

40 Days of Celebration

(Your church would choose any 6 weeks this year to do this series)

*Schedule six weeks to celebrate God's
work in our life and our church!*

What would the six weeks look like?

- September 4** Small Group Lesson 1 (Testimony?)
Sermon 1 Topic: **What am I here for? God has a purpose for my life. Salvation.** (Testimony?)
Special Event: **Friend Day Luncheon** after church. It can't hurt to have a good crowd the first day.
Personal Reading – **John 1-7**
- September 11** Small Group Lesson 2 (Testimony?)
Sermon 2 Topic: **Worship as a body and walking with God individually every day.** (Testimony?)
Personal Reading – **John 8-14**
- September 18** Small Group Lesson 3 (Testimony?)
Sermon 3 Topic: **Fellowship** (Testimony?)
Personal Reading – **John 15-21**
- September 25** Small Group Lesson 4 (Testimony?)
Sermon 4 Topic: **Discipleship** (Testimony?)
Personal Reading - **Galatians 1-6**
- October 2** Small Group Lesson 5 (Testimony?)
Sermon 5 Topic: **Serving Others** (Testimony?)
Special Event: **Mission/Ministry Fair** (set up some tables highlighting your church's ministry)
Personal Reading – **Colossians 1-4, I Timothy 1-3**
- October 9** Small Group Lesson 6 (Testimony?)
Sermon 6 Topic: **Sharing Your Faith** (Testimony?)
Special Event: **Baptism Sunday** – save baptisms until this last Sunday
Personal Reading – **I Timothy 4-6, II Timothy 1-4**

Mission Project in October or November

Sometime after the series is over, each SS class does a small mission project in the community working together as a class.

The sermons – each pastor prepares his own (Ask someone to share a testimony in the service?)

The Sunday School lessons – provided from the Association (Testimony?)

The personal devotions – provided by the Association (Ask your church members to read 1 chapter a day)

Friend Day Lunch – each church coordinates this. This could kick off the series with a crowd!

Ministry Fair – each church gets volunteers to set up some tables that highlight your ministries

Ministry Projects – each class could choose a project or the pastor could choose the projects

SERMON SERIES FOR 40 DAYS OF CELEBRATION

Sermon #1

What am I here for?
What is God's purpose for my life?
What is God's purpose for our church?

Sermon #2

Worshiping together as a church family.
Individually spending time alone with God.

Sermon #3

God made us to be a family in Christ.
The power of unity and friendship.

Sermon #4

God wants me to grow and help others
grow.

Sermon #5

We are given gifts, experience, passions and
resources so that we can help others in
need.

Sermon #6

The power of our testimony.
What it looks like to be an ambassador for
Christ.

Suggestions:

1. Use someone in your church or an outsider to share a 1-2 minute testimony about what you are preaching on that morning. It could be live or on video. If it is an outsider, it could be from YouTube or you could ask a friend from another state to send you a personal video to use for your service.
2. Promote the other parts of 40 Days in your service – the personal devotions, the small group meetings, Friend Day Luncheon, the Missions Fair, Baptism Sunday and the mission projects coming up by your classes.
3. Make sure and give guests and members who attend during the 40 Days a list of upcoming events and ways they can be involved and help – singers, musicians, teachers, counselors, mission trips, camps, and service projects.
4. If helpful, try to start one or more new small groups or Sunday School classes that will meet to discuss the 40 Days material but then keep going after the series is over. Maybe a new young couples class, a single adult class, a support group, a group that discusses the sermon or a new D-Group.

40 Days Class #1
What Am I Here For? What Is My Purpose In Life?

1. You read **John 1-7** this week. What stood out to you? What did you learn about God? What did you learn about people?
2. Ask two people to be ready to share testimonies about what it was like when they decided to have a personal relationship with Jesus and how their life was changed (1-3 minutes for each person).
3. How do you think the average American would answer the question "What is the purpose of life?"
4. When do you think people start to think about the meaning, purpose and goals of their life? When did you? What do you think are some of the biggest influences that affect someone's direction in life?
5. What are some things we can learn about God and people in these verses?

