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A glowing lightbulb is centered in the image. Inside the bulb, a detailed image of the Earth is visible, showing continents and oceans. The background is a dark space filled with numerous small, bright yellow stars. The text "A Light In the World" is arched over the top of the bulb.

31-Day Missions Devotional
VOLUME 3

by Vision Baptist Missions

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There are many reasons and excuses people give for not wanting to be a missionary. The dangers, fears, and the loneliness of living in a faraway land can cause a lot of understandable hesitations for many. However, the greatest comfort and the greatest source of strength for anyone considering moving to a foreign field is found in this verse—from the ends of the earth we can cry unto God and He will hear us!

When our hearts are overwhelmed, when the troubles seem to great, and when the loneliness is overtaking us, we have a God we can run to. We have a God who is a high tower and a strong rock. He will shelter and protect us in the midst of the greatest storms. No matter where we are, and no matter how distant and remote the country we are in may be, our God is still strong and able to deliver us.

He is the high and mighty Rock seen around the world!

David's Giant Slayers

2 Samuel 21:15-22

Dallas Brown — Burkina Faso, West Africa

15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. 16 And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel. 18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant. 19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant. 21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him. 22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

2 Samuel 21:15-22

The men in this story were not mighty men in themselves; they were just ordinary soldiers who did something extraordinary for their king.

What about you?

Maybe you think, “I’m nothing special; I’m not sure how the Lord could use me to be a missionary.” Take a look at the men that slew the giants. The first man mentioned was Abishia; it is no surprise that he slew a giant. He was one of David’s mighty men, his elite warriors. Look at the last name mentioned—Johnathan the son of Shimea. Who is he? He wasn’t one of David’s mighty men. He was just a warrior who stepped up when he saw a need and slew a giant.

There have been some incredible men of God who have carried the Gospel around the world in the past; now it’s your turn. The need is there; your King is worthy. What are you going to do? Will you step up in service to your King?

Are You in Love?

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Kevin White — Bolivia

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

I heard it said once that love can make a person do crazy things. From personal experience, I would have to say that this statement is true. Many have spent more money than they should have, and others have stayed up late or sacrificed for the person they

The Furtherance of the Gospel

Philippians 1:12

Brady Van Winkle — Turkey

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

Philippians 1:12

Paul was sitting in prison writing to the Philippians. They were worried about him and wanted him to get out of prison. He tells them not to be worried about him and explains that he was rejoicing in what had happened to him. He was rejoicing in it because the Gospel was being furthered even in his trial and troubles. So often in our lives we have hardships and difficulties and we beg God to take them away. However, our first thought should be how can this difficulty help further the Gospel? There is nothing wrong with asking God to take away the hardships, difficulties, and trials. But, while they are going on how, let us ask ourselves how we could use them to further the Gospel? Our mindset as Christians should be that no matter what we are going through or doing, it will be to the furthering of the Gospel! If we, as Christians, started doing this now, it would not take long for the whole world to be reached with the gospel of Christ!

The Rock Seen from Around the World

Psalms 61:2

Jason Rishel — Burkina Faso

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Psalm 61:2

Making the Great Commission Possible

Matthew 28:19-20

Will Hill — Japan

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 28:19-20

When we think on this command and consider the world of 6,803,241,148 lost people, the task seems impossible. Only 7.9% of the world is considered Evangelical Christian. There are billions left to reach with the Gospel, and Christ commanded us to tell them. So how is it possible to reach these people?

The book of Matthew tells us, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore."

Jesus has all authority and power in the universe, and He said, "Go." If the One Who has all power and all authority tells us to do something, we can be assured that it can be done. Christ has all authority to command us to go and He has all power to use simple humans for his glory! It's impossible without Christ, but because we have Christ we can reach the world!

It is important for us to remember, as we consider reaching the world, that it is Christ working through us. It's not you or your abilities, but it is the power of Christ working in and through you. Therefore, we can go into all the world and teach all nations!

"love". It is love that motivates people to do things that they normally would not and it is love that should motivate us to do more for the Lord.

