

Dear Ladies,

What has God shown you lately in your walk with him - any insight, inspiration, encouragement, or challenge? How do our lives show God's love to others? We hope these scriptures and thoughts will encourage you and show a way for growth in your own relationship with the Lord.

Love

Bonnie Fisher

1 - To Show...

By Lisa Fischer

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.” (Ephesians 1:3-8 NLT)

Over the past year and a half, life has been great, but challenging. My daughter gave her life to Jesus, everyone is healthy and thriving, but in spite of all the blessings, I have been struggling to “feel” consistently close to God. My mood swings have been so drastic that at times, I’ve felt like I was going crazy, knowing that my current circumstance did not require the reaction I was having. I would pray, talk to family and friends, lose-it on my family, kick a garbage can (once), eat clean, take calming supplements, but nothing worked long term. No matter how much I prayed, I felt like a fraud. I would tell myself, “Lisa, you know that just because you feel something, doesn’t make it the truth.” I knew I couldn’t give up because Jesus saved my life! Where would I go? I would remember all that God has done for me and the kindness He has shown me throughout my life. I remembered how He prepared me for my mother’s death and say to myself, “Oh yeah, God, You love me. You would not have prompted me to speak healing words of love and redemption if I wasn’t Yours!” I remembered how God moved us here and shortly thereafter, spoke the words, directly to my heart, so loud I thought He was in the room with me, that He would never leave me or forsake me. And

I'd say to myself, "Oh, silly Lisa, your Father loves you, He would not promise to never leave you and then leave you when you struggle." There are so many times God reminded me of how He has shown His love and kindness towards me, the aforementioned are just a few!

I was listening to a sermon by Tim Keller, a pastor in New York City. In his sermon, Tim Keller dealt with the issue of how as Christians, when we blow it or don't "feel" close to God that somehow we think we are no longer His child. One day we are doing great and we are His and the next we blow it and we're not. Tim went on to say that when his sons are doing great, he is their father, but they don't require a lot from him. However, when they struggle, Tim feels more like a father, not less. He feels more like a father because he is in the battle with them and fighting for them. He concluded that it doesn't make sense that our heavenly Father would then cease to be our Father when we struggle. What comforting, healing words those were to my ears!

*Thank you, Father, for You have blessed us with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ."
Thank You for loving us and choosing us before You laid the foundation of the world to be holy and faultless in Your eyes. You are so rich in kindness and grace that You purchased our freedom with the blood of Your Son and forgave all our sins. You have showered Your kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. We love You and praise You and ask that You help us to show to others the love and kindness you have shown to us. In Jesus Name, Amen.*

2 - How Am I Maximizing my Potential for the Lord?

By Renita Johnson

I was listening to a sermon and the question was how is the kingdom of God benefiting from my salvation? All I could say was wow, how is the kingdom of God benefiting from my redemption. I asked myself who have I impacted for the Lord. Has someone come to the knowledge of God because of my salvation. As I continue to ponder on that question, I begin to feel so pressured, but then I begin to thank God for his grace. As tears began to roll down my eyes, I could only think of a few scriptures that were laid on my heart when it comes to labor/working for the Lord and God's grace.

1 Cor 15:58 – “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that our labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

- Have you stood firm with allowing God to direct your life?

Jeremiah 10:23- “I know, O lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.”

- Let's think about how we allow ourselves to become so focus on what we desire that God is not the one directing our steps anymore. I often pray in the moment, because my character is to do my own will and not even stop to say, “God is this what you want me to be doing”

Proverbs 13:4 - The desires of the diligent are fully satisfied

- Are you fully satisfied in your diligence with reaching others in order to glorify God's kingdom?

John 15:4-5 – “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the

branches. If a man remains in me, and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

- Are we remaining in God in order to bear fruit to build his Kingdom, or do we have our own agenda? Apart from God we cannot bear fruit.

Hebrews 12:1-3 – “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

- Hebrews 12:1-3 - is such an encouraging scripture, because we all grow weary and lose heart. The longer we stay faithful to God the more challenging life gets. But, if we run with perseverance and continuously keep our eyes on Jesus we will keep our joy and will not lose heart.

Romans 8:5 – “Those who live in accordance with the spirit have their minds set on what the spirit desires.”

- How often do you keep your mind on the things above? How often do you think of heaven; and the presence of God? Ask yourself sometimes what does God desires of me.

Galatians 6:8-9 – “The one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

- How do you continue to sow what pleases God? Are you growing weary on doing what is good; when was the last time you went to feed the homeless, or visited someone in a nursing home? Let’s sow into people lives so that we can reap eternal life.

Nehemiah 9:17 – “They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate; slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them.”

