



# GPS GUIDE: SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

## Grow. Pray. Study

**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Sermon: Renew Our Faith**

**Luke 6: 46-49**

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and don’t do what I say? I’ll show what it’s like when someone comes to me, hears my words, and puts them into practice. It’s like a person building a house by digging deep and laying the foundation on bedrock. When the flood came, the rising water smashed against that house, but the water couldn’t shake the house because it was well built. But those who don’t put into practice what they hear are like a person who built a house without a foundation. The floodwater smashed against it and it collapsed instantly. It was completely destroyed.”

**Monday: Read Luke 10:38-42**

In the New Testament, to “sit at someone’s feet” meant becoming that person’s disciple. In this story, “Martha did what the culture valued in women: cleaned the house and cooked the food. Mary did what the culture valued in men: became a disciple.” Jesus put no gender or other limits on who he wished to teach. He wanted all his followers to grow spiritually. The contrast challenged stereotypes about gender roles: one sister was “preoccupied with getting everything ready for their meal,” the other one “sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his message.” Which one sounds more like the way you live your life? Jesus said, “Mary has chosen the better part.” Are there ways in which you are choosing, day by day, to sit at the Lord’s feet and listen to his message? How would doing so affect your priorities, time use, leisure activities and other choices? How might it offer you greater freedom in your life?

*Prayer: O Lord, I have a lot to do. It’s hard to stop all my doing to listen to you. Help me recognize how important that is to my growth as your follower. Amen.*

**Tuesday: Read James 1:2-5**

Every life has challenges—sometimes minor, other times trials that test the very fiber of our being. James urged Christians to meet life’s tests as “occasions for joy.” He didn’t mean the tests were pleasant, but rather that times that test us, in small or large ways, are chances to grow endurance. God will use that

endurance, James went on, to “complete its work so that you may be fully mature, complete, and lacking in nothing.” James offered a realistic view of life: there will be hard times. How can our faith shape the way we view these trials? James urged his readers to see the tests as “occasions for joy.” When have you faced a trial in your life and learned from it? How have you seen God use hard times to test and grow your faith toward greater endurance and maturity? James did not write through naïve, rose-colored glasses. He knew human nature is not at all inclined to view tests as “occasions for joy.” That’s why in verse 5 he wrote that God will freely give wisdom to anyone who asks. In what ways does God’s ability to “grow you” through life’s challenges help you view hard times differently? When has God given you wisdom to face a tough challenge?

*Prayer: Lord God, I find it hard to see all of life as an occasion for joy. Keep teaching me to view life your way, to value the endurance and trust you can grow in me in tough times. Amen.*

### **Wednesday: Read Timothy 2:14-15, 23-25**

Paul urged Timothy to value reading and applying the principles of the Bible accurately. As Timothy’s spiritual mentor, Paul urged him to “Present yourself to God as...a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” Doing that correctly also involved embodying its principles in the way he taught and shared. “Be kind toward all people” was an important part of teaching effectively. You may have heard the saying that “if you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything.” In what ways are you learning and understanding more of the Bible’s overarching message, and not just snippets here and there? How can an informed, Christ-centered study of the Bible help you discern truth from falsehood among the many religious ideas that clamor for your attention? Verse 14 says, “Keep reminding people of these things...” Paul didn’t just call Timothy to study the Bible for himself. He wanted him to accurately share its story with others. How is what you learn in the Bible shaping your life, especially the ways that you interact with others? What spiritual subjects “trigger” in you a desire to argue? How does the Holy Spirit help you deal with those feelings?

*Prayer: Lord of my life, help me to keep growing into a “tried and true worker” for your kingdom. Make me accurate, kind, and gentle in sharing what I learn from you. Amen.*

### **Thursday: Read Psalm 119:11-12, 103-105**

To grow spiritually from Bible reading calls for us to open our heart as well as our mind to what God wants to say to us through the Bible. Sometimes all we know of Psalm 119 is that it is “the longest chapter in the Bible.” But it is so much more than that. Today’s passage offers a lovely prayer model that can prepare us to “hear” and value God’s word on the pages of Scripture. “I have hidden your word in my heart,” the psalmist wrote. What does it take to move the word from the printed page into your heart? And remember, the Bible is

more than just a big book of inspirational verses and some do’s and don’ts. It’s a story. And like any story, it requires proper context. The Bible we hold in our hands today has been translated across multiple languages and was originally written in a culture much different than ours. This is important to understand because without proper context you will ultimately read the Bible out of context.” How can you grow in your ability to relate all the “pieces” of the Bible to the big story it tells?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, in the Bible, I find the centuries-old story of how you’ve dealt with all kinds of people who loved and followed you. Help me learn more about how my walk with you is woven into that same story. Amen.*

### **Friday: Read James 1:22-25**

Growing in faith involves study, but it is not simply an intellectual exercise. James the apostle said God seeks “doers of the word,” not just “hearers.” That idea shaped the life of John Wesley. Based on what they studied in Scripture, he and his friends got actively involved in helping prisoners and widows in Oxford. Holding together personal and social holiness has remained important to Wesley’s spiritual descendants ever since. Have you ever known a person who “talked a good game” about religious devotion, but whose actions and attitudes did not match their words? If so, how did that person affect the other people over whom they had influence? When have you discovered a mismatch between your words about faith and your actions? In what ways has your allegiance to Christ altered your activities, priorities, and lifestyle? James used a phrase that may startle us at first, writing of “the perfect law, the law of freedom.” When have you found in your own life that ignoring God’s principles to do whatever you feel like produces, not freedom, but a hurtful kind of slavery? In what ways have you found that living out God’s calling increases your freedom rather than limiting or frustrating it?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want the true freedom you offer me. Help me use my freedom to serve and bless others, as you did. Amen.*

### **Saturday: Read Ephesians 4:11-16**

“God’s goal,” Ephesians said, “is for us to become mature adults...fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ.” At times we find that unity with Christ and one another is still hard. But God calls us to become spiritually mature so that nothing can knock us off course. Building this kind of community requires us to speak the truth in love, with our understanding of truth grounded in thoughtful Bible study guided by the Holy Spirit so that we become more like our Savior Jesus Christ. Changing the world and building God’s kingdom calls us to take our faith beyond our weekend worship service. What are some of the steps you recall that moved you beyond being an “infant” in your faith, and helped you grow toward greater maturity? What are you doing in your day-to-day life that nurtures spiritual maturity in you and others, building up the body

of believers in love? What one or two items are most clearly on your growth horizon right now?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are building me—you are building us—into a community of spiritually mature people, growing in every way into your life of love. Help me to do my part as a faithful builder growing more and more into your image. Amen.*



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