If I were to ask you if you love the Lord, I am sure you would say yes, but does that love truly motivate you? As you can see in 2 Corinthians, it is the love of and for Christ that motivates us to no longer live for ourselves but to live for Him. This love motivates us to do more, sacrifice more, and "spend more" than we normally would. So how does your love for Christ compare? Are you truly in love with Him? To find out try answer these questions:

1. What has the Lord done for you that would motivate you in love?
2. What things in your life might be keeping you from loving the Lord like you should?
3. In what ways could you give and sacrifice more to show you love to the Lord?

Addicted to What?

I Cor.16:15

Raleigh Hill — Argentina

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

1 Corinthians 16:15

Some signs of addiction are:

Inability to think of anything else but the craving

Constantly wanting more and never turning down an opportunity

Willingness to pay any price

Always hanging around places and people that share or feed the need

People in today's society can be and sometimes are addicted to drugs, alcohol, gambling, adrenaline, eating, and even video games. How many people have purchased a video game and then couldn't stop playing it until they beat it? That's an addiction. When was the last time you were reading your Bible and couldn't stop until you finished it? Some are addicted to chocolate! I have seen the crazed look in the eyes of those young ladies in my youth group when I brought out a prize of chocolate goodness. When was the last time we felt that way about spending time with God?

We think of the Christian life and serving Jesus as something we do on the side, but these Christians had something amazing. They tasted and saw that the Lord was good and couldn't let go. They felt the joy from serving others in Jesus' name and being filled with His Spirit, and it overwhelmed them. It became their life. I know if you went back in time and asked each of them how much they regretted giving their lives to Christ their answer would be. "not at all!" Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Is Christ worth your life? Is there anything more important than our service for Him?

ma and Jehoram, priests. ⁹ And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people. ¹⁰ And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

2 Chronicles 17:1-10

King Jehoshaphat is now reigning in Judah. He sought God and walked in the ways of David. God established him and blessed him. After he strengthens security in Judah and takes away the idols, he sends people to all the cities of Judah to teach people with the book of the law of the Lord (vs. 9). The idea was to go into every city and teach God's people God's Word. What a phenomenal act by this king and what a great lesson to us!

Jesus also went from town to town, always pushing forward, teaching and preaching. Paul as well followed this pattern and left Titus in Crete and Timothy in Ephesus. The Great Commission not only teaches but commands us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). It is our responsibility but it should also be our ambition to get the Gospel out. Every city in the world should have the opportunity to hear the Word of God. Jehoshaphat was an earthly king and he sent his citizens to preach the law of the Lord for everyone to hear. Our Heavenly King has also commanded all of His children to go all over preaching and teaching what He has commanded us.

What if every Christian would determine to be part of our Heavenly Father's plan to go into all the world teaching and preaching the Gospel? Our obedience could cause a host of people to know our Savior. As Hudson Taylor said so well, "the Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed."

tached to Him. If we try to serve Jesus without staying connected to Him, we are like a flower that has been cut. It won't be long before we wither.

Do you want to have a life that bears much fruit? Do you want to reach this world for Jesus? If so, make connection to Christ your first priority through prayer and Bible reading.

Get the Word Out

2 Chronicles 17:1-10

Jeff Bush — Director of Vision Baptist Missions

¹ And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel. ² And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken. ³ And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; ⁴ But sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel. ⁵ Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance. ⁶ And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah. ⁷ Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. ⁸ And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nathaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elisha-

He Succeeds Where We Fail

Matthew 4:1-4

John Walz — Taiwan

¹ Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ² And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. ³ And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ⁴ But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:1-4

For forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness because of their failure. Yet, in the same wilderness where God's people failed, Jesus prevails in a symbolic forty days, not by merely living off of bread, but by living off of the Bread-Giver. Where the people used words to murmur against God, Jesus overcomes Satan with the Word, passing a great test before plunging into His ministry leading the way for others to follow. I'm comforted in knowing His strength is sufficient where I've already failed and am sure to fail again. I'm comforted in knowing His plan is to create Himself in me to the end that it is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me. He will cover all insufficiencies and complete in me the work He began.

Therefore, we do not let our failures or shortcomings deter us from taking the next steps in obedience. The new man created within is created after the image of Christ, and through Him we are more than conquerors.

God Sees Everything

Hebrews 4:13

James Miyashita — Japan

¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Hebrews 4:13

I remember as a child I sometimes would hide from my mother under the table. I thought that if I couldn't see her she wouldn't be able to see me, as though if I couldn't see her then I would be invisible to her as well. The fact of the matter was that my head was just close to the table or that I had my hands in front of my face. I was still in plain sight.

