

the gospel of
JOHN

LEARNING TO FOLLOW JESUS

Study Guide



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Study Guide

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WELCOME

Welcome to our six-week series on "Learning to Follow Jesus." During this six weeks, it is our hope that you will not only get to know Jesus better, but discover some tools to help you follow Him more closely. It is our prayer that you will experience God's presence in a bigger way through the power of the Holy Spirit. Abiding in God's love is a great lesson that reminds us that He is the Vine, the source of our strength and hope. Living each day guided by the Holy Spirit teaches us to rely on God, and not on ourselves. Prayer is the key to a more intimate relationship with God, as we talk with Him and bring our concerns to Him each day. He is our protection, and we can follow Him and become more like Him, because we know Him and are familiar with His ways. He unites us and gives us confidence to share our faith. He is the fire that ignites the strength to stand firm in what we believe. Let's spend this six weeks together learning how to follow Him. Many blessings to you as you join us in living out our purpose as a church of "People meeting Christ and Living as His disciples."

Pastors of CPC

THE PRESENCE

JOHN 14:15-31 • PASTOR SCOTT FARMER

OPENING REMARKS

Jesus promised His followers, (and us) that He would send the Holy Spirit - to be with us, to teach us and to remind us of all He had said. Jesus wanted us to know about this mysterious Counselor, Advocate, and Comforter, who would come after He died and rose again. The Holy Spirit, referred to as our "Counselor" or "Helper", is one who lends assistance. But He is also defined as our Comforter, giving extra strength to meet special needs and coming alongside us in times of distress. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate, as He pleads on our behalf before God, our final Judge. Jesus reminds us that we are left with His peace, and not to be troubled or afraid, for Jesus has given us the powerful Holy Spirit. He has come to live in us and to guide our life each day.

WARM IT UP

Think of a friend who is going through a personal crisis. If you were with that person now, how would you try to help?

TALK IT OVER

Read John 14:15-31

1. What does the term "Counselor" tell us about the Holy Spirit?
2. According to Jesus, how will the Spirit bring comfort and help to His followers? (Verses 15-27 offer many answers)
3. What is the relationship between our love and obedience to Jesus and His love and presence in our lives (15-24)? How is this different from legalism – earning Christ's love and presence through good works?
4. How does the peace Christ offers (25-31) differ from that which the world offers?

WORK IT OUT

1. Where do you see the Holy Spirit working in your life today?
2. Jesus says, "Don't let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid." How can Jesus' words help you in a personal season of a "troubled heart"?
3. What help does this lesson give you for strengthening friends in trouble or pain?

WEEKLY STUDY/OR SERMON THOUGHT

What was one thought/story from the sermon this week that helped you discover something new about Jesus or yourself, or helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? In what ways did this sermon/study help you understand how to follow Jesus more each day?

PRAY IT THROUGH

Ask God to help you be aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life more and more each day. The Spirit is your Counselor, Comforter and Advocate, given by Jesus to bring you peace.

CONTINUED READING

Most of you may have a basic knowledge about the Holy Spirit; but when it comes to experiencing the Spirit in your life, it's a different story. Take a moment and ask yourself this question: When was the last time I undeniably saw the Spirit at work in or around me? If it was recently, consider taking a few minutes to reflect on what the Spirit of God did and how you saw Him at work. Thank God for His active presence in your life, and praise Him for the way He is leading you even now.

If you are having trouble recounting when the Spirit was at work in or around you, perhaps that is because you have been ignoring the Spirit. Perhaps it is because you have a lot of head knowledge about the Spirit, but not much of a relationship with Him.

The reality is that the early church knew less about the Holy Spirit than most of us in the church today, at least in the intellectual sense. But they came to know the Spirit intimately and powerfully as He worked in and through their lives. All throughout the New Testament, we read of the apostles whose lives were led by the Spirit and lived out by His Power.

We don't need to go back to the apostolic age, but learn to live faithfully today. It is impossible for us as finite humans to completely understand an infinite God. We don't need more knowledge about the Spirit from a cerebral vantage point – what we need is experiential knowledge of His presence. We cannot go back, only forward, seeking what it means to live faithfully in the time and culture where God has placed us. May you be drawn into deeper communion with the Spirit and greater experience of His power and presence in your life.