- Have we returned back to our stiff-necked ways we had before Christ saved us? Do we take time to listen to the voice of God, or are we rebellion and have gone back to our own ways. Remember the miracle that God performed in your life when he saved you. Thank God he is gracious and is slow to anger. Let’s remember from where he brought us from.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank you for your mercy, thank you for your love and grace. My prayer is for the women who will take time to read these quiet times that their hearts would totally fall in love with you over and over again. God I thank you for how you take care of our every need; there are no limits on your forgiveness. God I thank you for your word that tells us to Trust in you with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding but in all our ways acknowledge you and you will make our path straight. Lord I am reminder every day to praise you and give thanks for you are good and your love endures forever.

Father, help us to always remember to seek first your kingdom and righteousness and all else will be added to our lives. Help us to keep our focus on your word as it is a light for our salvation in Jesus name Amen.

3 - To Show...God's love

By Carlisa Sanders

Showing God's love to other brothers and sisters is a beautiful and powerful way to spread the gospel of Christ to others. It's the reason I kept coming back to church after being invited initially. What can I say..I love to feel loved! Who doesn't? But showing love in the way Christ loves is so much more than I really understood at the time. As I get grow older in Christ, it's obvious that I didn't REALLY understand God's love in the beginning of my walk with God. I have made MANY mistakes with disciples, my family and with the lost but I strive to change because Christ's love compels me (2 Cor 5:14-15).

Here are a few markers of love the way the Bible defines it. There are 551 references to "love" in the NIV version of the Bible, so this is just touching the surface.

Love isn't just words. I John 3: 17-20. It's loving with actions and in truth.

Prayer: God, give me wisdom on how to express your love. Help me to be like Christ, who gave of his talents and time but always went to you for wisdom in prayer. He was never bitter or compelled by other people's demands. He served out of compassion and patience, healing, listening and teaching in love. He shared everything willingly with us, hopeful that we may one day reach out for God. The world gives conditionally but may I give unconditionally like Jesus.

Love is impartial. James 2:1-13. If I show one person more respect or honor than another for ANY reason, I am guilty of breaking your royal law. The world tells us that having money, social status, education or birth place is favorable but Jesus was poor, self-taught, controversial, and from a despised country.

Prayer: *God, help me to see people the way you see them, as your adopted children or as lost children who need desperately to be saved. Please forgive me for the way I have shown partiality in the past. May the social, cultural and political lines in this world not stop me from reaching out to others. And may my love be as deep for them as Jesus' love: impartial, considerate, and sincere.*

Love is truthful. Ephesians 4, especially, 15-16, 25-32, I Cor 13:6. Being truthful is difficult in a world of lies, slander and gossip, but speaking the truth in love is the only way to unity in Christ.

Prayer: *Abba, I confess my sin to you that I am not always truthful with myself, much less other people. And sometimes, when I speak the truth, it isn't in love and compassion, but in anger. Help me to listen before I speak and not be reactive (James 1:19). May your spirit guide my heart and say only truthful, encouraging words. Help me, Abba, to be like a small child, honest and truthful and never slanderous or abusive. May your whole body be built up in love, as each part does its work.*

Love is so much more than these few points. Love forgives, trusts, doesn't envy, builds up, hopes, perseveres... Basically, love is everything the world isn't. 2 Corinthians 5:16 tells me to "regard no one from a worldly point of view", and later that I'm supposed to commit to the message of reconciliation (v. 19). I constantly see my selfishness and lack of love in my relationships with family, friends, and brothers and sisters. But I can strive to change and pray for God's continued reconciliation.

Final Prayer: *Help me, Father, to feel your love every day so I can share it sincerely with others (Romans 12:9: Love is Sincere). May I be a pure hearted ambassador of your love and show others how to be reconciled to you and to others. (2 Cor 5:18-20). I know it is love that brought me to you and I am so grateful. Help me to never stop loving others since it is the true fulfillment of your law (Rom 13:8-10) Amen.*

4 - Accepting God's Generous Gift so We Can Show it to Others

By Paula Chu

Matt 25:14-30

I love how Jesus taught us through parables! This one, however usually left me feeling vaguely guilty and really unsure if I was using my talents (bags of gold) in a way that would please the master (God). I felt kind of confused by how angry the master was over the actions of the third servant who buried the gift in the ground. It made sense to me to keep the gold safe to give back to master when he returned. Why risk losing someone else's money? I think I was looking at this parable from a worldly perspective and not a spiritual one. First of all, how does it even make sense that a wealthy man would entrust huge amounts of his hard earned wealth to three of his servants? Didn't he know any financial advisors who could invest his money responsibly? Instead he called the gardener, the cook and the butler and gave them huge amounts of money! How ridiculous! On top of that, he gives them no instructions on what to do with it....no strings attached! Perhaps there is a deeper message here? Jesus never clearly explained this parable as he did some of his others, and I look forward to asking him one day! In the meantime, here is one possibility to consider.

