. But the one event I’ll never forget and the one I’ll never stop talking about is the day Jesus saved me. God calls us to remember what He’s done, and He gives us the opportunity—really the responsibility—to share those stories with others.

#### QUESTION 2:

*What are some things God has done in your life that you will always remember?*

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## JOSHUA 4:4-7

<sup>4</sup> So Joshua summoned the twelve men he had selected from the Israelites, one man for each tribe, <sup>5</sup> and said to them, “Go across to the ark of the LORD your God in the middle of the Jordan. Each of you lift a stone onto his shoulder, one for each of the Israelite tribes, <sup>6</sup> so that this will be a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ <sup>7</sup> you should tell them, ‘The water of the Jordan was cut off in front of the ark of the LORD’s covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan’s water was cut off.’ Therefore these stones will always be a memorial for the Israelites.”

It’s important to remember both the good and bad events in our lives. We often hear the saying from writer-philosopher George Santayana repeated: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”<sup>1</sup> That’s a warning to nations and to individuals to learn from our mistakes. I tried to be open and honest

with my children about my mistakes when they were growing up. My goal in that was so they could go and make their own mistakes later—hopefully smaller ones—instead of repeating mine! But just as it’s better to offer ten words of praise for every criticism, positive reinforcement with memories goes a long way.

Our senses are often intertwined with memory. In this passage, we see a visual reminder being set up. Imagine the scene. The priests carried the ark of the covenant into the Jordan River, the river rolled back and in the center of the riverbed stood the priests holding the ark of the covenant. Soil and rocks that had not seen the light of day in perhaps a millennium were now exposed. And twelve men were chosen, each representing a different tribe, to obtain a stone from nearby the ark of the Lord. To be so close to that precious symbol of God's presence itself must have filled the men with awe. These stones were to be carried on their shoulders, so they wouldn't have been small. In fact, they were to be used to build a full-scale monument, not unlike the ones we see in our nation's capital, to help us remember. These stones would be a symbol of unity for the people of Israel for each of the twelve tribes. God had done this mighty thing for all of them, and for each of them.

Then Joshua described how this memorial would play a role in the lives of their people by giving them a short catechism of sorts. The question: "What do these stones mean to you?" (v. 6). The answer: "The water of the Jordan was

cut off in front of the ark of the LORD's covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan's water was cut off" (v. 7).

My how children love to ask questions, don't they?

- "Why?"
- "What's that?"
- "Are we there yet?"

The fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers would have many opportunities to tell the great story of what God had done on this day. And they, in turn, would tell of God's greatness to their children and grandchildren and countless generations to come. In fact, we're still recounting this historical event today!

### QUESTION 3:

*In what ways has our culture forgotten God's work?*

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## JOSHUA 4:20-24

<sup>20</sup> Then Joshua set up in Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken from the Jordan, <sup>21</sup> and he said to the Israelites, "In the future, when your children ask their fathers, 'What is the meaning of these stones?' <sup>22</sup> you should tell your children, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' <sup>23</sup> For the LORD your God dried up the water of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, just as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up before us until we had crossed over. <sup>24</sup> This is so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD's hand is strong, and so that you may always fear the LORD your God."

# Engage

## MEMORIALS TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

What are some memorials to God's faithfulness that you can establish?  
Consider some that employ each of the following senses:

**Smell:**

**Sight:**

**Taste:**

**Touch:**

**Hearing:**

Joshua's catechism now had questions added to it. The question: "What is the meaning of these stones?" (v. 21). The answer: "Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground" (v. 22). The earlier reminder was reinforced with more detail added. "Not only did the Lord roll back the waters, but kids, we walked across on dry land!" The children's imaginations would have run amok without the details, I'm sure. Slimy, soggy, cloggy mud. Tough to cross. And filthy afterwards. (Okay, maybe they would've enjoyed thinking of it that way; they were children after all.) But no, God did a complete miracle on that day, and the details only made that more clear. It might lead us to think of the apostle John's description of Jesus: "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands . . ." (1 John 1:1). Vivid. Clear. Leaving no doubt about what had been experienced.