Mark 8:36 *"What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

John 2:15-17 *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."*

6. What does the Bible say about God having a plan and purpose for our life? What stands out to you in each verse?
Ephes 1:11,12 _____ Acts 17:24-28 _____
Jeremiah 29:11 _____ John 10:10 _____
Psalm 139:13-16 _____
7. If a person was at the end of their life looking back, what do you think they will say was most important to them? What might be some of their regrets?
8. Life is short compared to eternity. The Bible says that heaven cannot be earned or deserved. What else does the Bible say about heaven and eternal life? What stands out to you in these verses?
Romans 6:23 _____
John 14:1-6 _____
I John 5:11-13 _____
9. What does the Bible say separates us from God and his plan and purpose for our life? What stands out in these verses?
Romans 3:23 _____
Romans 3:9-12 _____
I John 1:8-10 _____
(3 sins a day = over 1,000 a year X 80 years = 80,000 sins! Should we feel that we are not really sinners?)
10. Is it harder to do the right things or harder to not do the wrong things? Why?
11. What was God's plan to restore our relationship with Him? What key words stand out to you?
Romans 5:1 _____ Romans 5:8 _____
Romans 8:1,2 _____ I Peter 3:18 _____
12. How would you explain the difference between knowing about God and Jesus versus believing and following? Many people attend church for years and have knowledge but don't necessarily have a deep life-changing belief.
13. How can a person receive the gift of eternal life and experience God's purpose in their life? What are some of the words that are used in these verses that mean the same as "trusting in Christ"?
John 1:12 _____
Acts 16:31 _____
John 5:24 _____
Acts 3:19 _____

My Commitment/My Prayer Request

If you have never made a decision to accept what Jesus did for you and follow Jesus with your life, you can make that decision right now. You can pray that prayer silently saying something like this: ***"Father, thank you for sending Jesus to die for my sins. Thank you for forgiving me. Help me to follow you for the rest of my life. Help me understand your purposes for my life."***

- Ephesians 1:11,12** In him we were also chosen,^[e] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, ... might be for the praise of his glory.
- Acts 17:24-28** “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’
- Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- John 10:10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
- Psalms 139:13-16** For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place ... Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
- Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- John 14:1-6** “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- I John 5:11-12** God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.
- Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- Romans 3:9-12** Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”
- I John 1:8-10** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.
- Romans 5:1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
- Romans 5:8** God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 8:1** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- I Peter 3:18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.
- John 1:12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God
- Acts 16:31** “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”
- John 5:24** whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life
- Acts 3:19** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord

40 Days Class #2
Worship: Growing Your Relationship With God

Worship and fellowship with God does not happen just on Sunday or just in a church building. Living in a relationship with God is 24/7. We can learn, pray, be thankful, confess sins and ask for strength constantly because the Spirit of God is in us.

1. You read **John 8-14** last week. Share some things you learned about God and people. Have someone ready to share a testimony about how daily worship and time alone with God has changed their life (1-3 minutes).
2. **Psa 122:1 "I was glad when they said unto me, "let us go into the house of the Lord".**
In what ways have worship services at church helped your spiritual growth?
3. What Christian books have you read that helped you grow spiritually? (a devotion book, a book on ministry, a biography)
4. **Psa 119:11 "I have hidden your word in my heart" Psa 119:37 "preserve my life according to your word"**
How do you usually go about reading the Bible? Is there a particular plan or strategy that you like best?
5. **Mt 6:6 "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen."**
Mt 5:44 "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."
Luke 18:1 "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."
 How has prayer been significant in your life? What helps your prayer life to be successful?
6. **Mt 4:10 "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan. For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"**
Have there been some particular scripture verses that you memorized and how did they affect your life?
7. **Psa 8:3 "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars ... Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth."**
Is there a place that helps you be aware of and talk to God (a room, nature, walking, when you are alone, driving, etc.)?
8. What kinds of things tend to negatively affect your walk with God the most (worry, fear, anger, pride, sadness,)?
Psa 51:10 "Create in my a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."
 When you found yourself experiencing a time of struggle, what helped you the most to recover?
9. When we struggle to feel God's presence – where is He?
 I Cor 6:19,20 _____
 John 14:16-18 _____
 Gal 2:20 _____
10. What is one of the things that Jesus said will keep us from being able to enjoy God fully with a clear conscience? What does Jesus say the solution is?
 Mt 5:23, 24 _____
11. When we walk consistently with God and grow closer to Him, what does the Bible say the results will be?
 Prov 3:5,6 _____
 Gal 5:22,23 _____
 Mt 5:16 _____
 John 15:5 _____

Review

Based on the things we discussed above, make a list of some things that help a follower of Jesus to worship every day.

