

LESSON TEN

THE TENTH MARK **SHOW**

DEFINITION

I know how to show the gospel through service and prayer.

LIFESTYLE

I serve others practically and pray for miracles.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How am I serving the lost and praying for miracles?

OVERVIEW OF THIS LESSON

Every lesson has the same three steps: new learning, new practices, and new commitments.

Every lesson takes about four weeks to complete—if you work at a moderate, consistent pace.

- Complete **Step One: New Learning** in the first week.
- Complete **Step Two: New Practices** in the second-to-fourth weeks.
- Complete **Step Three: New Commitments** in the third and fourth weeks.

Step One: New Learning

In this step, you'll explore what it means to show the gospel through service and prayer by reading an overview and answering some follow-up questions.

When you're done, you'll understand what it means to serve those who don't follow Jesus and pray for miracles and then able to explain it.

Write down your start date for this step (complete in the first week): _____

Step Two: New Practices

In this step, you'll integrate new practices to equip and empower you to serve and pray for those who don't follow Jesus. These practices include reading the Bible, prayer, and journaling.

When you're done, you'll know how to use the Bible, prayer, and journaling to serve and pray.

Write down your start date for this step (complete in weeks two through four): _____

Step Three: New Commitments

In this step, you'll discover practical ways you can serve those who don't follow Jesus and believe the Spirit for miracles.

When you're done, you'll serve and pray for those who don't follow Jesus.

Write down your start date for this step (complete in weeks three and four): _____

STEP ONE

NEW LEARNING

STEP ONE: NEW LEARNING

SHOW

Created and Saved for Good Works

Humans were created for a purpose. Designed to live in God's life-giving presence forever, we were made to image him in creation, to reflect what God is like. From this, we were called to extend God's life throughout every generation across the expanse of creation.

We were God's image-bearers and co-laborers. The works of beauty and love, creativity and justice, holiness and mercy, service and truth would reside in us and flow from us. Creation was a canvas waiting for humanity's labor and investment.

We were created on purpose, for a purpose.

Then, Adam and Eve ran away from God. Doing so, they lost their identity and call. No longer could they reflect God in the world. His nature in them was marred, hollow and diminished. What they were designed to do was also obscured, lost in the mire of sin and death.

Humans began to harm and kill each other (Genesis 4:1-18). Men began to abuse women through sexual dominance and violence (Genesis 4:19-24). The thoughts and intentions of humanity's heart was evil continually (Genesis 6:1-7). Demonic powers once again got involved and helped corrupt humanity (Genesis 6:1-7).

Even after humanity was all but destroyed in the flood, humans once again sought to define their existence apart from God. They built a tower designed to usurp God's place as the sovereign over the world and harness human energies to that end (Genesis 11:1-9). Like Adam and Eve, humans used their image and effort to reject God's benevolent rule. So, he scattered them across the face of the earth, family against family, tribe against tribe, nation against nation.

The gifts of intellect and wisdom, music and art, civic and economic prosperity were subject to sin and death, wasted and wasting away.

But God wasn't done.

He promised to unconditionally bless the nations of the world through Abraham and his family, the nation of Israel (Genesis 12:1-3). Restored to him in life-giving relationship, Israel would showcase God's image and work in the world. When the nations saw Israel, they were to see God's nature. And when they saw Israel's works, they were to see God's works in the world.

Though they often tried, they failed. They needed a new heart, one restored by God's presence and forgiving love. To accomplish the impossible task of transforming the human heart, God sent

his son, Jesus, into the world. Unlike all who came before him, Jesus would perfectly image the Father and do what the Father was doing (John 5:1-24). In Jesus, we saw what we were created to be and do.

In Jesus, God's restoring reign arrived in the world (Mark 1:14,15). Instead of hate, murder, pride, violence, injustice, selfishness, and greed, Jesus manifested sacrificial love, surrender, humility, selflessness, and generosity. He healed the sick, opened blind eyes, gave mercy to those who didn't deserve it, and loved the poor and outcast. In the face of unimaginable injustice and persecution, Jesus loved and forgave and died for those who murdered him. When he did the works of restoration, he reminded us who we were created to be and what we were created to do.

To trust and follow Jesus—to be saved from the power of sin and death—is to be restored to our identity and call. In Jesus, we know who we are and what we were created to do. Through the Spirit, we receive God's power to do the same works Jesus did.