**QUESTION 4:**

***How can we help those who come after us remember God's faithfulness and power?***

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Joshua went on to explain why this memorial was so important—why these questions were so important. This was a mighty thing God had done in the life of His people, not once but twice. Not only would they remember crossing the Jordan River when they saw these stones, but they would remember crossing the Red Sea as well. And more than the events themselves, they would remember who God is, and by extension, who they were.

One of the most difficult things I ever had to do as a missionary was to drop my fourteen-year-old son, also named Joshua, off at the airport. He would fly almost four thousand miles to boarding school and his mother and I wouldn't see him for several months. Through tear-soaked eyes, my last words to him would always be: "Son, remember who you are and remember Whose you are." I couldn't be with him, but I knew that God would be. And I knew that if he remembered that, he'd be okay. Through the years, this became a necessary ritual for me, especially when his little sister joined him. It never got easier, but my trust in God grew. He proved Himself faithful over and over again.

God is faithful. And He's strong. Not only does He want to do the right thing for His people, but He is wholly able to. I love that God does this for us because He loves us. But He also does it for us because He loves others. He wants us to fear Him because that fear "is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). But as the Lord shows Himself to be powerful on our behalf, He displays His strength to the nations, to "all the peoples of the earth" (Josh. 4:24). He blesses us to be a blessing, and in the end, there will be people from every tribe and language and nation gathered around the throne, worshipping our God.

**QUESTION 5:**

***How can we build a culture of remembrance in our group?***

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## LIVE IT OUT

We should never lose sight of God’s goodness and faithfulness. Choose one of the following applications:

- **Remember.** Make a list of events in your life when you felt certain God was at work. Write down some lessons from those times that you can apply to your present situation.
- **Recite.** Choose a Bible verse that helps you remember God’s goodness and faithfulness. Read it each day this week and try to commit it to memory.
- **Repeat.** Once you’ve committed that verse to memory, look for opportunities to share it with others. Encourage them to share it as well.



