



CALGARY MISSION TEAM BIBLE STUDY 2015

FOCUS PASSAGES FOR THE WEEK:

2 Corinthians 9:6-10:

“Remember this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work. As it is written: He scattered; He gave to the poor; His righteousness endures forever. Now the One who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness.” (HCSB)

Philippians 1:3-5:

“I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.” (HCSB)

1 Corinthians 9:19-23:

“Although I am a free man and not anyone’s slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone in order to win more people. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law. To those who are without that law, like one without the law—not being without God’s law but within Christ’s law—to win those without the law. To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some. Now I do all this because of the gospel, so I may become a partner in its benefits.”

MEMORY VERSE: *“And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8*

GOALS FOR THE SUMMER:

1. To see God’s name glorified and be instruments in His Kingdom expansion
2. To be ready to give gracious, truthful answers out of love to the questions that are asked by both seekers and followers of Jesus Christ
3. To experience the overflow of God’s grace to those who are spiritually poor and in need of Him
4. To remember that God has equipped us with everything we need to share His Gospel with those He puts in our paths and that He alone can multiply both our seed and our harvest

Included in this set of devotionals is one study for you to use as a team study before the trip. Our prayer is that you will begin this journey by studying God’s Word to prepare yourself for the work you will do in Calgary. One of the greatest bonds you can have with other Christians is that formed

while serving Christ together on a mission trip. This is especially true when the purpose is clear, the mission is God-centered, and the work comes from united hearts in love with Christ as you share Him with the lost and encourage the saved. We suggest that you do this study individually and then as a group in your last team meeting. The main point is that you allow God to fully prepare your heart and mind for your service to Him.

Then once you begin the mission trip, there will be a Bible study for each day while you're on the trip. The purpose is to help you stay focused on why you're there and to fill you with God's strength and His wisdom so that your service to the people of Calgary comes from the overflow of His love and grace to you. We can't emphasize enough how crucial it is to maintain this focus because you will become tired from doing physical work every day, as well as pouring your heart into these people. It would be easy to start serving from your own ability and strength, but that is far more difficult, as well as less effective, than allowing God to work through you. If God's work is to be done, it must be done in His power and His strength. It is our prayer that you will have a life-changing experience during this mission trip and that you see God working in and through you as you've never experienced before.

PRE-TRIP STUDY

We each go on mission trips for various reasons. Of course, the most obvious reason is that God has called us to go. However, there are many different avenues God uses to show us that. Why did you decide to go to Calgary?

What do you see as your purpose for being on this mission trip?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-10.

In looking at this passage, we should first consider the context in which it was written. Paul was encouraging the Corinthians to give to poor Christians in Jerusalem. They had given offerings to these Christians before, but then some false teachers had arrived in Corinth and had led a rebellion against Paul and the Corinthians had temporarily stopped giving. However, Paul dealt with the rebellion and urged the Corinthians to resume their giving.

It is helpful to back up to the last verse of chapter 8, verse 24, to see a major point Paul was making to the Corinthians. This verse says, "*Therefore, show them proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you.*" Consider for a few moments how you will be showing proof of your love (and essentially, God's love) for the people you will serve in Calgary, realizing, of course, that the most obvious proof is your presence there. How will you love and serve the people of Calgary so that you expose them to Christ's love?

Read again 2 Corinthians 9:1-5.

It may also seem unnecessary for the leadership in Calgary to send you a Bible study because you have committed to go and this would indicate that your heart is where it should be. Although we seem to typically find great, spiritually prepared teams, not everyone goes on a mission trip with the right heart or for the right reasons. We read in the above passage that false prophets went to the Christians at Corinth, causing them to stop giving to the Christians at Jerusalem. Just as these false prophets affected the work of the Corinthian Christians, Satan can cause us to become discouraged or side-tracked if we fail to stay focused on the call and be saturated in the Word in preparation to do the work He has called us to do.

Read again verse 8. This is the memory verse for your week in Calgary, so read it over and over until you have it memorized. Paraphrase this verse in your own words.

Define the word “grace” and give examples of God’s grace in your life.

In your group study, come up with your group’s definition of “grace” and write it below.

Consider how your life might be different if you consistently exhibited grace toward others as God has shown His grace toward you. Remember that God truly is able to give you an overflowing portion of His grace so that you will have everything you need for every situation you will face. He will do this in Calgary just as He does it in your normal everyday life if you allow Him that freedom. It would be great if you could so focus on this verse and its rich application to your life that you would be more in tune with God’s all-sufficient grace in every circumstance of your life.

God’s grace, as common as it is in your world, is foreign to most of the people of Calgary. In fact, over 96% of the people of Canada claim no religious affiliation whatsoever. Most of them are financially secure, so they don’t see themselves as needy. God will use the activities such as the ones you and your group will be leading to reach people for Him. Many of the parents who bring their children to the camps will wonder why you would take your vacation (which they call “holiday”) and go all the way to Calgary to work with their children. Some of the parents will ask you that question. You should be prepared to answer it. Think for a few moments of what you will

say to these parents. The leadership of Southwinds would like your answer to include the following: “The people of Southwinds churches want you to know how much Jesus loves you, so we are here to serve you and share His love with you and your family.”