To our Heavenly Father, everything is in plain sight. He sees everything. He sees the scheming of the wicked Ezekiel 8:7-13, and his saints in supplication Matthew 6:6-8. But that's not all that God sees. God also sees everyone on earth, including the people who have never heard the Gospel.

I wonder what God thinks each time he looks at another lost person who hasn't heard the Gospel. Just because we don't see them there in a faraway land doesn't mean they are not there. To pretend that they aren't there is about as silly as hiding under the table.

Will you take a moment to think about the people that God sees who are still without Christ?

Bad Connection

John 15:1-5

James Miyashita — Japan

¹ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. ² Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ³ Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:1-5

Have you ever bought or picked a flower? Flowers, from the stem to each petal, truly show the glory of God (Matthew 6:29). Over time, however, what happens to that flower? If it is has been cut from the root then eventually it will wither and die. You might be able to slow the withering down by putting the flower in water, but as long as the flower has been detached from the root, the flower's death is only a matter of time.

Jesus uses a similar illustration about our lives as Christians. He tells us that He is the vine and we are the branches. Unless we as the branches are connected to the vine, we are useless. In fact, we are lifeless! A branch that has been detached from the vine might look good for a while, but without the necessary nourishment from the vine, it will soon wither.

We often get fired up about serving Jesus but we don't remain at-

Lord pulled Israel out of the fires of their faith. “Be strong and of good courage,” the Lord says to Moses in verse 6. Essentially God says, “It is I Who is going with you, the Lord that has led you out of Egypt and has taken care of you these forty years in the wilderness. Do you trust me now? Be strong and courageous in your faith in me. I have commanded this and I am with you.”

The Lord’s expectancy of our confidence in Him does not change when we cross over into the New Testament. Although we have not heard the thundering of God’s voice at Mt. Sinai, God sends us another Comforter, an Advocate who speaks to us in our inner man. Although we may not be the offspring of Abraham, we have the right to be called the sons and daughters of God as does everyone who believes on the name of Jesus. Although God did not rescue us from Egypt with signs and wonders, through the death and miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ, God rescues all sinners who believe. And, even though we have more reason than the Israelites to be strong and courageous, there still remains the crucible of our faith. Our hearts must go through testing and tempering until necessary strength and courage emerges. Even though we are not being sent into Canaan for conquest, we are being sent into all the world to occupy it with the Gospel of Christ until the Lord’s appearing. It is an offensive on a much larger scale than the Israelites ever faced, but we have a better covenant established with better sacrifices, even the Lord Jesus Christ Who now reigns over all. “Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakes of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pet. 4:12). Be strong and courageous.

The Seven-Year-Old King

2 Kings 11:17-21

Jeff Bush — Director of Vision Baptist Missions

17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD’s people; between the king also and the people. 18 And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD. 19 And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king’s house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. 20 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king’s house. 21 Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

2 Kings 11:17-21

I love the story of this king. How fascinating is it that a seven-year-old can become king of a nation! And yet that is exactly what happened in Israel with Jehoash (Joash). Let me point out a few interesting facts about his life:

Joash received counsel from a leader that loved and served God.

Joash followed the godly counsel; he did what was right. Right council will lead us down the right paths. The book of Proverbs

mentions “in the multitude of counselors” three different times (see Proverbs 11:14; 15:22 and 24:6). By good counsel, young people could evade big mistakes, marriages could be saved from divorces, and heartaches could be avoided. Every person should seek good, godly counsel in their lives.

Anyone can serve God.

At seven years of age, Joash began leading. Old or young, rich or poor, smart or not, God can use anyone who is willing. We should never forget that many known servants of God made decisions to serve God when they were just children. Proverbs 8:17 says that “those that seek me early shall find me”. Seek God now. Encourage children to seek God now. God will use anyone who will seek Him with their whole hearts.

He followed instructions while he was young and chose to do right himself when he was older (II Chronicles 24:4).

Joash started by being taught good instruction, but he determined himself later in life to apply what he was told. Many people are told what to do but later ignore it and stray from the paths. God gives you the instructions, but it is up to you to obey them in your life. According to James 4:17, the sin is knowing what to do but not doing it. We know we should be serving God, so let’s begin to live it out.