We were created on purpose, for a purpose

And we were saved on purpose, for a purpose.

God rescued us from sin and death to make us part of his rescue plan for the world. In Jesus, God is reconciling and restoring the world to his presence **and he uses us to accomplish this task**. Ephesians 2:8-10 says...

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

We are God's workmanship. Not only did he create us but he also saved us as an expressing of his loving handiwork.

We were created for good works, the good works of justice and mercy, holiness and worship, love and service, miracles and righteousness.

God prepared good works for us before we were even saved. This has always been his plan. When we trust and follow Jesus, we step into the plans always intended for us.

We should walk in the good works God's already prepared. This is how we define significance, meaning, and purpose. This is what matters. This is why we're here on earth.

We Show the Gospel through Service

We show the work of the gospel through service, just as Jesus served. Jesus came to serve us in our desperate need (Matthew 20:20-28). Service marked his identity, his intentions, and his lifestyle. To see Jesus was to see service embodied.

Jesus served the poor by declaring them rich. He gave them God's promise of abundant, eternal life—**even though the religious authorities excluded them because of their poverty** (Luke 6:20-21).

Jesus served the hungry by giving them food to eat—and then pointed to the true food from heaven that would give them eternal life (John 6).

Jesus served the outcasts by offering God's presence and forgiveness to them—**even though their condition was due to their own rebellion and selfishness** (John 4:1-42; 8:1-11).

He healed the sick by extending God's forgiveness—**even though the sick were thought to be cursed due to their sin** (John 9).

Jesus served others by inviting them to follow him, to be with him, and learn from him—**even though no one could walk in the perfection in which he walked** (Mark 3:14).

Service is to characterize the life of those who follow Jesus.

We're called to alleviate poverty—hunger, thirst, nakedness—by giving our time, talent, and treasure to those who need it (Matthew 25:35-36). The homeless. The orphan. The widow. The divorced. Clean water to impoverished peoples.

We're called to invite the stranger into our homes and family (Matthew 25:35). Immigrants. Refugees. Addicts. Neighbors.

We're called to cloth the naked, to give physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual resources to those who've lost their dignity (Matthew 25:36). The homeless. Those afflicted by mental health issues. Those shamed by the scourge of racism.

We're called to serve the needs of the sick (Matthew 25:36). HIV victims. Those sick from the disease of consumerism and materialism.

We're called to visit the imprisoned (Matthew 25:36). The incarcerated. The wrongly accused and convicted. Addicts.

And we're called to serve those who live next door to us—who work with us—who attend school with us—whose children play with our children. And those who might dislike us, hate us, and resist us (Matthew 5:12).

We Show the Gospel through Prayer & Miracles

We show the work of the gospel through prayer and miracles, just like Jesus.

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them one thing. And only one. They didn't ask him to teach them how to preach, cast out demons, heal, or make disciples. Of course, he did all these things and the disciples eventually learned to do them as well. What the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them was how to pray (Luke 11:1). More than anything else, the disciples understood that Jesus' life and ministry was empowered by his communion with the Father through prayer.

From the overflow of his prayer life, Jesus opened blind eyes, made the lame walk, cleansed lepers, made the deaf hear, raised the dead to life, and preached good news to the poor (Matthew 11:4-5). Through all-night prayer, Jesus received wisdom to choose his twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-16). Prayer empowered Jesus to confront the religious power structures of his day (Matthew 23) and to stand against the temptations of the devil (Matthew 4:1-10). And it was his devoted life of prayer that strengthened Jesus to trust the Father as he endured the misery of crucifixion (Matthew 26:36-46).

On the night before Jesus died, he told his disciples that the Spirit's presence in them would empower them to do the works he did—and even greater works than he did (John 14:12-14). With the indwelling Spirit in them, they would be able to ask in the authority of Jesus' name and the Father would do through them what he did through Jesus (John 14:14).

After Jesus rose from the dead, he instructed the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the infilling of the Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). So, they waited and prayed (Acts 2:1-4). When the Spirit filled them, they received the same presence and power given to Jesus.