Forgotten God, Frances Chan, pg. 35-36, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, Copyright 2009

THE VINE

JOHN 15 • PASTOR CATHY BURKHOLDER

OPENING REMARKS

God's vision for us is that we would know Christ, become like Him and follow Him completely. That cannot happen unless we first learn to remain or abide in the vine, which is Christ. Jesus gave His disciples this parable in John 15 as a picture not only of their position "in Him," (as they remain, live, dwell, abide...) but to show them how He would produce His character in and through them.

God receives great glory as we bear (demonstrate) the fruit of His character in our lives. Only He can produce the life-change in us that shows His character to the world. His power and presence is revealed as He transforms us. God prunes us (the branches) so that we can be even more fruitful and continue to grow. God has chosen us for this very purpose – to bear fruit for Him. We cannot do it without Him. Verse 5 reminds us, "apart from Me you can do nothing." "Abide," used 11 times in this passage, refers to our need to "remain" in a close relationship with Christ. The word means, "to stay connected" in a relational sense. We cannot know and follow Christ in an intimate way without abiding in Christ.

WARM IT UP

Describe someone who has had a significant impact on your life and share how this has happened.

TALK IT OVER

1. Read John 15:1-11. What word (or words) stand out to you, and why? Notice how often Jesus uses the word "abide" or "remain" in this passage? Why do you think He uses such repetition?
2. What organic metaphor does Jesus use here to explain His relationship to us, and our relationship to Him? Why is this important?
3. How does Jesus explain how to abide in Him (v. 7, 10)? What hints does Jesus offer His disciples on how to remain close to Him, like a branch to the vine?
4. According to the passage, what are some of the benefits to abiding/remaining in Jesus, the "true vine?" Share some examples of "fruit" that you have seen in your life, or the lives of people around you, as a result of abiding in Jesus.

5. What is the difference between trying to bear fruit on your own and bearing fruit by remaining in Christ? How do the two look different?

WORK IT OUT

1. How would you assess your current habits of abiding in Jesus? What is one way you could abide in Him? What fruit might come from that?
2. What are some common things that keep you from abiding in Jesus? How might some of these hurdles be overcome?
3. Can you identify a season of your life where you experienced spiritual fruitfulness? If so, share some highlights and some reasons you're thankful for what God did in you, through you and for you.
4. What brings you the most joy in life? In v.11, Jesus admits why He is telling us to abide in Him. How does this verse encourage you?
5. Consider your current habits, and commit to abiding in Jesus in one specific way during this next month. (This could be anything from spending time in Scripture or prayer, to journaling, to listening to music that draws you near to Jesus, to saying "NO" to something that may overload your family, to practicing confession with a prayer partner, to going on prayer walks, to taking 5-10 minutes a day and spending time alone with God, etc.)

WEEKLY STUDY/OR SERMON THOUGHT

What was one thought/story from the sermon this week that helped you discover something new about Jesus or yourself, or helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? In what ways did this sermon/study help you understand how to follow Jesus more each day?

PRAY IT THROUGH

Pray for one another. Pray for your "follow through" of abiding in Jesus. Pray for the fruit that will come. Pray for the joy that awaits you (individually and collectively), according to the promise of Jesus. And pray against the opposition/hurdles you will face as you commit to abiding in the true vine.

BY KAREN PEARCE

"I yearn for a life of simplicity and purpose—one pervaded with His peace, a calm surrender to His will unfolding, intentional yet interruptible." I wrote those words a year ago trying to figure out why my good life, my "godly" life was so wearying. In my quiet time, the Lord led me to Matthew 11:28-30 in the Message: "Are you tired? Worn out?...Walk with me and work with me; Watch how I do it, learn the unforced rhythms of grace...keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." This was pretty much the opposite of my typical day. Jesus and I would spend quality time together each morning. Then I'd say goodbye and zoom off into my busy day. Habit and hurry had me so focused on DOING that I couldn't see Him.