Be Strong and Courageous

Deuteronomy 31:3-6

John Walz — Taiwan

³ *The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said. ⁴ And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed. ⁵ And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.*

⁶ *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

Deuteronomy 31:3-6

Strength and courage are two necessary outcomes of tempered faith. There is, of course, no fault in the Lord that it was necessary for the Israelites to wander forty years in the desert. If they had the ability obey and trust the Lord’s goodness and provision, then they would have moved straight into Canaan, conquering cities as they went. However, because the nature of man is painfully ignorant to the nature and ways of God, their faith had to be trained in the crucible of the desert. It was in the desert that God’s covenant people learned something about God’s uniqueness, that there is only one of Him in a world that believes in a pantheon of deities. They learned something of God’s transcendence, that they could not domesticate God by reducing Him to a mere idol as was in the case of the golden calf. They murmured, they grumbled, and they tested the Lord again and again. Yet, in the end, as the smith tempers metal ready for use, the

water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

John 5:6-7

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:30-31

Much like the people in these two Bible examples there is a lost and dying world around us that is searching for answers but doesn't have anyone to help them. We get so caught up in our everyday activities, with our material and worldly possessions overflowing from our spoiled lives, that we forget about everyone else. What about the kid down the street, across the hall, or next to us at school or work? "They don't care," we say. We act like we are the only Christians in the world and that everyone is against us. Satan spreads this lie to convince us that there is no one in this world who wants to hear about Jesus Christ or who wants healing from a life of sin. But the truth is there is a world full of people like the Philippian jailer who are crying out, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" This poor lame man, who was longing to be healed in the only way he knew how, had no hope. He had no man to help him. Will you be that man for India, for China, for Argentina, or for some part of Africa? The souls of men are crying out. The Savior asks us to pray for laborers. Will you obey the call? Will you be **the man**?

Unforbidden

1 Thessalonians 2:16

Ed De los Reyes — China

¹⁶ Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

To forbid anyone from missions is a sin.

In this chapter, Paul is praising God for many wonderful things about the Thessalonian church. One thing He praises God for is that they suffered persecution and continued following Christ. Paul goes a bit into detail and tells how those who had persecuted the church had also forbidden them to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul says that this fills up their sins. He says that these people do not please God. Let's remember this and encourage others to go to the mission field. Paul rejoiced with them that their faith had spread all over (1:8). Spreading the Gospel and seeing people get saved is a beautiful thing. Yet, there are those who encourage people against it. "Don't go to another country; America needs help. Don't be a missionary; you won't make money. Don't preach to the lost; it's too dangerous." Every person who is forbidden to go proclaim the Gospel is representative of many who won't get saved. People need to be saved; encourage the spread of the Gospel.

Real People Go to a Real Hell

John 3:17-19

Will Hill — Japan

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 3:17-19

Last year, our dear friend and Japanese language school teacher died of cancer. Fukumoto was an incredible help to us in learning Japanese but, much more than that, she was our friend. Rebel and I frequently prayed she would have more time to be saved, and after she died I struggled with all the ways I could have done more.

We shared the Gospel with her several times, and she even heard a clear Gospel message at our Christmas party. It never feels like enough, though, when you realize your friend died without Jesus as her Savior. You think about all the things you could've done differently. You think about all the time wasted and wonder if she would've accepted Christ had she heard the Gospel sooner. I share this with you in the hope that you will not waste the opportunities God has provided you.

People really are dying and going to Hell. On deputation, I would say, "Every 30 seconds a Japanese person dies without Christ."

when I asked the question in the title, these things were not what I was talking about. I would like to ask you when was the last time you were moved as Paul was when he saw the need in Athens.

Athens was a very religious city with almost every kind of religion you could imagine. The one religion that the people were forgetting was to the true and living God that would take place of all the others. When you travel around the world you will see a similar situation. People are worshiping everything except for the true God. This should move us. It should upset us and motivate us to do something about it. When was the last time you really got upset about the great need around the world for the Gospel? Compare your life to Paul's here and answer the following questions:

1. How easy do you get upset about things?
2. How often do you read missionary prayer letters or study countries around the world?
3. When you are moved, what are some things that you personally could do to make a difference?

I Have No Man

John 5:6-7

Raleigh Hill — Argentina

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the

When was the last time you were moved?

Acts 17:16-23

Kevin White — Bolivia

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbling say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. 21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. WHOM THEREFORE YE IGNORANTLY WORSHIP, HIM DECLARE I UNTO YOU.