My Commitment /My Prayer Request

I want the Lord to help me in this area ...

_____ to be faithful	_____ to be available	_____ to memorize a verse	_____ to gather with other believers for services
_____ to pray and not give up	_____ to forgive and ask for forgiveness	_____ to be teachable	_____ to develop a habit of Bible reading at home
			_____ to trust with my whole heart God's faithfulness

- I Corinthians 6:19,20** Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.
- John 14:16-18** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.
- Galatians 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- Matthew 5:23,24** “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.
- Proverbs 3:5,6** Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.
- Galatians 5:22,23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- Matthew 5:16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
- John 15:5** “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

40 Days Class #3
Fellowship: Connecting with Other Believers

God created us to live in fellowship and friendships with others. We were made to do life together! God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." We can accomplish more together than we can by ourselves.

1. You read **John 15-21** last week. What are some things we learned about God and about people in these chapters?
2. Begin your group time with a testimony from someone about how being friends with another believer has changed their life for the better (1-2 minutes).
3. The Bible uses different words to describe believers and followers of Jesus. What are some of these words?
Mt 1:21 _____ Mt 5:1 _____ Mt 9:38 _____
Mt 16:18 _____ John 3:3 _____ John 4:24 _____
Acts 2:44 _____ Acts 1:8 _____ Acts 11:25,26 _____
Ephes 2:19 _____ I Cor 12:27 _____ I John 3:1 _____
4. Name at least 5 specific things we could do every Sunday and Wednesday to build friendships and unity in our church family. Whose job is it to do these things?
5. Make a list of at least 5 things that damage friendships and prevent unity in a church family.
6. Can you think of several ways that Jesus built community and relationships with his 12 disciples?
7. What things did Jesus pray for his disciples? John 17:20-23
8. What did Jesus tell his disciples to do? John 13:34,35 What would be a result?
9. Do you think genuine friendships and love help the church family to be a witness for Christ? Why?
10. What are some ways your life has been influenced by the friendship of another person? (Several people share)
11. How do each of these spiritual fruits promote good relationships? Gal 5:22,23
12. How does the fruit of our sinful nature destroy healthy relationships and unity? Gal 5:19-21
13. What attitude does this verse describe that makes it hard to ask forgiveness when we have hurt someone? Luke 18:9

Review

Based on the things we discussed above, what are some things you learned about building community and family?

My Commitment /My Prayer Request

I want the Lord to help me in this area ...

- I want to look for people I don't know well and sit with them and talk with them at a worship service.
- I want to ask some friendly questions when I see people at church, more than just "Hey, how are you?"
- Helping a guest or new member to build relationships by introducing them to others.
- Inviting another family to my house. Getting a group together for a meal or a game night.
- Making it a goal to get to know everyone in my S.S. class in a deeper way – things like where they work, details about their children and grandchildren, their hobbies, where they have traveled, and how they accepted Christ in their life.
- I will not listen to or spread gossip.
- I will try to be a peacemaker and bring people together, being part of the solution, not the problem.
- I will ask for help when I need it. I will help others when I can.
- I will ask for forgiveness when I wrong someone. I will forgive when someone wrongs me.

- Matthew 1:21** She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”
- Matthew 5:1** Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,
- Matthew 9:38** Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”
- Matthew 16:18** And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
- John 3:3** Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.
- John 4:24** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”
- Acts 2:44** All the believers were together and had everything in common.
- Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
- Acts 11: 25, 26** Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.
- Ephesians 2:19** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household
- I Corinthians 12:27** Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
- I John 3:1** See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
- John 17:20-23** I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.
- John 13:34,35** “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
- Galatians 5:22,23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- Galatians 5:19-21** The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.
- Luke 18:9** To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable:

40 Days Class #4

Discipleship: God Wants Me To Grow In Spiritual Maturity and Help Others Grow Also

Just like we help our children and grandchildren learn,
God's purpose for our life is to grow spiritually and help others grow as well.