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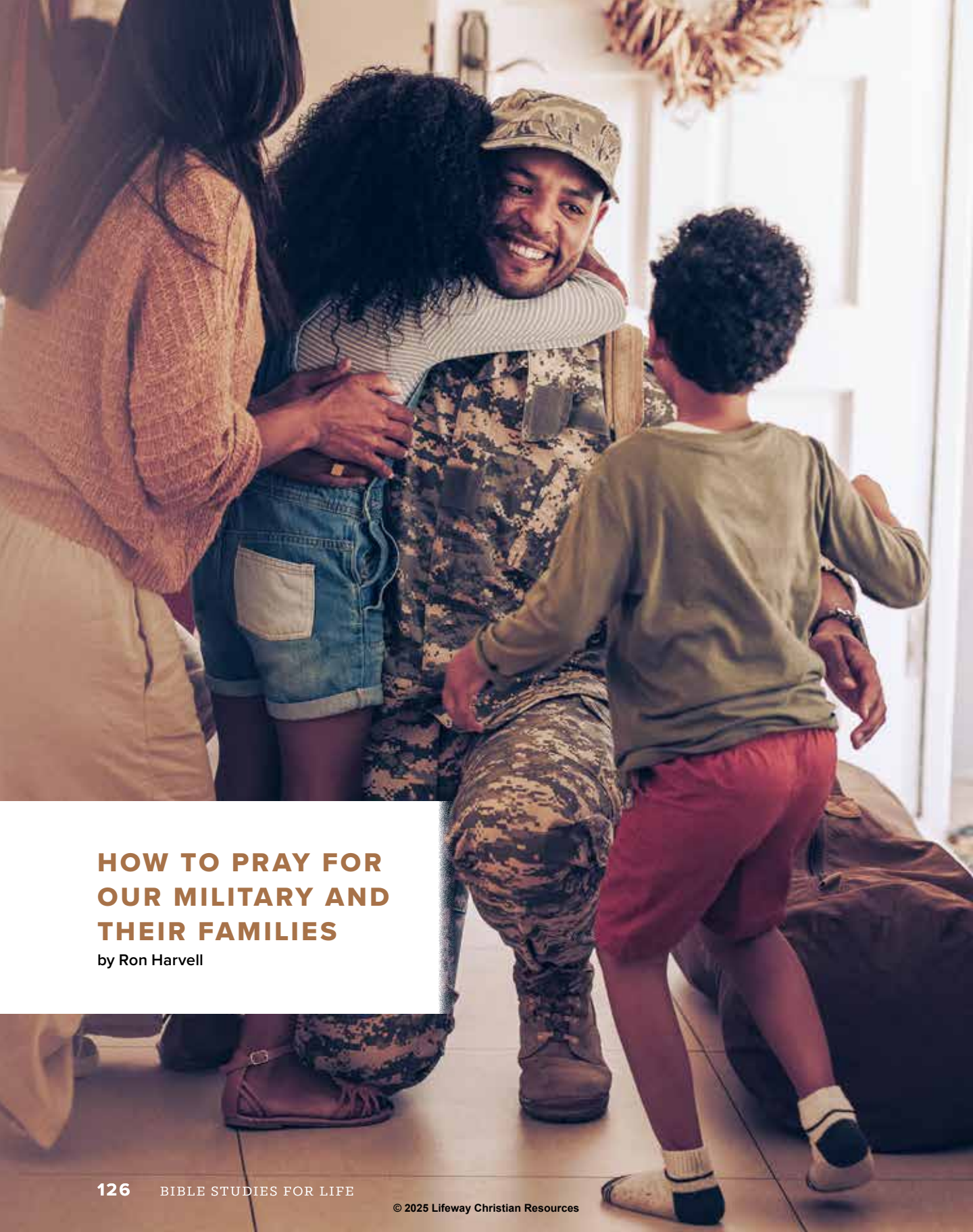
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1. George Santayana, *The Life of Reason Vol. 1: Reason in Common Sense* (London: London Constable, 1905).



## HOW TO PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES

by Ron Harvell

## Here are three specific ways to support them in prayer.

Memorial Day is a day to honor those who have died fighting for America's freedoms. And one of the best ways to honor them is to pray for the heroes who now serve to protect those freedoms.

My wife, Marsha, and I served as North American missionaries for 30 years in the U.S. Air Force chaplaincy. We love the military community. We have journeyed with them on 5 continents, 16 assignments and multiple deployments. We've lived overseas for 11 years; 4 of those years in the Middle East and Africa. At one point we lived in a local community where we were responsible for ministering to all 20,000 airmen who worked in the Middle East, fighting the Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS.

I'm always delighted to get the question, "How can I pray for the military?" Because I believe there are three specific ways that we can all support them in prayer.

### 1. PRAY FOR THEIR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS.

I was in a guard tower on the perimeter of one of our bases in Afghanistan several years ago. My chaplain assistant was with me, Chief Master Sergeant Keller Benningfield. This particular night, we were going from tower to tower, visiting our security forces warriors who were on lookout. They were modern-day watchmen protecting the lives of those inside the walls of their base.

As we visited with them, they pointed out where the enemy positions were. We asked them, "Are you worried about the possibility of being attacked tonight?"

One of them replied, "We hope there is not an attack tonight, but if there is, we will do our duty."



## The best way to pray with authority is to pray the Lord's Word back to Him.

I looked at the enemy positions and thought about the soldiers defending our country — the ones who are ready to make the biggest sacrifice of all. Just before it was time to leave, our conversation trailed off. Chief Benningfield turned to the soldiers, “Can I pray for you?” Simultaneously, they all answered, “Yes, Chief.”

He prayed for their safety, their families, their courage and for their success in their mission. After the prayer, something was different. They were thankful and encouraged. Chief's prayer outlines how you can pray for the personal and professional success of your military. Pray for God to . . .