ACTS 17:16-23

There are many things that can move us but not always in a good way. We can get aggravated with life when things don't go the way we want. We can get frustrated with friends and family because they will not do what we want. One of my greatest weaknesses is getting upset when I drive. I always say it is my thorn in the flesh because it is when my patience is most tried. However,

The number does not carry the significance of the person. Fukumoto Sensei was not just a number or a statistic. She was a real person who Christ died for but she never accepted His gift of salvation. She died condemned. She was our dear friend.

Christ has commanded us, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." If you aren't obeying that command, how many more Fukumotos have to die without Christ for your heart to be stirred? I pray you are more than just stirred. I pray you will be moved to action. I pray that you will surrender your life to serve Jesus on the mission field and I pray, one day, you too can share the sweet Gospel with someone that's never heard before!

Some Have not the Knowledge of God!

I Corinthians 15:34

Brady Van Winkle — Turkey

³⁴Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

1 Corinthians 15:34

Paul is telling the Corinthians to wake up to doing good and to stay away from sin. Then he tells them that some in their area do not have the knowledge of God and that was shameful! As Christians, it was their responsibility to tell those in their area about Christ and what He had done for them, but they had failed at their task. Paul wanted to motivate them to be a light to those around them and to help them to realize that there should be no one they came in contact with who didn't know who God was. If Paul were writing to our churches today, he would probably say the same thing. The shame is that the church has failed at sharing the Gospel not only in their own areas but also around the world! We need to be sharing the Gospel with everyone we come in

contact with because if people do not have the knowledge of God and the Gospel, it is our fault. The world is filled with people who do not have the knowledge of God, and as Christians it is our responsibility to reach the world with the Gospel. What part will you have in reaching the world with the Gospel? The first way should be at home and the area in which you live, and then you should ask God what part you can have in world evangelism.

Chinese Bamboo Trees

James 1:1-5

Stephen Underwood — South Africa

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. ² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. ⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:1-5

I like the story of the Chinese bamboo tree. You take a little seed, plant it, water it, fertilize it for a whole year, and nothing happens. The second year you water the planted seed and fertilize it, and nothing happens. The third year you water it and fertilize it, and nothing happens. How discouraging this becomes!

The fifth year you continue to water and fertilize the seed, and then, take note. Sometime during the fifth year, the Chinese bamboo tree sprouts and grows ninety feet in six weeks!

All through the Bible, God has used men to carry forth His will. Today, God is still using men to accomplish His purposes.

Jesus, when He saw the multitudes, was moved with compassion. His compassion caused an *action* (as opposed to a *reaction*, which would simply cause guilt).

Then he states that the harvest is plenteous. There are plenty of souls to be saved. The harvest field is the world (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20).

But there is a problem—the laborers are few! Where are all the workers? Where are all the “living sacrifices,” the blood-bought, born-again, Holy-Spirit-filled young men who are willing to serve the King of Kings with their lives?

Jesus gives the solution to the problem—pray! Are we asking God for laborers? This is the prayer request of God! He will not command you to pray what He won’t answer. Ask God to make you a laborer. When you pray for laborers, pray, “God does that mean me? Do you want me to go?”

With 96% of that task outside the U.S.A., every Christian needs to seek God and ask “Do you want me to be a foreign missionary?”

Where the Gospel is proclaimed and prayer for laborers is made, missionary potential is great!

trap. Let's be people of faith that trust our awesome, amazing, and always faithful God! Let's not get trapped by fear.

Missionary Potential

Matthew 9:36-38

Mark Tolson — China

³⁶ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷ Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; ³⁸ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Matthew 9:36-38

Potential is the “possible”, as opposed to actual. It means “capable of being or becoming”. Within the Gospel itself, we find missionary potential, that is, the potential to transform a life from sinner to saint and send them around the world declaring its transforming power.

Therefore, wherever the Gospel is, there is great missionary potential.

The local assembly where the Gospel is constantly proclaimed is one of the wealthiest places on earth for missionary potential. The local church has unspeakable potential to turn the world upside down.

Trials produce patience! “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” Just like the bamboo is watered, fertilized, and maintained, we must go through a process of growing and cultivating. On deputation, there would be times I would go through discouragement. Support would not come in as quickly as I wanted. I would have cancelled meetings or would go an entire day without scheduling any new meetings. Pastor Austin Gardner would always remind me, “Stop focusing on the product; just work the process!”