Once they received the Spirit, they spoke in languages they didn't know to preach the gospel to people from other nations (Acts 2). They participated in supernatural giving and community (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37). They healed a lame man (Acts 3). They healed the sick and cast out demons (Acts 5:12-16). Boldly, they proclaimed the gospel to hostile religious authorities (Acts 4, 5:17-42). Stephen endured martyrdom with confidence (Acts 7:54-60). As they were scattered through persecution, they were empowered to preach the gospel wherever they went (Acts 8:4). The Spirit appointed them to divine appointments (Acts 8:26-40). They confronted demonic sources of magic and cast out demons (Acts 8:9-24; 16:16-18). They raised the dead (Acts 9:36-43). They received prophetic visions and revelation from God (Acts 11:27-30; 16:6-10).

Prayer and miracles were normal for the first followers of Jesus.

Jesus is still the same king. The Spirit remains the same today. The Father's promise to answer prayer and perform miracles is still in the Bible.

As those who trust and follow Jesus, we're invited into a life of prayer and miracles. The most powerful way we can impact people who need to know Jesus is prayer. While prayer isn't the only step, it's always the first step.

The Bible says some life-changing things about prayer.

Jesus tells us that when we ask, we'll receive. When we seek, we'll find. And when we knock, doors will be opened (Luke 11:1-13). Saying this was his way to inspire us to pray with confidence that his Father would answer our prayers. No, all prayers aren't answered immediately. Nor are they answered as we often think they will be. However, prayers *are* answered and repeatedly God shows us in his word that those who pray see miracles.

When the first disciples were threatened by religious officials for living the gospel, they prayed for more boldness to show the power of the gospel (Acts 4:23-31). They didn't pray for an easy life (although that's not a wrong prayer). And they didn't pray for God to curse these officials (though that's tempting, it's probably not a good idea). Instead, they wanted to be faithful to God's call on their life.

When the Apostle Paul was in prison, he asked other disciples to pray for him so he would have an open door to share the power of the gospel (Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:2-4). Though he wanted to be released, his prayer was that he would be equipped to share the gospel with power. Maybe he'd be released. Maybe not. Either way, his prayer was focused on fulfilling his mission and showing others the beauty of Jesus. Like Paul, our prayers are powerful when we pray for God's purposes to be accomplished.

Prayer fills earth with heaven's aroma. Pray. Serve. And go and do what Jesus did.

QUESTIONS FROM THE READING

1. In your own words, summarize the big ideas about following Jesus.
2. What are some of your key take-aways from reading?
3. Read Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 5:12-16. What do you discover about the atmosphere of prayer and service in the lives of the first disciples?
4. Read John 14:12-14. What does Jesus promise to those who trust in him? Why does this matter for us today?

5. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus says all power in heaven and earth was given to him. In this power and authority, he sends the first disciples into the world as witnesses. Why does it matter that this power and authority is available to us today? What hope and vision does this promise inspire in you?
6. Based on what you've discovered, how does Jesus want you to obey this week?

Supplemental Videos

The following videos may be helpful for you to watch as you think about this lesson and respond to the questions. You can find these videos on YouTube by searching for a YouTube channel called **The Bible Project**.

- Justice
- Compassion
- Grace

STEP TWO

NEW PRACTICES

STEP TWO: NEW PRACTICES

BIBLE–PRAYER–JOURNALING

Introduction

In this step, you'll integrate three new practices: listen to Jesus in the Bible, talk to Jesus through prayer, and journal. It's best to spend most of your time in the Bible and in prayer (about 80%) and then follow up with journaling. If you spend the bulk of your time in the Bible and prayer, you'll experience the biggest impact toward growth.

To incorporate these new practices, you'll need to make some decisions: when, where, how much, and how long. In other words, when you know WHEN you'll do these practices, WHERE you'll do them, and HOW long you'll do them, you have a much better chance of integrating these practices into your lifestyle.

Here are two questions to help you decide.

Where will I fit these practices into my weekly schedule/routine? Consider working your way up to four times each week.

How long will I spend each day doing all three practices? Any amount of time is good to start with but consider working up to thirty minutes at a time.

Although not necessary, it will help you to spend time in the Bible, prayer, and journaling at the same time every day, in the same place, for the same length of time. Of course, if you can't do that, then do what you can.

The important part is this: **make a commitment and keep it.** When we make and keep our commitments, we increase our ability to hear and obey Jesus.

Use this chart to record your decisions.

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
What Day?							
When?							
How Long?							
Where?							

