

2021 PRAYER FOCUS: WALKING AS JESUS WALKED — LIVING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Imagine the impact those first century followers of Jesus had on the world. From those few disciples, a movement was born that has grown to be the largest religion in the world. The number of disciples multiplied despite hardship, persecution, and limited resources. The multiplication of disciples is a testimony to the power of God and to the love Christ-followers have for Him and for a lost world.

The growth of the early Church was due in large part to the fact that the world saw changed lives. These early disciples lived differently. They walked by faith. They walked counter to the culture by serving only one God and living holy lives. They were willing to suffer great loss in order to honor Jesus and to share with others what Jesus had done for them.

Jesus never promised them that their journey would be easy. In fact, He told them that if the world persecuted Him, it would persecute His followers as well. Through the centuries, believers have been censored, marginalized, and persecuted, and yet our number continues to grow.

The Church in the US has been spared the persecution that believers in other parts of the world have faced. Perhaps our impact has not been as great because our resolve to follow Jesus has not been tested. While we live in a very secular culture that seems to be increasingly anti-Christian, God can still use the Church to impact this nation. If He could take a core of 120 devoted followers and change the world, what might he do today through a fully devoted Church?

JULY PRAYER FOCUS – LIVING AS DISCIPLES IN A SECULAR WORLD

Jesus told His followers that they were to be “salt and light” in the world. There are numerous interpretations to what Jesus meant by those words. We know that salt is a preservative and that it enhances the flavor of food. Light, of course, dispels darkness and allows us to see where we are going. As salt, we should have a positive impact on all of those around us, and as light, we dispel the darkness so that others might see Jesus.

As you pray this month, use these Scriptures as prompts to examine your personal walk as a disciple of Jesus.

1. “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are

behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” — Philippians 3:12-14.

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for the claim you have on our lives. We praise you that you are not finished with us yet and that there is more you want to do in our lives. Forgive us for the times we have been less than fully committed — when we have coasted along instead of pressing on. We pray that you will help us forget the things that are behind. Help us to focus on what is ahead — what you have in store for us. Perfect us, we pray.

2. “As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among *them*. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty’” — 2 Corinthians 6:16b-18.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for the assurance that you walk among us and that you claim us as your people. Forgive us for the times we have tried to keep one foot in your world and another in this world. You have called us to be separate from the world in order that they might see your power and presence in our lives. Help us live as your sons and daughters. Help us to so resemble you in character that an unclean world will be drawn to you.

3. “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” — 2 Corinthians 7:1.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for the promise of your presence in our lives (2 Corinthians 6). We praise you that you desire to dwell in us. Forgive us for any uncleanness in our lives. Cleanse us from all sin. Help us to pursue a life of holiness so that others may see you.

4. “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” — Psalm 42:1-2a.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that you are the satisfier of the soul. We long for you because only you can fill the void in our lives. Forgive us for the times when we have sought fulfillment in possessions, positions, or pleasures. Increase our thirst for you. We don’t want to be casual followers, but followers with a passion to know you more.

5. “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” — 1 Timothy 4:12.

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that you are not a respecter of persons. We praise you that you welcome children and young people into your Kingdom. Forgive us for the times we have looked at our age or our circumstances and thought of them as limitations to our witness. Remind us that we are not defined by our age, our position, or our standing in the community. We are defined by our relationship with you. Teach us in whatever place we find ourselves to be an example to other believers and to the world.

6. “Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” — 1 Peter 2:11-12.
PRAYER: Father, we praise you for the reminder that this life, and all its enticements that war against us, are temporary. Forgive us for the times we have lingered and looked at those temptations. We pray that you will help us conduct ourselves in this secular world so that those who don’t know you might glorify you as they see our good works. Continue to call us, as your disciples, to do good works.
7. “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” — Philippians 2:12.
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you have called us to a life of obedience to Jesus. Forgive us for the times when we have lived one way in private and another when we have been around the people in the Church. Lord, help us live our lives in consistent obedience to you. Teach us to walk in this world as Jesus walked as a testimony to our salvation.
8. “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” — Proverbs 3:5-6.
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you are completely trustworthy. We praise you that we can have confidence that you will direct our paths. Forgive us for thinking that we could have a better plan. Forgive us for trusting in our own understanding. We pray that you will help us to always acknowledge you and to follow the path you choose for us. As we walk with you, we pray those around us will want to follow you as well.
9. “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” — Philippians 4:8.
PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that you are true, just, pure, lovely, holy and good in all your ways. When we think on you, we are blessed. Forgive us for the many times we have filled our minds with things that are untrue, impure, and less than noble. We pray you will remind us of all the praiseworthy traits displayed in your grace and mercy toward us. Teach us to meditate on these so that our hearts will be filled with praise amid a world that has difficulty seeing what is good.
10. “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” — Galatians 6:9-10.
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you give us purpose and that you have called us to bless others because of the grace you have extended to us. Forgive us for neglecting

opportunities to do good. Forgive us for ignoring the promptings of the Spirit to bless someone else. We pray that you will open our eyes to see how we can do good for those inside the church as well as those who are not yet in the church.

11. “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” — Philippians 1:9-11.

PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you fill us with the fruits of righteousness for your glory. We acknowledge that these are not of our own but by Jesus. Forgive us for marring the fruit by not always pursuing things that are excellent and not abounding in love. We pray our love for you will increase and that our love for you will urge us to pursue excellence. We pray, too, that our love for others will also grow.