That's how "Do Less, Be More" became my mantra for 2013 and Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God" my verse. Next, God led me to John 15 where Jesus describes "Abiding" as the means to spiritual life and growth. My connection to Christ needed evaluation, but how would I get anything done if I sat around all day BEING and ABIDING? I am an involved wife and mother in addition to my other responsibilities. There would be no peace or joy if I stopped doing what needed to be done! Thankfully, God honors our cry for wisdom and He pointed me back to Matthew and John: "walk with me, work with me, watch and learn from me, abide in me". God shifted my attention from the verbs (my actions?) to His Son and I saw it's not what I do, but how. Jesus calls us to do everything "WITH ME". That's the key to the fruitful, serene life I sought.

In order to do everything "WITH JESUS", I needed to move my focus off my thoughts and actions and onto His presence. Forcing myself to travel more slowly, I began to notice what God put before me. I turned off the car radio and imagined talking to Jesus, my companion on errands. I began to live expectantly and saw God at work all around me. As a result my pace was saner, my face smiling and my demeanor calmer. Living in constant awareness of Christ allowed me to enter fully into His rest and refuge even when busy. In God's amazing way, as I made "Being" (being) with Christ my priority, I was able to actually do more for Him with energy and enthusiasm; even hard days brought me joy because I knew Christ was with me.

This devotion is from the perspective of Jesus talking to us, and fits into this idea of abiding:

"Let Me prepare you for the day that stretches out before you. I know exactly what this day will contain, whereas you have only vague ideas about it. You would like to see a map, showing all the twists and turns of your journey. You'd feel more prepared if you could somehow visualize what is on the road ahead. However, there is a better way to be prepared for whatever you will encounter today: Spend quality time with Me.

I will not show you what is on the road ahead, but I will thoroughly equip you for the journey. My living Presence is your Companion each step of the way. Stay in continual communication with Me, whispering My Name whenever you need to redirect your thoughts. Thus, you can walk through this day with your focus on Me. My abiding Presence is the best road map available."

Read Exodus 33:14 and John 15:4-7

(from Jesus Calling by Sarah Young)

THE SPIRIT

JOHN 16 • PASTOR TYLER SCOTT

OPENING REMARKS

“Pray daily for a great outpouring of the Spirit on the Church and on the world. This is the grand need of the day—it is the thing that we need far more than money, machinery, and men. The “company of preachers” in Christendom is far greater than it was in the days of Paul; but the actual spiritual work done in the earth, in proportion to the means used, is undoubtedly far less. We need more of the presence of the Holy Spirit—more in the pulpit, and more in the congregation—more in the pastoral visit, and more in the school. Where He is, there will be life, health, growth, and fruitfulness. Where He is not—all will be dead, tame, formal, sleepy, and cold. Then let everyone who desires to see an increase of pure and undefiled religion, pray daily for more of the presence of the Holy Spirit in every branch of the visible Church of Christ.” -J.C. Ryle

WARM IT UP

1. What are your thoughts on the quote above re: the Holy Spirit?
2. Share about a time in your life where you sensed the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

TALK IT OVER

Read John 16:5-33

1. In 16:7, Jesus describes Himself and/or the Holy Spirit as being a “the Counselor,” but different English translations are used for this word (“parakletos,” in the original Greek language):
 - a. NIV: Counselor
 - b. NLT: Advocate
 - c. KJV: Comforter
 - d. NASB: Helper
 - e. Message: Friend

In what ways has God the Holy Spirit worked in your life in one or more of these roles? (He may have played a different role, depending on the season or circumstance of life.)
2. In verses 7-15 there are three major aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit described. Can you see them and describe them? (Try this...and then read on to see them explained simply below.)
 - a. To the world – conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment. In other words, the Holy Spirit shows us we are sinners, separated from God; and that forgiveness is found through Christ.
 - b. To us (and all followers of Christ) – direction and truth. The Holy Spirit leads our lives as we allow Him to...guiding us “into all truth.”

c. Through us (and all followers of Christ) – revealing Jesus through those who represent Him. Incredibly, graciously, God the Spirit works through us to reveal His love for others.

Share a personal example of when/how you saw the Holy Spirit working in one of the ways mentioned above.

