



**MISSION POSSIBLE | WEEK TWO**  
*MARCH 12, 2017*

+ Week Two | March 12<sup>th</sup>  
**PREPARATIONS MADE FOR OUR MISSION**

“...with God

everything

is possible.”

matt 19:26



## PREPARATION

### + **MONDAY - WEDNESDAY**

Read through Romans 8:9-17, John 17:17-19, and Ephesians 4:1-16. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truths of this text.

### + **THURSDAY - SATURDAY**

Many questions have been included, so read through and determine which of those questions will work well to encourage, push, and grow your group in the best way.

### + **DAILY**

As you prepare, pray for the preaching of God's Word this coming week at the corporate church gathering. Pray also for your time in this week's study.



## THIS WEEK

### + **KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH**

God has called us to the mission of sanctification, but he does not leave us unprepared for that call. He has made preparations for our mission by giving us his Spirit, his Word, and his people.

### + **THEOLOGY APPLIED**

As we walk in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the instruction of the Word, and the people of God, we will conform more and more into the image of Christ and be a better reflection of him in the world.



## GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

*Q: Have you ever gone on a trip where no preparations were made? What was it like?*

*Q: How would it feel if your boss asked you to do something you had never learned and offered no training or resources to help you do it?*

*Q: In what ways do you prepare for an upcoming task, project, or purchase? (ex: weekly meal planning, saving money for a larger purchase, rehearsing a presentation for work or school)*

## | BEING PREPARED

No one likes facing something they are completely unprepared for. Whether it's something as fun as a road trip with friends or something as nerve-wracking as a job interview, we all want to feel prepared. We want to be equipped for what lies ahead. No one wants to be in a situation without the resources needed.

As we studied last week, God's mission for his children is for them to become more like Christ, His Son. God calls us to throw off any weight or hindrance keeping us from Christ. But he also provides us the resources needed to bind us to Him. God wants us to chase after Christlikeness unhindered, but not unprepared. When it comes to our mission of sanctification, God makes all the preparations we need to pursue ongoing Christlikeness.

*Q: Share a time you knew God was preparing you for something.*

*Q: How does it feel when you know you're ready for a certain challenge?*



## Understanding the Text

Sanctification is our mission. However, just as with Christ's mission, preparations are in order before we venture out to take hold of it and begin our journey. We cannot assume we are ready for sanctification until God makes us fit for it. So how does one become "fit" for sanctification? What preparations has God made for our mission to be possible? There are a myriad of preparations laid out for us for our spiritual growth; however, the following three passages teach us some of the most crucial. Through these texts we learn three God-given preparations to make our mission of growth in Christ possible:

1. *God Empowers*
2. *God Instructs*
3. *God Brings Together*



## GOING DEEPER

+ *This next section will help to show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Walk through the Scripture passages, connecting the text to this week's biblical truth.*

# | GOD EMPOWERS



*Read Titus 3:3-6, Romans 8:9-17, and 2 Corinthians 5:4-5.*

*Q: What were we like before we became believers? [Titus 3:3]*

*Q: Why did God save us, according to Titus 3:4-5?*

*Q: What are the two things the Holy Spirit does in Titus 3:5?*

The first preparation God makes for us to become like Christ is empowering us to do the job. There's no way to become like Jesus on our own. Our strength to change is a supplied strength, powered by the Holy Spirit. The first way that the Spirit empowers our sanctification is by bringing us to faith in Jesus. Conforming to Christ can only happen in those who have come to Christ in the first place. To make his children more like his Son, God makes us one of his children first, bringing us in the family through the Holy Spirit's work in our conversion (John 1:12-13).

The Spirit does this miraculous work in three ways.

To start, he convicts us of our sin (John 16:8-9). Before God's Spirit dwells in us, we don't see our own sin. When he reveals it to us, it breaks us. This is the Spirit's work of convincing us of the truth. The Spirit removes our blindness and our hardness of heart, and we see our condition for what it is: we are lost. Separated from a Holy God. Runaways from our Father. Stuck in our sin. Unable to change. This is bad news, indeed. But the Spirit does not leave us there. Next, he preaches the gospel to us, usually through a person (1 Peter 1:12; Luke 4:18). We hear the good news of Christ who paid for our sins, gave us his righteousness, and reunited us with the Father. We hear that we can be found, we can be reconciled, we can be a son or a daughter again, and that it's possible to change for good.