1. You read **Galatians 1-6** last week. What are some things we learned about God and about people?
2. Ask two people to be ready with a testimony. The first about how someone helped you grow spiritually. The second about how someone has tried to walk alongside another Christian and help them grow in their faith (1-2 minutes each).
3. Some people chose a career where they were an apprentice for a period of time before they worked on their own. How would you describe the difference between just attending classes and an apprenticeship or on-the-job training? Think of some real-life examples.
4. The Bible says Jesus chose 12 disciples to be his apprentices. From the verses below, explain what was involved in this apprenticeship? Discuss what Jesus did and why you think he did it.
Mark 3:14 _____ Mt 4:19 _____
Mt 9:37-38 _____ Mt 13:36 _____
Mt 16:6 _____ Mt 16:13, 15 _____
Mt 18:21,22 _____
Mt 20:25-28 _____
Mt 28:19,20 _____
John 13:5, 12-17 _____
John 17:15-18 _____
John 21:22 _____
5. After you believed in Christ and began following Him, what helped you grow the most those first few years?
6. Reading, writing, doing it, watching, helping, teaching, hearing, practicing/repetition, and discussion are all methods of learning. Which do you find most effective for learning spiritually in your own life? Give an example.
7. 1) Reading the Bible every day and 2) learning to share their faith are two things that many Christians say are the most important things they have learned. Which of these would you like to get better at? What would help you to be successful?
8. If you helped one person for a year to grow spiritually and then each of you helped someone else for one year. Year 2-4 people, year 3 -8, year 4- 16, year 5-32, year 6-64, year 7-128, year 8-256, year 9-512, year 10-1,024, year 11-2,048. This is the strategy Jesus asked his disciples to follow. Help someone who will help someone else and so on. If each Christian tried to follow this pattern, he/she would influence the lives of thousands of people.. It all starts with finding one person. Some people feel that they cannot speak to a crowd or teach a class of 10 or 20 people. But everyone can help one person. Read II Timothy 2:2 (Jesus, 12 disciples, Barnabas, Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others also – a line of disciple-making!)
9. Read Prov 27:17 What does this verse mean to you? Can you give an example of how you helping someone learn helped you to grow spiritually and learn as well?

Review

Based on the things we discussed above, what are some things you learned about growing spiritually or helping others grow?

My Commitment /My Prayer Request

I want the Lord to help me in this area ...

___ I want to develop a habit of reading the Bible every day or at least several times a week at home.

___ I want to find someone who would be my partner and help me to grow.

___ I want to get some training so I can learn to explain the gospel more easily to someone else.

___ I want to memorize six key scripture verses like John 1:12, John 3:16, John 5:24, Rom 3:23, Rom 6:23 and Rom 10:13.

___ I want to help in a ministry at church or in some kind of community service serving others.

___ I want to be in a small group Bible study that will challenge me to grow, read, discuss, and serve others.

___ I want to find one person that I can meet with and help them grow spiritually for the next year.

___ I want Jesus to be the Lord of my life and help me to grow more like Him in my integrity, love, patience and generosity.

- Mark 3:14** He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach
- Matthew 4:19** Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."
- Matthew 9:37,38** "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
- Matthew 13:36** Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of..."
- Matthew 16:6** "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."
- Matthew 16:13,15** Jesus ... asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
- Matthew 18:21,22** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."
- Matthew 20:25-28** Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- Matthew 28:19,20** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
- John 13:5, 12-17** After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him..... When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."
- John 17:15-18** My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.
- John 21:22** Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."
- II Timothy 2:2** And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.
- Prov 27:17** As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

40 Days Class #5

Service: God Wants Me To Use My Gifts, Talents, Time and Resources To Serve Others

God gives spiritual gifts to every believer, and he wants us to use our personality, experience, skills and resources to serve others in the community and inside the church family.

1. You read **Colossians 1-4** and **I Timothy 1-3**. What stood out? What did you learn about God and about people?
2. Ask someone to talk about their passion and experience in a particular kind of service helping others (1-2 minutes).
3. Can you think of a lesson you learned or example you saw about helping others from your parents or someone else?
4. Can you tell a story about a time when someone helped you with a particular need?
5. Read I Peter 4:10-11 and I Cor 12:7 What are several things we can learn from these verses?
6. Read I Corinthians 12:18 Is it an accident that we have the spiritual gifts we have? Why?
7. Read Romans 12:5-8. Do you tend to see one of these gifts in your life – **Preaching, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership** or **showing mercy**?
If two Sunday School teachers had different spiritual gifts, how might they lead their classes differently?
Have you noticed people who seemed to demonstrate a particular spiritual gift or motivation in how they serve? Explain.
8. What were the examples of service that Jesus mentioned in Mt 25:35-36 1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ 4) _____ 5) _____ 6) _____
9. See if your class can make a list of some of the ways your church or your church members serve people outside the church walls in your community. (For example: **SBC** – sends missionaries overseas and educates seminary students, **GBMB** – has a ministry on college campuses and in children’s homes, **Mid-State Baptist Association** – they lead Bible studies at Wesleyan, feed families and share the gospel every week at *Storehouse*, and the Association *Builders for Christ* builds buildings.