Patience produces maturity! “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” It takes five years of commitment and work before any results are seen in the growth of the bamboo! Maturity takes time and commitment and does not happen overnight. Are you willing to pay the price? Will you continue being faithful during the process? Being able to “stick with it” is the only way we grow and mature spiritually!

Wisdom comes from God! “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” The wisdom we need to raise our children, lead our homes, follow God's will all comes from God. We must ask for the wisdom we need and believe His word to be true. God tells us to go! We need His wisdom to know where.

In our own abilities, we will fail at the task of world evangelism! But with God's wisdom and the cultivation of patience, we can see true spiritual growth, souls saved, and men trained to carry the gospel to a lost and dying world!

A Greater Gift

Acts 3:6-7

Jason Rishel — Burkina Faso

⁶ Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ⁷ And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

Acts 3:6-7

In Burkina Faso, there is a proverb that states, “If you give money to nine poor people, you will be the tenth.” In a country of such great physical needs, there is a special burden felt when you see the poverty around you and realize there is nothing you can do about it.

In Acts 3, Peter and John found themselves in a similar situation as they went to the temple to pray. A lame man came to them begging for money. Peter’s response in verse 6 holds a beautiful truth for all of us. “Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.”

As a Christian, we have a greater gift than money or resources to give the world: the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Money will be spent, food will be eaten, and medicine will be used up. These gifts are temporary and can only help the temporary problems. But salvation is an eternal gift, touching and changing every aspect of a person’s life. It is a gift that will never be lost or stolen. A gift that will never need to be replaced. As we pass by those we may never be able to help physically, may we never forget that we have a greater gift we can give them—the gift of God!

needs for us to start doing what we were sent to do—to tell them about Jesus.

Don’t Get Trapped

Proverbs 29:25

Kanon Bloom — China

²⁵ The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Proverbs 29:25

What is holding you back from going to the mission field? Many times, people feel like God is calling them into missions, ministry, or some other service for God. Yet, for some reason, they are too afraid to step out in faith and do what God is calling them to do. Many times the things that hold people back is they are afraid of man. They are afraid of what people will do to them. They are afraid of what people will think of them. They are afraid of other men, and that fear keeps them from doing the job that God has for them to do.

The Bible says, “The fear of man bringeth a snare.” The word snare just means a trap. You don’t want to fall into a trap with your life. However, if you become afraid of man, the Bible states that you fall into a trap, but if you trust the Lord, you will be safe. People don’t do what God is calling them to do because they are afraid and want to be safe. The truth is, though, if they wanted to be truly safe, they would put their trust in the Lord and do what God is calling them to do. Then they would be truly safe.

Let’s be people of faith. Let’s not fear man. Let’s not fall into a

Lift Up Your Eyes

John 4:34-35

Miguel Sanabria — Colombia

³⁴ Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. ³⁵ Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

John 4:34-35

Jesus, through His interaction with the Samaritan woman, teaches His disciples a very important lesson. He wants His disciples to know that His life is about one thing—doing and finishing what He was sent here to. He then tells them to lift up their eyes and to look at the fields because they are white already to harvest.

Every day we do many things in our lives. We sleep, wake up, eat, go to work or school, return home, eat, and go back to sleep. We are busy people. We often realize that time flies by and that time is very valuable in our lives. While it is good that we are busy people in this world, we must be careful that we do not live our lives for the things of this world. We must lift up our eyes and realize that our lives here on this earth are for so much more. We must lift up our eyes and realize that we have a great and amazing purpose for living. We are here not to live like the rest of the world who are busy and very involved in what they do; we are here with a great, God-given purpose. We must lift up our eyes and see that there is a dying world that needs us, that needs missionaries, and that needs a church involved 100% in God's business. We must lift up our eyes from this monotonous life that we are living in and realize that God has us here on this earth so that people, through us, would know about Him. Let us lift up our eyes and see a world without God, a world that desperately

Learn the Father's Heart

Luke 15:29–32

Beau Carpenter — Church Planter USA

²⁹ And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: ³⁰ But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. ³¹ And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. ³² It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Luke 15:29-32

Jesus' parable of the lost son contains many lessons. Really, it was aimed at the religious leaders who were hardened and prideful. They were so full of themselves that they couldn't even be happy when someone got right with God.