Read the second focus passage, Philippians 1:3-5.

Paul said to the Christians in Philippi, “*I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you...*” Why was he so thankful? “*because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*” Know that the people of both Southwinds churches are so very thankful for you and your willingness to share in God’s work there. They look forward with great anticipation to working alongside you this summer. Consider for a moment that you’ve just completed your week in Calgary and you’re ready to return home. Write below how you can serve this week so that the people of the Southwinds churches will say of you what Paul said to the Christians in Philippi, noting that it’s Christ who should be glorified and not ourselves.

Southwinds’ leadership are already praying for you as you prepare to go—specifically, that you will have a safe trip and that God will work in and through you to use you as His vessels to accomplish the work that He has planned for you to do. What an encouragement you are and will be to the people of Southwinds churches!

Spend some time praying for each member of your team and ask God to give you all unity of heart and clarity of purpose. Also ask Him to give you a heart to serve your team members in whatever ways He shows you.

You are about to embark on an amazing journey! May God prepare your heart to sow His seed generously and with a whole heart and may you, in return, receive the blessing that comes with obedience so that your heart overflows with thanksgiving to God for His truly indescribable gift.

DAY 1 – Prepare to Serve

Ask God to open your heart and speak to you the words He wants to say to you to convict you, change you and challenge you as only He can. Prepare your heart to hear from The God of the universe as only He can speak to you.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-5

Looking at verse 4, think about how you could possibly be embarrassed on this mission trip if you failed to adequately prepare for it spiritually, mentally and physically. You've committed to the task, so you're responsible for doing your part to the very best of your ability and then trusting God to do His part. List all who could be embarrassed if you went on this mission trip unprepared.

Read Colossians 3:23-24. What is the one word used for how we're to do whatever task we do?
_____ Whom do we really work for? _____

Going back to our focus passage from 2 Corinthians 9, read verse 5. Paul says that he considered it necessary to send some brothers to the Corinthians to help them prepare the generous gift they had previously promised. In the same way, you have made a promise to the people of Southwinds churches to perform whatever tasks your group has committed to perform. A promise should be taken seriously and followed through intentionally and enthusiastically.

Looking at the last phrase of verse 5 above, what is the difference between a gift and an extortion, or, as another translation puts it, a grudging obligation?

Imagine yourself serving people in Calgary as a gift, given freely and cheerfully. Next, imagine yourself giving only out of obligation, feeling forced to give simply because you're expected to give. Probably no one going on this trip will fall into the second category, but there may be other times, other situations in your life, when you will serve God out of sheer obligation rather than a willing heart. On the other hand, imagine the joy that God has when He sees His children freely giving themselves as gifts to Him and the people they serve.

Therefore, you are encouraged to prepare in advance for the generous gift you have promised—the gift of yourself and the outpouring of God's love and power flowing through you.

Meditate on the week's memory verse, "*And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.*" 2 Corinthians 9:8.

Pray that God will truly pour out His grace on you as you serve today and commit to Him your willingness to do the tasks He calls you to do cheerfully and wholeheartedly, doing them for Him.

DAY 2 – Serve Generously

Ask God to open your heart and speak to you this morning the message He wants you to hear and to prepare your heart and mind to serve the people He’s called you to serve today in the way He will enable you to do it.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6.

What does it mean to sow sparingly? How would that look on this mission trip?

What does it mean to sow generously? How would that look on this mission trip?

Read verse 7.

This verse provides the foundation of instruction for sowing generously. Paul says, “*Each person should do as he has decided in his _____.*” We can decide with our mind that we’re going to do something, but if our heart is not in it, we’re likely not to succeed or be effective. You’ve undoubtedly heard the saying, “You get out of something what you put into it.” Think about how that relates to this verse. If you work diligently and enthusiastically to serve the people you’re given to serve, giving absolutely all you can with pure motives for God’s glory, God will bless you.

The result of that diligent, wholehearted service is found in the very next verse, which is our memory verse for the week: “*And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.*” (Verse 8)

Another passage that gives us basically the same message is found in 2 Peter 1:3. Write it below.

Notice the phrase, “*And God is able.*” It is essential that we truly believe and understand that God really is able to make every grace overflow to us and to provide us with everything we need to excel in every good work. Hopefully, you have many examples in your life where you saw God work in ways that there was no doubt it was Him. Those times give us encouragement and assurance that He is able and faithful to provide what we need to do His work.