10. Sometimes our own neighborhood is overlooked. Have you found some ways to minister to the neighbors on your street? Explain what you do and it might help others in your class to reach out to their neighbors as well.
11. The Bible says we should not only use our spiritual gifts and time, but also our finances. What do these verses say about being generous or supporting the work of your church? Romans 12:13; I Cor 16:1,2; II Cor 8:7; II Cor 9:7

Review

What are some of the key things we discussed about serving others?

Planning Our Group Service Project

You can brainstorm now or assign a couple of class members to come up with ideas for a service project that your class can do in the next few weeks. It could be a service project that helps your church, a school, a person, a non-profit agency or something else.

My Commitment /My Prayer Request

I want the Lord to help me in this area ...

- I want to discover what my spiritual gift is and begin using it to help others. (Your pastor can help.)
- I want to be generous in helping others with my financial resources and my time.
- I want to give financially on a regular basis to support the ministries of my church.
- I want to find a ministry that I can help with every week.
- I want to start a new ministry and find people to be on my team.
- I want to have a new awareness and sensitivity to people around me who need help.
- I want to begin some new relationships in my neighborhood and see if God opens a door for the gospel, service and prayer.
- I want to help my church find some new ways to reach out to our community.

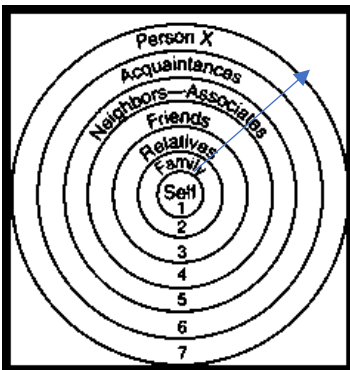
- I Peter 4:10,11** Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.
- I Corinthians 12:7** Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.
- I Corinthians 12:18** But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.
- Romans 12:5-8** so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.
- Matthew 25:35,36** For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'
- Romans 12:13** Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
- I Corinthians 16:1,2** Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.
- II Corinthians 8:7** But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.
- II Corinthians 9:7** Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

40 Days Class #6
God Wants You To Tell The Good News

The early Christians in 33 A.D. began to tell the story of Jesus to a world that had never heard His name. The changes in their lives, and the love, joy and peace they demonstrated were powerful testimonies as they explained to their friends the grace of God and forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

1. What stood out in **I Timothy 4-6** and **II Tim 1-4**? What did you learn about God? What did you learn about people?
2. Ask someone to tell about a time they shared the gospel and what they learned from that experience. (1-2 minutes).
3. Every Christian can tell the story of how they put their faith in Jesus Christ. You may want to include four parts:
 - a. A little bit about your life before you became a believer – ask someone in your group to share just this part of their story. (perhaps they had a church background or what it was like with no spiritual background)
 - b. How you realized your need for forgiveness – ask a 2nd person to share
 - c. What you came to understand about salvation – ask a 3rd person to share
 - d. How your life has changed – ask a 4th person to share
4. Ask someone in your group to tell about the person who explained the gospel to them and how they did it.
5. What are some of the methods people use to explain the gospel? **Steps to Peace With God; The Bridge,** _____

6. What did Jesus say he wanted his followers to do? What is one of the purposes God has for our life?
John 20:21 _____ **Mt 28:19,20** _____ **Acts 1:8** _____ **Mark 5:19,20** _____
7. In **II Cor 5:18-20**, what does it say God gave us _____ and what does the Bible call us _____?
8. A seminary professor drew **Concentric Circles** on the chalk board showing the influence we can have with our story of faith.



What do you notice about our witness for Christ in this illustration?

Where does God work first? (see Circle #1) Why does God start in Circle #1 first?