- Protect them
- Bless their families
- Help them face the challenges of their duty
- Give them favor in battle
- Help them have victory

### 2. PRAY FOR THE SPIRITUAL MATURITY OF OUR MILITARY MEMBERS.

In Matthew 8, Jesus encountered a Roman centurion and was amazed by his faith. The centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant who was paralyzed. He said:

*“I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. But only say the word, and my servant will be cured” (v. 8). And Jesus replied: “I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith!” (v. 10).*

Pray for God to mature our military and their families to have faith like the centurion. Pray for the chaplains and local churches that support military communities to intentionally develop them in Christlikeness so they can be a light to others and be spiritually fit to endure the challenges of the military service.

### 3. RAY THE WORD OF GOD AS A WARRIOR WITH AUTHORITY.

In Ephesians 6, once the components of the armor of God are completely assembled on the believer, comes the command to pray. Isaiah 62:6-7 teaches us that God calls watchmen to serve on the walls of Jerusalem and to pray without rest. The best way to pray with authority is to pray the Lord's Word back to Him. Ephesians 6:17 says, “The sword of the Spirit . . . is God's word.”

**Ron Harvell** is a North American Mission Board chaplain serving as the Command Chaplain for Air Force Global Strike Command in Louisiana. He and his wife, Marsha, authored, *The Watchman on the Wall, Daily Devotions for Praying God's Word Over Those You Love*. Marsha is an international trainer for Precept Ministries International and a conference speaker. They have two married children and five grandchildren who are all on the foreign mission field.

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<b>BUILD RELATIONSHIPS</b>				Connecting with Others Like Jesus Did
<b>SERVE GOD AND OTHERS</b>				Essentials for Christian Living

## COMING NEXT QUARTER

### CONNECTING WITH OTHERS LIKE JESUS DID

- Session 1      **Meeting Needs** • Luke 5:12-16, 27-32
- Session 2      **Making Others a Priority** • Luke 7:36-48
- Session 3      **Showing Love** • Luke 10:25-37
- Session 4      **Calling Out Sin** • Luke 11:37-46; 12:1-3
- Session 5      **Speaking Truth** • Luke 18:18-30
- Session 6      **Extending Grace** • Luke 19:1-10

### ESSENTIALS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

- Session 1      **Fellowship with Believers** • 1 Corinthians 1:1-13
- Session 2      **Wisdom from God** • 1 Corinthians 1:20-25; 2:9-16
- Session 3      **A Servant's Heart** • 1 Corinthians 3:5-15
- Session 4      **A Humble Attitude** • 1 Corinthians 3:18–4:7
- Session 5      **An Outward Focus** • 1 Corinthians 10:23-33
- Session 6      **A Way to Serve** • 1 Corinthians 12:12-24
- Session 7      **A Love for Others** • 1 Corinthians 13:1-13



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**Lifeway**<sup>®</sup>

***GOD IS: UNDERSTANDING  
THE CHARACTER OF GOD.***

The world is overrun with religions, philosophies, and personal opinions regarding the nature and character of God. Left to our own devices, we typically make God in our own image. We are not left to figure God out on our own. Through the Bible, God has revealed Himself to us. Through the revelation of Scripture—and His ultimate revelation through Jesus Christ—we can see exactly who God is. And when we see Him, we are drawn to worship Him. This study was written by James Jackson, pastor at Glynwood Baptist Church, in Prattville, Alabama.

***SEIZE THE DAY: EMBRACING  
A MISSION WITH PURPOSE.***

Deepening one's relationship with Jesus is wonderful in itself, but it doesn't stop there! With that relationship comes a charge, a mission to carry out. It's a privilege we've been given, to walk with Christ and take His gospel to our neighbors, our community, and the world. Through the book of Acts, we see the example from the early church of what it looks like to joyously embrace the mission. This study was written by Paul Chitwood, president of the International Mission Board.

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