12. “‘For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst’” — John 6:33-35.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that you are the satisfier of the soul. You feed us and satisfy the deepest hunger of our lives. Forgive us for chasing after things that can never satisfy. Lord, we come to you and ask that you quench the thirsting of our soul. We pray the peace we have in you will be a witness to those who do not yet know you.

13. “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” — 2 Corinthians 5:17.

PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you make us a new creation. Thank you for taking the old away and making us new. Forgive us for looking back and stepping into old patterns. Help us to walk fully in newness of life. Help us fully embrace this life we have in you.

14. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” — James 1:17.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you because you give good gifts and every good gift has come from you. Forgive us for thinking that we deserved them or earned them. You have given them freely and generously. Help us use those gifts for your glory and to bless those around us. Teach us to be grateful.

15. “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” — 1 John 2:5-6.

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for your Word that reveals who you are and reveals your plan for us. We praise you that it teaches us how to follow you. Forgive us for not always keeping your Word and for not abiding in you. We pray that you will help us

abide in you so that we will walk as Jesus walked. We want our actions to match our claim that we abide in you.

16. “And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” — 1 John 2:17.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for the hope we have in you and for the reminder that this world and all of its enticements are temporary. Forgive us for those times we have turned away to focus on what was temporary instead of keeping our eyes focused on you. Continue to show us your will and teach us to abide in you with the hope of abiding forever.

17. “Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” — 1 Peter 2:12.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that you give us the opportunity to represent you in this world. You live in us so that the world may see you. Forgive us when our conduct is less than honoring to you. We pray that you will do good works through us so that your name is glorified in the world.

18. “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” — Philippians 2:14-15.

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for the privilege of being your children. We confess that we are often found to be complaining and disputing about senseless matters. We know that we live in a world that is crooked and perverse. Help us to shine as bright lights for you.

19. “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” — Matthew 5:14.

PRAYER: Lord, even the idea that we are the light of the world seems overwhelming. That you would trust your name and your Word to us is humbling. We praise you for the grace you have shown to us. Forgive us when our light is dim or worse — tarnished. Help us shine brightly. Remind us that dim or tarnished, we cannot be hidden. Help us be a light in a dark world.

20. “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints” — Ephesians 5:3.

PRAYER: Lord, that you would call us saints is humbling. We praise you that you call us holy because of the blood of Christ. We confess that we do not always look like holy people. We have often made excuses for behaviors that are not consistent with the life you have called us to live. We pray that you will examine us and remove anything that is displeasing to you.

21. “Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself” — Philippians 2:3.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we praise you for the humility you demonstrated in coming to dwell among men. We praise you for the love you have shown to us. As your followers, we confess that we have often been selfish, ambitious, and conceited. We pray that you will enlarge our capacity to love others as you love them. Help us esteem others above ourselves and show the world that we truly are your disciples.

22. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” — Ephesians 2:10.

PRAYER: Father, we praise you that we are your workmanship and that we are created in Christ Jesus. We praise you that you created us in Him for good works. Open our eyes to see the opportunities you give us to do good works.

23. “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” — Matthew 6:20.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for the hope of heaven you promise to your disciples. We confess that we have sometimes become so earthly minded that we have focused more on earthly treasures than heavenly ones that do not perish. We believe that one of the ways we build the heavenly treasures is by being obedient to your Spirit and being used of you to touch the lives of others. Help us be good investors.

24. “Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom” — James 3:13.

PRAYER: Father, James also reminds us that if we lack wisdom, we can ask of you and you will give it liberally. We praise you for that promise and that provision. We confess that we often resort to earthly wisdom instead of waiting on you. As your disciples, help us by our good conduct to display wisdom that comes from above.

25. “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him” — John 2:11.

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that the foundation of our relationship with you is not based on what we do but on the simple fact that we believe in you. Like the disciples of old, our faith has not always been strong. We affirm today that we believe in you, Jesus, and we want that faith to keep us walking with you.

26. “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed’” — John 8:31.

PRAYER: Lord, you remind us that your disciples are those who abide in your Word. We praise you for your Word and for the way it reveals who you are and shapes us. It is difficult for us to abide in a word we don’t know. Forgive us for not being diligent students of your Word. Open our hearts. Increase our desire for your Word that we might know you more.

27. “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” — John 13:35.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you tell us in your Word that one evidence that we are your disciples is that we love one another. We have not always done this well. Your Church has suffered through the years because your disciples didn't love one another well. Forgive us. Help us see our brothers and sisters in Christ as you see them. Teach us to love one another so that the world will know we are your disciples.

28. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" — John 15:8.

PRAYER: We praise you that your Word promises that if we abide in you, we will bear fruit. Fruit is another evidence that we are your disciples. Forgive us for barren seasons. Teach us to so abide in you that we not only bear fruit but that we bear much fruit.

29. "For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" — John 16:27.

PRAYER: We praise you for your love for us. While it is sometimes hard to comprehend that the God of all creation loves us, we believe it to be true because of your Word. We pray that you would help us to love you more deeply so that our love for you is demonstrated in how we live.

30. "The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me'" — John 1:43.

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that the invitation you gave to Philip you have given to us. We praise you that being a disciple is as simple as following you. Forgive us for the times we have lagged behind or tried to run ahead. Teach us to follow you.

31. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" — John 10:27.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for being our Shepherd. We praise you for your voice that calls us, comforts us and commands us. We confess that we have not always listened to your voice. We pray you will continue to speak to us. Call to us so that we can follow you. Help us distinguish your voice from all the noise that surrounds us.