The older brother in this story is symbolic of the religious leaders. He was enraged when he heard that his father prepared a feast when his younger brother came home. This anger only revealed his lack of love. He wasn't glad that his brother was back; he was just mad that he wasn't the center of attention.

This attitude is a clear example of pride. This man could not see past himself to rejoice in the fact that his brother was restored. This story goes to illustrate a great truth about our God.

Our God loves it when people get saved. We have to learn our heavenly Father's heart. He loves it when the lost are found. Do you have the same heart as the Father?

The Lord is Ready

Psalm 86:5

Brendon Wung — North Africa

⁵For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Psalm 86:5

The Lord is good and ready to forgive all that call upon Him!
He has commanded His people to go out into all the earth and preach the Gospel so that the world can turn to Him!

Lord, you are ready to forgive sinners all over the world, but am I ready to go and preach?

How can the people be forgiven if they never hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

How can they know your mercy and forgiveness if no one has preached Your Word to them?

O Lord, I know that you are good and ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy! Please use me to share this truth with those around me today! Please send Your Gospel around the world; send more laborers out into Your harvest!

What controls you? Many of us never think about this question. So, let's think about it for a minute. Why do you do the things that you do? Is it money the driving force? Is it the approval of others? Is it attention from the opposite sex? What is the motivation behind what you do?

I recently broke a bone in my left hand, and it hurts. When it happened, I thought, "Well, at least it's my left hand," since I'm right handed. However, have you ever tried to function with one hand? It's not the easiest thing to do and takes some adjustment for sure. At first, I would try to use it but I could not because it was controlled by pain. The pain in my hand dictated what I could do and what I could not do. It limited my ability to do the daily functions that I take for granted each day, like buttoning my shirt or putting on my socks. Those are difficult tasks when an intricate part of the process is not controlled by me but is instead controlled by some other outside force.

As a Christian we should never be controlled by anything other than the Holy Spirit. So often we let anger, education, careers, entertainment, family, and much more control our behavior. These things bring very little profit and progress to the Kingdom of Heaven. So, what controls you? Are you controlled by outside forces or are you controlled by the Spirit?

God Knows

Proverbs 15:3

Micah Rastelli — Bosnia

³The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Proverbs 15:3

I am so thankful that God sees all that is going on in the world. He is never surprised when something happens. He knows (and already knew) it would happen and is watching all over the earth.

Fear is a very real thing that we deal with, and many times, for me, I deal with the fear of the unknown. I am limited in what I am able to see and know about; so, I fear what may happen or what people might think of me or be planning. However, I am so very thankful that I can trust God who already knows all of these things. I don't have to fear because God knows and is watching what is going on. He will take care of me.

Let's trust and praise God because He knows what is going on in our lives!

Controlled

Ephesians 5:18

Jason King — South Africa

¹⁸And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Ephesians 5:18

Where Art Thou?

Genesis 3:9

Kyle Shreve — Peru

⁹And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

Genesis 3:9

Before Genesis 3:9, we really don't see too much in terms of missions. We see that all of creation is perfect and operating in the way God intended. Everything was "good."

But the serpent ruined that for all of us when he beguiled Eve, and sin entered the world at that point. Adam and Eve realized they were naked and hid to make themselves clothing.

Before this point, they literally walked with God in the Garden of Eden. Once sin entered, they left God, struck out on their own, and hid, at which point God came and asked quite possibly the most famous question of all time, "Where art thou?"

It may not seem like it, but there is a lot of insight into missions here.

At the instant of the first sin, God is already the One looking for the sinners. He is searching for them, though they hide. He is pursuing them, though they flee from His presence. He offered salvation and hope when they are broken and destitute.

Ever since the beginning, our God has been interested in re-

deeming the world back to himself. And with over 7 billion people on the earth today, the question our God asks the masses is still the same, “where art thou?” God is looking and wanting to save every single person on this earth, and is not willing that any should perish.

For those who think missions and world evangelism is something that isn't all that important to our God, please realize that since the first sin entered the world, our God has been trying to bring the world back to Himself.

There is nothing so important to our God as seeing the world reconciled to Himself, and by getting involved in missions, you have a chance to get in on that.