The Holy Spirit always follows the bad news up with the greatest news in the world. By grace through faith, the Spirit regenerates us bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life, giving us a new, Jesus-loving nature, making us "new creations" (Eph. 2:1-5; Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17). Instead of our old, proud, selfish, calloused heart, the Spirit gives us a new heart that loves the Lord and wants to follow him (Ez. 11:19, 36:26). All this is accomplished through the Spirit's power in our conversion. What a wonderful first preparation God made for us to become like his Son—new life in the Spirit (Rom. 6:4; Acts 5:20).

*Q: Where does the Spirit dwell, according to Romans 8:9-17?*

*Q: Romans 8:9-17 says reveals certain things that the Spirit does for us. What are some of them?*

*Q: While we live in our earthly bodies, we yearn to be fully sanctified in the future. Who prepares us to become fully sanctified? How can we be sure he will change us? [2 Cor. 5:5]*

The work of the Spirit in our conversion is jaw-dropping. However, he doesn't stop there! Once he works in our heart to bring us into the family of God, the Holy Spirit stays. He does not leave us to do the work of sanctification alone. The New Testament often phrases the indwelling spirit as "Christ in us" or our "seal" and "guarantee" that this ongoing progress will one day end in a fully transformed, resurrected, sinless experience in heaven (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:10; Col. 1:27; 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:4-5; Eph. 1:14). To ensure that we become more like Jesus over time, the Holy Spirit is at constant work in our hearts: he convicts us of idols, encourages us, intercedes for us, guides us in decisions, reminds us of Jesus' commands, comforts us in difficulty, illuminates Scripture to us, reminds us that we are God's true children, puts our sin to death, and empowers our witness with spiritual gifts.

*Q: Why is it comforting to know that God himself is in you, working out your sanctification?*

*Q: Explain why the Spirit must dwell in us in order for us to become more like Jesus. -OR- Explain why "Christ dwelling inside us" accomplishes more than "Christ walking beside us."*

## | GOD INSTRUCTS



*Read John 17:17-19 and 2 Timothy 3:14-17.*

*Q: Believers are sanctified in what, according to Jesus? [John 17:17]*

*Q: What is "truth," according to Jesus? [John 17:17]*

*Q: Where does all Scripture originate, according to 2 Timothy 3:16?*

Another way we are prepared for the mission of sanctification is through God's Word which he gives for our instruction. Jesus' prayer for all believers in John 17 is for them to be sanctified in the Word—the very definition of truth. As Jesus lived by the Word, so should we if we are serious about becoming like him (Matt. 4:4, 5:17).

The Word of God, like the Spirit, works very powerfully in our lives. The author of Hebrews calls it living and active, able to discern our hearts, thoughts, motives, and desires; it pierces our soul (Heb. 4:12). Timothy tells us that Scripture has all sorts of transformative functions in the life of a believer: it teaches, reproves, corrects, instructs, and trains us to become like the Righteous One who is Truth (2 Tim. 3:16). Jesus desires for us to be sanctified by the truth, and has graciously provided it as a preparation for our spiritual growth. If we desire his will for our lives, we must take God's Word seriously and engage with it often. In his great grace God prepared instructions for us—his very Word!

*Q: Explain how the Word teaches us to be more like Jesus.*

*Q: Share a time when Scripture directed you to be more like Christ in a certain situation.*

## | GOD BRINGS TOGETHER



*Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-27*

*Q: Why did God create a church that has different kinds of gifts and strengths? [Eph. 4:12]*

*Q: What is the point of "building up the body of Christ?" What does it accomplish? [Eph 4:13-14]*

*Q: We "grow up into Christ" by doing what, according to Eph. 4:15?*

While the Spirit and the Word help us become like Jesus largely on an individual level, the people of God help us on a corporate level. Jesus was constantly engaging with others, interested in their well-being and attentive to their needs. He could have changed the world all by himself, yet he chose to do it in community, with a band of 12 diverse disciples walking alongside him. To be like Jesus, we must do the same.

In Ephesians 4 we learn that there's no such thing as a growing Christian who isn't part of a church community. The Spirit bestows each of us with specially designed gifts for the purpose of helping others in the body grow (v. 7-8, 12; c.f. 1 Pet. 4:10; Rom: 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:7,11). Our spiritual gifts aren't about us, they are about helping our community become more like Jesus as a whole. Our gifts are given to us for the sake of others. If we aren't purposefully using our gifts to build up our community, we cannot possibly become like Jesus, who gave everything he had to build us up. As we consistently engage in our local body of believers, building others up and loving them sacrificially, we become like Jesus himself.