Do you find it harder to share your story with family and friends or Person X (a stranger)? Why?

What are some of the fears we sometimes have and lies we believe about telling the gospel?

In Colos 4:3-6 can you find six tips that Paul wrote about sharing your faith with others?

Which of these six tips has been meaningful to you or helpful?

Review

What are some of the things we discussed that stood out to you?

My Commitment /My Prayer Request

I want the Lord to help me in this area ...

- ___ I want to strengthen my relationships with the people in my concentric circles and pray for an open door to talk with them.
- ___ I want to tell my story of faith to several people that have never heard it.
- ___ I want to practice explaining the gospel and memorize a few key verses so I can tell the gospel clearly.
- ___ I want God to always remind me that I am a sinner saved by grace (circle #1).
- ___ I want God to give me wisdom to recognize my fears and the lies I might believe (“No one will listen. No one will believe.”)

Acts 13:36 **“David served God’s purpose in his own generation ...”**

Please pray for yourself and our church family that we will all serve God’s purpose in this generation.

- Purpose #1 Worship and center our lives around Him seven days a week
- Purpose #2 Build meaningful friendships with other believers
- Purpose #3 Grow in spiritual maturity and help others to grow also
- Purpose #4 Serve others with our time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances
- Purpose #5 Communicate His love to others by explaining the gospel as God opens a door for our conversation

- John 20:21** Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."
- Matthew 28:19,20** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- Mark 5:19,20** "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.
- II Corinthians 5:18-20** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.
- Colossians 4:3-6** And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.
- Acts 13:36** "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation,"

40 Days of Celebration

Personal Devotions Guide

1. Read one chapter every day
2. Write down something that stands out to you
3. Write down a prayer response

Bring this with you to your Sunday School
or Small Group meeting each week.

Personal Devotions for 40 Days of Celebration

A Few Tips for Successful Personal Devotions

1. Try picking the same time every day – when you wake up, right before you go to sleep, or lunch.
2. Pick a quiet place without the distractions of TV, phone or people talking to you.
3. Read slowly and thoughtfully. Take time to think about what a phrase or story means to you.
4. Read with a pen in your hand so you can underline a verse you want to remember.
5. Pray about a verse. Ask God to build that verse into your character.
6. Use your devotion time to pray for yourself, for other people and to give thanks to God.
7. Rather than skipping around, have a plan to read a chapter a day from a book in the Bible.
8. Share something you read or learned with someone else.
9. Don't be in a hurry. Allow yourself time to read and pray without being rushed.

Going Forward – How To Apply What You Discovered

1. What was one of the best things you learned from being part of the 40 Days of Celebration?

Discipleship/Fellowship

2. Find a small group Bible study to be part of every week. You could help start a new group. Continue reading one chapter every day of the Bible and discuss it with others in your small group.
3. Pray for God to bring someone into your life so you can help them grow spiritually and encourage them.

Fellowship

4. Get freedom from bitterness. Forgive the people who have hurt you.
5. Gain a clear conscience. Go to people you have hurt and ask them to forgive you.

Serving Others

6. The Ministry Fair highlighted many kinds of ministry. Choose a ministry and become a regular volunteer. Take someone with you and help together.

7. Write the names of 5 people that you will share your story with (how Jesus is changing your life).

Worship/Discipleship/Sharing Our Faith

8. If you haven't memorized some key Bible verses yet, start with these. Find a partner that you can say them to each week until both of you have them memorized and planted in your life for God to use.

John 1:12 John 3:3 John 3:16 John 5:17
John 5:24 John 10:28 John 14:6

What did you learn about God or people?

Your prayer request

John 1

John 2

John 3

John 4

John 5

John 6

John 7

John 8

John 9

John 10

John 11

John 12

John 13

What did you learn about God or people?

Your prayer request

John 14

John 15

John 16

John 17

John 18

John 19

John 20

John 21

Galatians 1

Galatians 2

Galatians 3

Galatians 4

Galatians 5

What did you learn about God or people?

Your prayer request

Galatians 6

Colossians 1

Colossians 2

Colossians 3

Colossians 4

I Timothy 1

I Timothy 2

I Timothy 3

I Timothy 4

I Timothy 5

I Timothy 6

II Timothy 1

II Timothy 2

II Timothy 3

II Timothy 4