3. Read verses 17-33. Answer the following questions:
 - a. Why would the disciples weep and mourn, while the world rejoiced? How and why would their grief turn to joy?
 - b. What does Jesus mean when he says he is leaving and going back to the Father?
 - c. In v33, a final promise given in relation to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is PEACE. Describe a time in your life when the Holy Spirit brought peace. (If you are in need of that peace right now, turn to Philippians 4:6-7 and read those verses aloud.)
 - d. There is another promise in v33: in this world we will have TROUBLE. Describe the types of troubles that we often face. Share one such trouble you are facing today.
 - e. In the face of trouble, and in light of the Holy Spirit, we are encouraged by Jesus to “take heart,” for He has overcome the world. What do you think He means...and what are some the implications for your life?

WORK IT OUT

In addition to the work of the Holy Spirit described in John 16, there are other relevant teachings in Scripture about the power and work of the Spirit. For example we know that the Holy Spirit (among other things) reveals God’s will, sanctifies us (makes us holy; more like Jesus), indwells us, and gives us spiritual gifts.

- **Read Galatians 5:22-23.** The fruit of the Spirit is described nine different ways here. Take turns wrapping up your study by sharing a “real world” example of how/where you have seen the fruit of the Spirit displayed in EACH of these ways. Thus, share a “real world” example of Spirit-led love, and joy, and peace...as evidenced in your life or in the life of someone you know.

WEEKLY STUDY/OR SERMON THOUGHT

What was one thought/story from the sermon this week that helped you discover something new about Jesus or yourself, or helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? In what ways did this sermon/study help you understand how to follow Jesus more each day?

PRAY IT THROUGH

Pray for one another. Be sure to thank God for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

THE PROTECTION

JOHN 17:1-19 • PASTOR SCOTT FARMER

OPENING REMARKS

Why pray? The most central answer is “Jesus prayed.” If the Son of God prayed in conversation and intercession with the Father, how much more should you and I pray?

Want to pray like Jesus prayed? Here’s our chance. For the next two weekends, we bask in the prayers of Jesus, the prayers our Lord prayed for us. When we pray “in Jesus’ name,” we want to see and feel and desire the things that Jesus does. Those are the kinds of prayers our Father longs to answer. We can learn to pray as Jesus prayed by following His example.

Prayer might be a brand new activity for some of us. Welcome. These studies could start something wonderful for you. For others, this will refresh your love of following Jesus as you grasp His prayer for you, for us, and for our world.

WARM IT UP

Which phrase most closely describes your life of prayer right now? Why?

- a. What life of prayer? Not a part of my life.
- b. Formal, in church only. Childhood hangover.
- c. Occasional when I’m really sick or in trouble.
- d. Better with people than alone.
- e. Better alone than with other people.
- f. Best part of my day or week.
- g. Other _____

TALK IT OVER

Read John 17:1-19

1. In John 17:1-19 what does Jesus specifically ask on behalf of His disciples? What do these requests mean?
 - a. “Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name” [v. 11]
 - b. “I say these things in the world, so that they may have the full measure of My joy within them.” [v. 13]
 - c. “My prayer is not that You take them out of the world, but that You protect them from the evil one.” [v. 15]
 - d. Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth.” [17]
2. Of all the things Jesus could have asked, why do these matter so much?

WORK IT OUT

1. As you consider living as His disciple and following Jesus into prayer, what do Jesus’ prayers teach you about how you can pray?
2. Which of His prayers speak most to your present situation? What steps [small or large] could you take to apply what you are learning in the next seven days?

WEEKLY STUDY/OR SERMON THOUGHT

What was one thought/story from the sermon this week that helped you discover something new about Jesus or yourself, or helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? In what ways did this sermon/study help you understand how to follow Jesus more each day?

PRAY IT THROUGH

Try following Jesus in prayer by praying as He prayed in John 17:1-19. Ask a different person to focus on each of His prayers and pray them into your lives. Isn’t it great to live as Christ’s disciples! He is guiding us into this mysterious, intimate and powerful venture called “Prayer.” May you have a disruptively intimate week with your Father in heaven! Come next week to continue studying the prayers of Jesus, looking more deeply into His prayerful heart. And it is good.

THE UNITY

JOHN 17:20-26 • PASTOR SCOTT FARMER

OPENING REMARKS

Prayer is a wonderful mystery by which we draw near to God. Prayer is also a powerful tool by which we get to join God in His work in our world. Today we engage more of our Lord's prayers for us. All Scripture is inspired by God, but this passage seems to invite a unique intimacy with both Jesus and His Father. What was of concern to Jesus on His last night with His first followers? Not surprisingly, He wanted them and us to be with Him, to see His glory, and so love God the Father, and in turn, love each other so that a watching and skeptical world would come to know Christ.