On the next page, you'll find a helpful worksheet to direct your time in the Bible, prayer, and journaling each day.

NEW PRACTICES WORKSHEET

Listening to Jesus in the Bible

Each week, you'll learn to listen to Jesus through the Bible. To do this, you'll read, think about, and answer questions about a passage. For this lesson, you'll spend multiple days in EACH of the following texts.

- John 14:1-14
- Acts 5:12-15
- Luke 11:1-13

As you spend multiple days in each passage, journal the following questions.

1. Who is God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)?
2. What is God doing?
3. Who are God's people—and as a result, who am I?
4. What is God inviting me to do today?

This Week's Bible Text: _____

Talking to Jesus through Prayer

For the first six lessons, you explored **The Disciple's Prayer** found in Matthew 6:9-13. In the last four lessons, you'll explore how to pray using a Psalm.

In this lesson, learn to pray using Psalm 84 as a guide.

Use **Praying Psalm 84** in **The Disciple's Prayer Guide** to pray this week.

Reflect through Journaling

As you read and pray, it's helpful to journal your thoughts, feelings, and insights. Consider journaling to one or two of the following prompts:

- What I learned today was...
- What I discovered about Jesus was...
- What I discovered about myself was...
- What I sense I need to do is...
- What doesn't make sense is...

STEP THREE

NEW COMMITMENTS

STEP THREE: NEW COMMITMENT

SERVICE & MIRACLES

Introduction

Jesus came to serve. And Jesus prayed. Service opened the hearts of those who were lost and broken. Prayer invited supernatural power to invade impossible situations.

Jesus gave us power to do what he did. We're called to serve and pray.

Below, you'll find ways to serve and pray for those who don't follow Jesus.

Serve and Pray

Service and prayer are a potent combination. Follow the steps below to impact those who don't follow Jesus by showing the gospel through your service and prayer.

1. Make a list of ten people. Include seven who already intersect with your weekly rhythm and three in your neighborhood or relational network but with whom you have no relationship.

2. Start praying for these people daily for thirty days: Start Date: _____ End Date: _____
3. Target three areas as you pray: blessing, spiritual hunger and thirst, and revelation.
 - a. Blessing: As Jesus to bless those for whom you're praying with good.
 - b. Hunger and Thirst: Ask the Father to change what their hearts hunger and thirst for.
 - c. Revelation: Ask the Father to open their eyes to their needs and the gospel's promise.
4. As you pray, identify ways others might need service—and ways you're wired to serve them.
 - a. Tangible: This is a need that can be met through service or action.
 - b. Relational: This is a need that can be met by building or reconciling a relationship.
 - c. Emotional: This is a need that can be met by empathetic listening.
 - d. Mental: This is a need that can be met by talking together.
 - e. Financial: This is a need that can be met by finances/material goods.
 - f. Spiritual: This is a need that can be met by the word, prayer, and gospel community.
5. Keep in mind, there are strategic times for service.

- a. Tragedy: Sickness, diagnosis of/dealing with disease, operations; accidents; loss of a job; loss of something materially, like a house or car; anniversary of tragedies.
 - b. Positive Relational Change: Engagement, marriage, pregnancy, birth, adoption.
 - c. Negative Relational Change: Separation, divorce, death, criminal activity, offense.
 - d. Positive Circumstantial Change: New job, new home, new move, new school.
 - e. Negative Circumstantial Change: Loss of job, loss of finances, loss of house/car.
 - f. Painful Personal Exposure: Revelation of a hidden lifestyle, revelation of anything thought shameful, or exposure of conflict, dysfunction, or brokenness.
 - g. Family Challenges: Birth, health, sleeping, destructive behaviors, severe disobedience, rebellion, academic issues, kids leaving home.
6. Identify practical ways you can serve those on your list. Initiate a conversation to find out how you can serve them. Then do something immediately.
7. Make journal notes of what you sense Jesus is saying to you or showing you as you pray for them—include the date in your journal.
8. Make journal notes of how your interactions with them shifts—include the date in your journal. Share these with other Life Group members. Then ask...
- o Are they ready to share a meal?
 - o Are they ready to hear my story or tell their story?
 - o Are they ready for a conversation about spirituality?
 - o Are they ready to attend one of our gatherings?
 - o Are they ready to hear the gospel?