What if, in this parable, the bags of gold were actually gifts of God's grace, lavishly given and undeserved? Maybe the servant who received the most had actually sinned the most, or realized the magnitude of their need for grace. The two servants who received the five and two bags of gold (grace) accepted the gift and multiplied it. Knowing the gold was undeserved but desperately needed in their lives, these two servants gladly used the treasure freely in their own lives causing it to grow and spill over to bless many others. Maybe the servant who received one bag of gold (grace) had only sinned a little, and therefore didn't really appreciate or see their need for this this amazing gift. This servant did not use the gift to bless others or even him/herself.

Maybe we only accept as much grace as we think we need! If we don't see our need, we might bury it in the ground where it lies dormant and unproductive. Those who accept His grace, let it fill their hearts and spill over to bless others are called to "come share your master's happiness" (Matt 25:21). The servant who received one bag of gold was afraid and saw the master as a "hard man", an unjust man, "harvesting where you have not sown" (Matt 25:24). Could it be that this servant missed the master's generous heart and acted on his/her own belief of the master's heart (hard and unjust)? Maybe he/she couldn't accept that the master's heart was good and that the gift was entrusted to him/her to use freely. This servant was judged by his/her own standards of belief about the master.

I definitely tend to be like the third servant! Someone giving me a large undeserved gift makes me feel uncomfortable. I don't truly see my need for it. I prefer to earn my own way, rather than depend on someone else. If I try hard enough, surely I can achieve some sort of righteousness! What I don't understand is that before God, I am "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked". (Rev. 3:17)

Abba, please help me to see my deep and constant need for your beautiful gift of grace. Teach my heart to humbly accept your generous bags of gold and multiply them in my life to bless many others, to show your beautiful heart to those who desperately need you.

5 – To Show our love of God through worship, obedience, service, and love for all people.

By Laura Hall

This is such a high calling and we will be learning this till we breathe our last! I hope this study will inspire you in your showing the love of God in Christ. I would encourage you to take your time going over it. I have broken it up into three days but of course it can be done in shorter or longer timeframes –

Day 1: Remember Why You Want to Show Love for God

You've been shown love:

External motivation can be helpful when first learning or reaching for something new, but only the internal drive of God's grace will keep you living a life of love in the long run.

1 John 4:10–11, 19 God loved you first.

Romans 5:6–11 God loved you as His enemy, as a sinner.

Ephesians 5:2 God's love for you was sacrificial.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 God's love for you is eternal.

Titus 2:14 God's love is for you is purposeful.

Day 2: Cultivate Being Present by Imitating Christ

Jesus was WITH God:

You can't give what you don't have. Jesus set the example in oneness and connection with God. He knew He couldn't complete the work God had prepared for Him if He wasn't remaining in the Father's presence.

John 1:1–2 in the beginning

Mark 1:35, 6:46, 14:32 in prayer

Mark 16:19 in heaven

For further study: John 13–17

Jesus walks WITH us:

Jesus lived His life here with people and He lives in us now individually and collectively as His disciples. He was fully present whether He was one on one or in a massive crowd. People saw His love for them because He connected with them in the moment.

John 1:14 took up residence among us (HCSB)

John 10:11–15 as the good shepherd

John 14:7–11 as the perfect representative of the Father

John 14: 15–18 as the Spirit

For further study (examples of Jesus with people):

Mark 5:21–43, Luke 19:1–10, John 4:1–26, Hebrews 1:2–3

Day 3: Build Readiness With Spiritual Disciplines

Wouldn't it be nice if all the love we want to show just happened? Unfortunately, life doesn't really work that way. We have to take time to prepare. For example, if we want to be spontaneous in hospitality it doesn't usually happen if we haven't gone to the grocery store! We've got to be ready to show God's love. Here are some areas to build readiness.

Build readiness for the spiritual battle:

Luke 14:1–13 Satan will find an opportune time to tempt when you least expect it.

Ephesians 6:13–17 Put your armor on daily.

1 Timothy 4:7–8 Train yourself to be godly.

Practical tips: If you are struggling to have a consistent and/or an impactful relationship with God ask someone who you know to be strong in this area for guidance, help and accountability. Pray, brainstorm and commit to a new habit with God. Try a change in scenery for your times of prayer. Change the translation of the Bible your reading from. Remember it takes 21 days to build a new habit! Don't give up!

Build readiness with spiritual friendships:

Romans 12:9–18 Practice one another principles.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 Share life together.

1 John 1:8–9 Practice openness and confession in one another relationships.

James 5:16 Let times of openness lead to prayer together and for one another.

Practical tips: Relationships require time, both quality and quantity. Commit to a consistent time together with 2-3 sisters. Sit down with your calendar at the start of each month and get it written down and confirmed. Make it a priority. Don't be afraid to initiate something at the last minute. You'll never know who might have been available for a phone prayer time, quick meal or play date with kids if the opportunity arises for you but you don't ask! Keep cards on hand so you can encourage others.

