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**DESCRIBE
A MOMENT
WHEN YOU
WERE TOTALLY
EMBARRASSED.**

We Strengthen One Another

The
POINT >

**We strengthen one another to
live as God desires.**

> EPHESIANS 5:8-21

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light— ⁹for the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth— ¹⁰testing what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret. ¹³Everything exposed by the light is made visible, ¹⁴for what makes everything visible is light. Therefore it is said: Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

¹⁵Pay careful attention, then, to how you live—not as unwise people but as wise— ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸And don't get

drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

“Muscle” comes from the Latin word which means “little mouse”—so called because it was said our muscles look like little mice running around under the skin.¹ Gross!



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // JESUS

Jesus sits at God's right hand and continually intercedes for believers as our advocate, mediator, and high priest.

In high school, I knew the first commandment of weight training—*never lift free weights without a spotter!* But I had a plan. When I didn't have a spotter, I always used a Smith Machine, a piece of equipment with the barbell attached to vertical rails and with pegs to rest the bar at various heights. However, on one particular day, I ran into a major problem. I had worked out so much that my arms were totally shot, and no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't lift the bar back up to the peg. So there I was with a heavy barbell pressing down on my chest, and I had to squirm out from under the weight in utter humility. There have been few moments in my life that were more embarrassing.

I foolishly thought I could do it on my own. Sometimes, we do the same thing in our Christian life. We think we can handle our challenges all on our own, but when we live this way, sooner rather than later, we're going to find ourselves in big trouble. Thankfully, God gave us the church to provide the help we need when life is heavy. As the Holy Spirit works in our lives, fellow Christians provide one another with the strength and encouragement we need to press forward when we feel beaten and weighed down by life's troubles.

EPHESIANS 5:8-14

1 What are some ways our culture calls the light darkness and darkness the light?

2 Why is it significant that Paul says we “are light” rather than “like light”?

EPHESIANS 5:15-17

3 How are you tempted to misuse time?

4 What practices help you make the most of your time?

5 How can a biblical view of eternity impact how you view your time?

EPHESIANS 5:18-21

6 What does it look like for us to submit to one another as believers?

7 How would you compare and contrast being drunk with wine with being filled by the Spirit?

8 What are some of the results of being filled with the Spirit?



When Jesus saves us, He also changes us. It's a total transformation of heart, mind, and will, and it's the Holy Spirit that accomplishes this. #BSFLtheChurch



LIVE IT OUT



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // JESUS

Jesus sits at God's right hand and continually intercedes for believers as our advocate, mediator, and high priest.

When Jesus was on the earth, He laid aside certain divine powers in order to experience life as a human. Throughout His ministry, Jesus prayed over and over in order to remain relationally connected with the Father and to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Today, we all have our fair share of weaknesses, and we receive strength to pursue God's will from others in the church. Just as important, Christ continually intercedes for the people of God, so we would live out our faith.

All people have strengths and weaknesses, and we're much better off when we work together. Ultimately, however, we're powerless to accomplish the things God desires for His people on our own. Thankfully, Jesus.

> CHRIST

Living in relationship with Jesus involves our being totally transformed—not just making a few changes. We are called to be like Jesus.

9 What areas of your life don't reflect Christ?

10 Commit to putting those sins to death, so you can be relationally closer to God. What steps will you take in pursuing holiness?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD



› COMMUNITY

We were never meant to pursue our faith in isolation—God made us to be a part of a Christian community.

11 As you pursue personal holiness, invite a trusted Christian friend to be a part of your fight against temptation. Confess your temptations to them and allow them to confess theirs to you. Stand together against those struggles.

› CULTURE

It's not enough for us to simply reject evil. We're to go one step further in exposing darkness, so others can see the truth.

Read Ephesians 5:11-12.

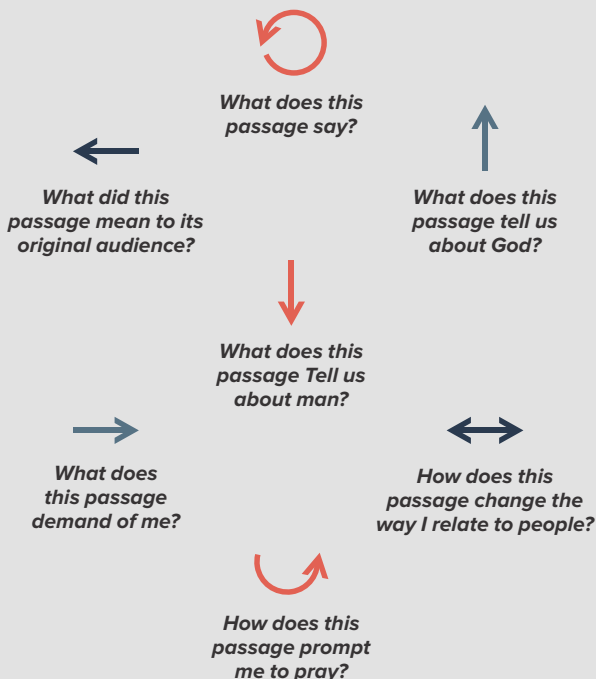
12 What works of darkness, which are common in our culture, are you tempted to engage in?