*Q: Explain why the church needs multiple kinds of people with various gifts, according to 1 Cor. 12:12-27. How can this diversity also be unified?*

*Q: Who chooses what kind of member you are in the body of Christ? [1 Cor. 12: 18, 24]*

The “one another” passages woven throughout Scripture show us a different angle to community within the church family. These “one another” verses show us how this God-given gift of community sharpens us and what each Christian relationship should look like in the church: having fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7), holding one another accountable, speaking truth to each other (Eph. 4:15), encouraging one another (Heb. 3:13, 10:25), teaching and instructing each other (Col 3:16; Rom. 15:14), using our gifts among one another (Rom 12:4-6a; 1 Pet. 4:10), confessing sin to one another (James 5:16), bearing each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2), forgiving one another (Col. 3:13), enduring each other's differences (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:2), exuding humility toward one another (1 Pet. 5:5), offering hospitality toward each other (1 Pet. 4:9), serving and honoring one another (1 Pet. 4:10; Gal 5:13; Rom. 12:10), living in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16), and admonishing one another (Col. 3:16).

The Bible sums it up like this: love one another (John 13:34-35, 15:12-17; Rom. 12:10, 13:8, 1 Thes. 4:9, 1 Pet. 3:8, 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23, 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 5). These are all the ways Christ engages with his church, and to be like him, we must do the same. In his great wisdom, God knew we needed this last preparation to make us more like Christ—his very people.



*Q: Share a time God used another believer to sharpen you spiritually.*

*Q: Summarize how God's Spirit, God's Word, and God's people help us become more like Christ.*



## NEXT STEPS

+ Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.

*Q: Which of these preparations do you feel you give the least attention in your life? How can you change that this week?*

*Q: What from this week's Scripture passages has taught you the most about becoming more like Jesus?*

*Q: The local church is one of God's ways of sharpening us and making us more like Jesus. List some ways you plan to prioritize this in your life in the coming months.*



## PRAY

+ Use these prayer points to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.

· *God, thank you for equipping me with your Spirit; please allow me to sense Him on a deeper level and obey Him when He's leading me.*

· *God, thank you for preparing me through your Word: I pray you'd give me the strength to submit to it as I read it.*

· *God, thank you for your Body - the people of God; please give me opportunities to use my gifts, be sharpened by others, and increase my commitment to Oakwood.*

· *God, thank you for giving me all I need to become more like Christ instead of leaving me to myself to accomplish the mission.*



## COMMENTARY

+ Use these commentary resources to help explain the passages and facilitate discussion.

**Titus 3:3-6** The “washing and of regeneration” done by the Spirit is not communicating that baptism achieves salvation. Given that the context of this passage downplays human merit or effort in salvation and emphasizes divine action and initiative, this phrase refers to a spiritual cleansing done by the Spirit. Baptism is simply an outward expression of this inward transformation achieved by God.

**Romans 8:9-17** Paul alternates between the phrases “Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ” here, using them interchangeably. This shows that Christ and God share the same status. Similarly, this verse does not suggest that there is no difference between Christ and the Spirit, but it does show that both Christ and the Spirit are fully God. Also, the “witness of the Spirit” here is to bring assurance to the Christian that he or she is God’s true child (v. 16).

**2 Corinthians 5:4-5** The “tent” language Paul uses is in reference to the Christian’s present human body that will eventually die. In these verses, he looks forward to the day where our transformation into a resurrected, fully sanctified body will be complete on the last day. The indwelling Spirit in a Christian is the guarantee that they will undergo resurrection and glorification when Jesus returns.

**2 Timothy 3:14-17** “All Scripture” refers to the Old Testament, as the New Testament had not been officially compiled yet. However, by implication this applies to New Testament writings as well, which, by this time, were already being circulated among believers and considered as Scripture (see 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Pet. 3:15-16).

**Ephesians 4:7** “Grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift” does not mean that there are different levels of saving grace, but instead, various levels of grace given to serve God’s church.

**1 Corinthians 12:17** One of the major problems of the Corinthian church was their obsession with elevating one gift (speaking in tongues) much higher than all others. Paul uses the eye/ear analogy to help us avoid an unbalanced view of spiritual gifts. All are important and needed for the church to thrive and grow.

*\*All commentary resourcing for Lesson 2 was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes and the NIV Compact Bible Commentary.*