WARM IT UP

If you pray, for whom do you tend to pray? What do you mostly pray about? When do you find yourself praying, if at all?

TALK IT OVER

Read John 17:20-26

1. In John 17:20-26 what does Jesus specifically ask on behalf of His disciples?
2. What do these requests mean?
 - a. "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message" [20]
 - b. "that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You" [21a]
 - c. "May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me." [21b] [Note that Vv. 22-23 further explain these requests. Why do you suppose Jesus added these explanations into His prayer?]
 - d. "Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory." [24]
 - e. "I have made You known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." [26]
3. Of all the things Jesus could have asked, why do these matter so much?

WORK IT OUT

1. As you consider living as His disciple and following Jesus into prayer, what do Jesus' prayers suggest for your life? For your prayer life?
2. Which of His prayers speak most into your present situation?
3. What steps [small or large] could you take in the next seven days to apply what you are learning?

WEEKLY STUDY/OR SERMON THOUGHT

What was one thought/story from the sermon this week that helped you discover something new about Jesus or yourself, or helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? In what ways did this sermon/study help you understand how to follow Jesus more each day?

PRAY IT THROUGH

Try following Jesus in prayer by praying as He prayed in John 17:20-26. Ask a different person to focus on each of His prayers and pray them into your lives.

Jesus' passion is not just to reconcile you or me personally to our Father. Rather, He gave His prayer and His life to reconcile the human family to each other as a result. He identifies the unity of our new Jesus-following, glory experiencing community as a key witness to a skeptical and lost people who watch us to see if God loves them!

How Jesus longs for us to follow Him into prayer, and into Spirit empowered living out of His prayers for unity among Christians. May this week bring obvious opportunities to live in answer to Jesus' prayers. Also, isn't it just amazing that Jesus wants us to be with Him where He is and to see His glory?! Love the glimpses we get now. Can't wait for the full shot!

QUOTE ON PRAYER

"I have since learned that the most mature believer is the one who is bent over, leaning most heavily on the Lord, and admitting his total inability to do anything without Christ. The greatest Christian is not the one who has achieved the most but rather the one who has received the most."

Jim Cymbala,
Fresh Faith: What Happens When Real Faith Ignites God's People

THE FIRE

JOHN 18:1-27 • PASTOR MARK WOLLAN

OPENING REMARKS

There are two ways to look at the end of Jesus' life. The first is to see it as a series of unfortunate events. Fearful disciples yield to conspiring religious leaders who convince a political and military power to put Jesus to death. The second, is to view it through the lens of God's sovereign plan. All humanity is in need of a savior. Jesus completely submits to the will of the Father, then demonstrates remarkable authority in His interactions with those who appear to be in positions of power.

The way we choose to view these final scenes will shape the way we speak about Jesus. As you explore this important passage, ask God to grow your courage to speak boldly about your faith in Jesus.

WARM IT UP

Have you ever had to serve on a jury? Share about your experience. Did you feel confident speaking up even if others disagreed?

TALK IT OVER

Read John 18:1-27

1. Who was in the group that came to the garden looking for Jesus? (verses 2-3). Look closely at verses 4-11. What evidence do you see that Jesus is taking charge of the situation? In your reading of the denials (verses 15-18 and 25-27) how would you describe Peter? Pastor Mark suggested that he may not have been as afraid as we often think. Do you agree/disagree? Contrast Jesus' words in verses 19-24 to the words and actions of Peter. What do you think John wants us to see? Share about a time in your life where you sensed the power and work of the Holy Spirit.
2. It's been said that all of humanity is represented at the arrest of Jesus. Look back at the cast of characters in verses 2-3. Who do they each represent? What does Jesus' conversation with the arresting party tell you about the sovereignty of God and Jesus' submission to the will of the Father?
3. Do you think, in the moment, Peter thought his denials were as significant as they became?

WORK IT OUT

1. Did you have any opportunities last week to mention that you are a follower of Jesus? Did you do so?
2. If you did not, then replay that opportunity with your small group and talk about what you could have said. If so, who did you talk to and what did you say?
3. Spend some time anticipating opportunities this coming week. Who are you going to be with? What might you say?