13 What steps will you take this week to "expose" darkness, so others can see the truth about Jesus?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One ROMANS 14:13

The idea of a stumbling block is something people in church speak about fairly regularly, but many don't have a clear understanding of what this is. Here's what's happening in Romans 14. Jews who had come to Christ had trouble letting go of some of the ceremonial rites they'd practiced all their lives. Gentiles who had practiced pagan worship in the past struggled to see how their newfound faith applied to past activities. One specific issue was meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8:4). Paul taught that, because an idol is nothing, believers are free to eat this meat. However, for the former pagan, their consciences convicted them because they'd previously offered meat as sacrifices to pagan gods. Their conscience was misinformed, but they were convicted nonetheless. Paul taught that to eat meat in their presence or to encourage them to eat in a way that tempts them to offend their conscience is to cause them to stumble. Instead of judging one another for our weaknesses, we should express love through a willingness to give up even the things we're free to enjoy.

➤ **How would you describe a stumbling block?**

➤ **What has someone given up in order to keep you from stumbling? What have you given up?**

Day Two

ROMANS 14:14-15



In the Old Testament law, God declared certain foods “unclean” as a way of demonstrating that the Israelites were set apart from other nations. But under the New Covenant, in demonstrating the unity that exists in Christ and by the Spirit, God did away with these dietary restrictions, and foods were no longer unclean in and of themselves. We demonstrate that we are set apart not by what we eat, but through loving as Jesus did. Still, if our conscience convicts us that any food or activity is sinful, we must follow our convictions—to do otherwise is to sin. Therefore, we should always seek to encourage others in following their convictions, even if it means making sacrifices ourselves. This is how we show love.

- **Why did God call Israel to abstain from certain foods? Today, how do we show that we’re set apart?**
- **Why is it important that we always follow our conscience?**

Day Three

ROMANS 14:16-17

At times, people will criticize us for enjoying our freedoms in Christ. At other times, people will criticize us when we give up freedoms in order to serve a less mature believer. Either way, the truth is that we can’t please everybody. Many have tried, but it’s just not possible. With this in view, what matters most is that we seek to follow Christ in all we do and continually seek to show godly love to the people in our lives. Sometimes, this will mean giving up freedoms. Other times, it may involve our helping a less mature brother or sister to grow in understanding how the Bible speaks to their convictions. Whatever the case, our greatest concerns shouldn’t be what we eat or drink, but how we can follow the Spirit’s leading, continually working to see kingdom realities manifest among God’s people.

- **When have you discovered that you can’t please everybody?**
- **How do you find the balance between enjoying freedoms and giving up freedoms?**

Day Four

ROMANS 14:18

People continually observe the ways Christians live. The Pharisees were always following Jesus, scrutinizing His every move and looking for an opportunity to accuse Him. People will often view us this way, looking to discredit our faith. Others will observe, looking to find out if our faith is real or not. Either way, we need to be careful to live in a way that continually points others to Christ. One of the best ways to do this is to be patient, gracious, and sensitive to others. When we show love the ways Christ did, not only do we receive approval from God, but others who look at our lives will find out that our faith is real and that God truly does change those who trust Him.

- **Why do others continually look at the lives of Christians?**
- **What is at stake when others observe the ways we live?**

Day Five

ROMANS 14:19



Our world is characterized by conflict. We see it on the news and in our schools. We experience it in our families, and sometimes, conflict even exists in our churches. But this should never be the case. This isn't to say that Christians always need to have the same opinions or that we'll always get along perfectly. That will never happen. However, there are ways to disagree and still get along beautifully. God has called each of us to pursue peace and unity, and this happens only when we're willing to give up our own preferences in order to love and serve others. We live in an age where following Christ is not easy. One of the best ways to strengthen our brothers and sisters is to provide an environment of security and comfort in the church. Out there, it's a spiritual war! Let's make sure our churches provide the peace and safety God desires for His people.

- **Where do you see conflict in the world?**
- **How will you work to promote peace?**