Set Your Mind and Heart on Christ

Colossians 3:1-2

Daniel Sparks — Chile

¹ If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:1-2

Paul is telling Christians to set their hearts and minds on the ways of the Lord. We are not to think or indulge in the things of the world because we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. His ways are now our ways.

Christians should think the way Jesus thinks and have the same

hundreds of notches on his spear from the men he has killed. He's so well-armed that somebody else has to carry his shield for him. On top of that he's 10 feet tall and a champion of war! The other man is about 20 years old, 5 feet 6 inches, and weighs in at 140 pounds. He wears no armor, and carries a sling, a staff, and a bag of rocks.

Who do you imagine would make the claim that he'd kill other and taken his head from him? If you asked me, I'd say the guy in the armor has the best chance of fulfilling that threat. But it's David, the 140-pound kid, that kills Goliath, the champion of the Philistines. He stands with the head of Goliath in his hands as a victor over the Philistines and the champion of Israel! Now let's think about the situation for a moment. Was there anything special about David? Was there anything in the sling that made it more effective than any other weapon? Were the stones that David used more aerodynamic than others? I think we can answer “no” to all of the above questions.

The reality is that there was nothing special at all about David. He was simply a man who placed himself in the hand of his God to see what He would do. This is wonderful news! If David was a normal man, then we, as normal men and women, can do great things for our God! Don't let doubts, fears, and insecurities keep you from serving God. Let yourself be a little tool in God's hands and watch Him do great things!

Everything about Paul's life was about the Gospel. Making Jesus known to the world was the foremost thought on his mind. He knew what Christ did for him and he wanted people to experience what he was able to experience. He knew what real joy was and where it came from.

In our lives, do we have the same purpose as Paul? Do we draw our joy from a lifestyle of promoting the Gospel of Christ? Are we even more joyful when we see others following that same pattern? Let us evaluate our lives to see where from where we attempt to draw our joy. Following Christ is the only place of real joy.

God Does Not Need Big Things to Do Big Things!

1 Samuel 17:46-47

Sam Quinn — India

⁴⁶ *This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.* ⁴⁷ *And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.*

1 Samuel 17:46-47

Imagine a scene with me for a moment. In a valley stand two men. One is decked from head to foot in armor with a sword, a spear as big around as a small tree, a helmet on his head, and

heart that He has. He is the Savior of the world. He loves everyone. He desires for all people to hear the Gospel. We should gladly carry His glorious message to the ends of the Earth. The Great Commission is a command to be obeyed. It should be our first objective in life. It should consume our minds and hearts.

The Final Exam

Genesis 22:1-12

Dr. Jim Roberts — India

¹ *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.*

² *And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

³ *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.* ⁴ *Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.* ⁵ *And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.* ⁶ *And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.* ⁷ *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? ⁸ And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.* ⁹ *And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built*

an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. ¹² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Genesis 22:1-12

Abraham had been tested many times in his walk with God. Some tests he failed, and one particular test, Abraham failed twice. But Abraham continued to allow God to grow him by trying his faith and he received God's promise—a son, Isaac.

Abraham's final exam came in Genesis 22. Abraham was enjoying days with his promised son, Isaac. But then, God asked for the promise back. God wasn't angry with Abraham. He was going to display his man.

Abraham passed this test with flying colors. Sometimes God displays us with a test. God isn't angry with us. Maybe He wants others to see how He has grown us.

And we want to pass our "final exam" like Abraham did.

Servant

Philippians 2:1-2

Mark Coffey — South Africa

¹ If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ² Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Philippians 2:1-2

Paul message to the church of Philippi is pretty amazing, especially considering where he when he was writing. The main emphasis throughout the entire letter to the Philippians is to rejoice in the Lord. He was encouraging the church to find their joy in God, not in their circumstances.

Paul was a great mouth piece for this message from God, writing it as he sat in a Roman prison. He knew firsthand what it was like to live a joyful life in Christ, no matter what was going on around him.

In verse 1 Paul was making a statement that if God had done anything for the Philippian believers, if He had been a comfort and help to them in any way, they should follow the instructions found in verse 2. If their life was impacted by the Gospel in any way, they should fulfill Paul's joy by thinking, loving, and behaving the same way about the Gospel that Paul did.

Paul said he lived a joyful life, but if they wanted to cause his joy to overflow even more, they would live out the Gospel in the same way he did.