WEEKLY STUDY/OR SERMON THOUGHT

What was one thought/story from the sermon this week that helped you discover something new about Jesus or yourself, or helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? In what ways did this sermon/study help you understand how to follow Jesus more each day?

PRAY IT THROUGH

Spend some time specifically praying for the people you will interact with and the opportunities that are presented in the coming week. Pray for boldness to talk about your faith, and to share God's love with those you encounter.

BY GEOFF LATENDRESSE

In terms of my character, who I am should not depend on where I am. Whether I'm with my family, my neighbors, my fellow CPC'ers or those that I work with, they all should have the same perception of my character; namely, that I am a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

Let's take that a little farther as it relates to work. Given that I am a Fire Chief and employed by Local Government the challenges associated with the separation of Church and State are real. In fact, sometime after I was appointed I learned that my status as a Christian was raised as a 'negative' with the concern that I might prioritize proselytizing the workplace over my professional obligations. (To be clear, I was not at all offended by that, nor do I view it to be discriminatory as my faith was not used as a filter to determine employability.)

The fact is, my top priority is to be the best Fire Chief I can possibly be. I work as hard as I possibly can to serve and protect the community and employees I am responsible for. To that end I have committed myself, at all points in my career, to serve with professionalism, dedication and integrity. My sense of duty and my faith in Christ have always been the driving factors for the way in which I conduct myself at work. Moreover, I believe that my chosen profession represents more than just my vocational preference, its God's call on my life.

So then, as a Christian answering God's call on my life it naturally follows that I am also compelled to obey His word as it relates to evangelism, including workplace evangelism. I have always based my approach to sharing the Good News on two specific commands. First, Paul exhorts us in Romans 1:16 to live our lives unashamed of the Gospel "...because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes." Second, that we should live our lives of faith out in the open so that others might glorify God. (Matthew 5:14-16)

For me that translates into specific workplace behavior. As I shared earlier, I see my profession as God's unique call on my life (and part of my personal mission field) and therefore work hard at being the best Fire Chief possible. That commitment stems from my sense of duty to my employer, my community and my employees but also, from my sense of duty to God's call on my life! In answering God's call I aim to earn the respect of those I am responsible for and win the right to be heard. Because while I genuinely care about my co-workers and their needs as professionals, I also care deeply about them as members of God's

creation, people with spiritual needs as well. The fact is, whether they know it or not, Christ died for them too.

The work environment raises constant opportunities to discuss life and personal interests away from the job. I committed long ago to be honest with my co-workers about what's important to me and what I do with my off-duty time. When I'm asked about my plans for the weekend for example I choose to be activity specific with my reply. Rather than just saying, "It's going to be great" or "I have some fun stuff planned" I make sure that I share specifically how I'll be spending my weekend.

Oh sure, I'll share the weekend projects I'm planning to take up, the hike my wife and I will be going on or the family events we will attend. But I'll also share that I'll be attending church on Sunday. If I'm headed to a retreat, I'll share that. If I'm going to a Christian concert, meeting with our Small Group or teaching Sunday school, whatever it is, I simply make sure I say it.

The result? Most people will ask questions and therein lays the opportunity to share my faith and represent Christ. Over the years God has used these simple conversations to build relationship. I have been privileged to see Firefighter's I've worked with give their lives to Christ. I've had opportunities to pray with employees when they share personal challenges and struggles and most of the time when I ask if they'd like me to pray for them, they say 'Yes!' Recently I prayed with an employee whose best friend (and fellow Firefighter) was diagnosed with cancer. Afterward he said, "You know, I have worked in the Fire Service for over 25 years and no one has ever offered to pray with me. Thank you." Funny thing was, as a result of praying together I learned something I didn't know about him, that his Uncle was a Pastor!

To be completely candid, not everyone responds positively but that's ok too. It doesn't change my commitment to be obedient to God's Word and His call on my life. Nor does it negate the opportunity I have to represent Christ with those He crosses my paths with. In the end, it's up to the Holy Spirit to do whatever it is that He decides to do with the seeds we sow. Along the way though we get the privilege, and joy, of witnessing His hand at work and it's in those very moments that He also greatly encourages our faith. How cool is that?

Amen!





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