Build readiness for impact with hospitality:

1 Peter 4:9 Practice joyful hospitality together.

Romans 12:13 Share with one another and pursue hospitality.

Hebrews 13:2 Don't neglect hospitality.

Practical tips: Did you know that in Biblical times culturally it was customary to welcome strangers, anyone who was in need of a place to stay regardless of inconvenience or lack of resources? Now that's serious readiness! Take some time at the start of each month to plan for hospitality. What do you need to have on hand so you can be responsive when the need or opportunity arises? Put dates on your calendar for planned hospitality. What works with your schedule? Sunday after church? Friday evenings? It doesn't have to be complex. Keep it simple. A watermelon cutting on a summer day is a hit with kids and adults! Have someone over for coffee or tea. If you need help with making your home a hospitable place go to a sister whose good at it and ask for input.

6 - To Show- to anyone who had need

By Dickye Jennifer Mares

Theme scripture: Acts 2:42-47- They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and to fellowship, to breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe and the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to ***give to anyone who had need.*** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. ***They broke bread in their homes and ate together*** with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Show Me: In the spring of 1980 while living in Warren Towers at Boston University, two girls knocked on my door and invited me to a "Soul Talk". I just stared at them because they were white, and I was black! They handed me the flyer; I abruptly closed my door. To my surprise, they knocked again the following Thursday and invited me to the "Soul Talk". Instead of closing the door on them, I said, **Show me?** Where is this Soul Talk?

I followed Joyce Elizabeth Crosby and Pamela Johnson to the "Soul Talk", located in Warren Towers just one floor below my floor. Because of the love **shown to me** and the powerful Bible lessons, I never missed a "Soul Talk"! As a result of the **love shown to me** by members of the Lexington Church of Christ (which was later named, The Boston Church of Christ); I will celebrate my spiritual birthday on July 23, 2018!!

Show compassion and give to anyone who had a need: So fast forward to April 2014, I accepted a position in Rock Hill, SC and was eager to find where the church met. It was during a mid-week service in March 2016, an announcement was read about a brother in need due to medical condition. He needed a kidney. I remember when I worked as an administrator for the LA Church of Christ; my co-worker and friend, Janet, offered to be tested to help a brother in need in the Toronto Church.

Her kidney tissue was a perfect match for the brother in the Toronto Church! We had glad hearts and praised God!

I thought this is my opportunity **to show compassion and give to anyone who had a need!** I walked up to the brother one Sunday morning, and told him I would like to be tested to see if I can help. He looked at me and a big smile came to his face!

Even-though my tissue was not a perfect match for him, the friendship with he and his wife has given me so much joy in my life. I was a new supervisor in my new position in Rock Hill and was in need of help with my communication skills (I was showing a poor example by yelling during disagreements with my staff and contractors). Because **this couple showed me compassion and gave to me with my need**, God used them to help me!

I have stopped raising my voice; therefore; using tools given to me by them and stopped yelling during disagreements. My relationships at my office have changed; expecting some families who have expressed interest to visit our fellowship!

Phil and Bonnie, you have invited me into your home, and broke bread together! I was glad! Your friendship is a perfect match for me! I look forward to those who will be added to our fellowship!

7 – To Show our love for God through worship.

By Lavonia Drabot

I am reading a book called “Satisfy My Thirsty Soul” by Linda Dillow. As I’m going through the questions at the end of each chapter and reflecting on my own worship experience, I’m realizing that my worship of God is more than just what we do on Sunday morning at church. Dillow shares in her book: “Worship is not just a specific act. It is a lifestyle. Worship is a specific act of bowing my knees and declaring holy, holy, holy. Worship is also a lifestyle of bowing my life and living holy, holy, holy. Also: “Worship begins in holy expectancy and ends in holy obedience. The specific act of worship – bowing my knees in holy expectancy – has taken me into the presence of God and true intimacy. The lifestyle of worship – bowing my life in holy obedience – has taken me to a new level of living faithfully for Christ.”

Here are some verses to read and meditate on as we begin to understand what worship really is for each of us.

1 Chron. 16.29

- What does the word “ascribe” mean?
- What does it mean to bring an offering and come before him?
- What does it mean to worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness?
- What comes to your mind when you think and meditate on God’s splendor?

John 4.24

- What does it mean to worship in spirit and in truth?

Romans 12.1

- If our spiritual act of worship is offering our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, what would this look like in your life?

Psalms 96.9, 99.5, 100.2

- What do these Psalms say about worship?

Think about this quote from A.P. Gibbs:

“In prayer we are occupied with our needs, in thanksgiving we are occupied with our blessings, but in worship we are totally occupied with God himself”

Decide what worship will look like in your life. Enjoy your walk with God, and show him your love by growing in your worship of him.