Two key points to consider here are that (1) God’s power is the source of what we do and (2) His power comes from our knowledge of Christ. To know Christ, as meant here, means to have a relationship with Him and through that relationship, we know His character. Knowing His character and having the power of His Holy Spirit within us to manifest His character gives us the

ability to live as He wants us to live. The most frustrating work done is that which is done in our own power. If we Christians try to do God's work in our own way and our own power, we will, first, not be rewarded for it and, second, not be effective. God's work and our power are like oil and vinegar—they don't mix. Another frustrating effort is when non-Christians try to do God's work. They can't do it in God's power because the Holy Spirit does not live in them; God's power is not available to them.

Looking back at 2 Corinthians 9:9, what is the end result of God's children sowing generously?

Read verses 10 and 11.

What are the two things we're told here that God provides for us when we do His work?

_____ and _____

We're also told that not only does He provide these things, but He also multiplies and increases the seed we sow and the harvest of our righteousness (harvest that is gathered through God's righteousness demonstrated through us).

One would think that giving would cause us to have less. However, God's way is not like that. His way is to increase the seed and the harvest the more we give. We've all heard the saying, "You can't out-give God." There really is truth in that. The more we give, the more God gives us to give and the greater the harvest.

The last part of verse 11 gives the result of our generous giving. What is it?

Consider how your daily life might be different if the meditation of your heart were always full of thanksgiving to God for His work in and through you. If just maybe that could replace selfishness, negativity, and worry, the abundant life would be ours. We're not saying you're not there because perhaps some of you do live in that realm, but perhaps many of us do not. Our prayer is that this will encourage us all to strive toward that goal.

Meditate today on our week's memory verse, "*And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.*" (2 Cor. 9:8)

Ask God to help you give generously and enthusiastically and to give you a heart full of thanksgiving to Him.

DAY 3 – Serve Unselfishly

Ask God to open your heart and speak to you the words He wants to say to you to convict you, change you and challenge you as only He can. Prepare your heart to hear from The God of the universe as only He can speak to you.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

In this chapter, Paul described two ways he worked to win the lost—self-denial and self-control. This passage contains his explanation of self-denial.

In verse 19, Paul says, *“Although I am a free man and not anyone’s slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people.”* In his commentary on this passage, John McArthur says that the phrase, “I have made myself a slave,” is only two words in Greek. They are “edoulosa,” which means “I enslave” and “emauton,” which means “myself.” This is a very intentional and determined act and one that is contrary to our human nature.

McArthur goes on to say, “Paul’s willing adjustment of his living in order to identify with those to whom he witnessed was part of what today we call pre-evangelism. What he did in this regard was not a part of the gospel; it had nothing to do with the gospel. But it helped many unbelievers to listen to the gospel and be more open to receive it.” The point as it applies to us as we serve in Calgary is that we should interact with the people in a way that makes them want to hear what we say. This includes our willingness to be like them in ways that will cause them to want to listen to us as long as it is within God’s laws. You will have an orientation session on Sunday afternoon of your trip and will be told some things about the culture in Calgary. This will help you adapt in this regard.

Read Exodus 21:2-6.

Verse 5 of this passage tells us why a slave would decide to stay with his master after he was free to leave. What was his reason? _____

So if we make ourselves slaves to other people, what should be our motivation?

We don’t, in our flesh, naturally love others, especially strangers, but this is the love that comes from God and flows through us. We are all fully capable of loving a complete stranger if God’s Holy Spirit lives within us.

Think about the life of a slave or servant. Two qualities that probably come to mind are humility (they put the needs and desires of their master ahead of their own) and initiative (they look for ways to help their master without being told). Now apply these two characteristics to the work you’ll do today and the remaining days of this week.

Going back to our focal passage for today, 1 Corinthians 9:19-26, Paul names several groups of people he served and with whom he practiced making himself a slave. They are the Jews, those under the law, those without the law, and the weak. Concerning the Jews, John McArthur says this: "In Christ he (Paul) was no longer bound to the ceremonies, rituals, and traditions of Judaism. Following or not following any of those things had no effect on his spiritual life. But if following them would open a door for his witnessing to Jews, he would gladly accommodate. What had once been legal restraints now had become love restraints."

The next group, those under the law, was comprised of the Jews who were not Christians and who believed that following the laws was their way to God. Paul did not compromise his beliefs, but simply followed the laws, not as a spiritual benefit, but so that he could have an open door to share Christ with the Jews. Breaking the Jewish laws would have been offensive to these people and would have caused them to not listen to him.

The next group he mentioned was comprised of those without the law, which were the Gentiles, and Paul lived as they lived when he was with them. He made an important note here when he made it clear that he stayed within Christ's law when with the Gentiles (verse 21). Never should we become like the people we're with when it goes against Christ's laws and His character.

The final group Paul mentioned was the weak. A mature Christian such as Paul could easily become frustrated with those who find it difficult to understand and accept the Gospel. Becoming a slave to the weak involves simplifying the Gospel so that it is easily understood. Just as writers adapt their vocabulary based on their audience, Paul adapted his presentation of the Gospel according to his audience and made sure to explain it simply enough that it could be understood by them. The patience in dealing with the weak goes a step further as we interact with weaker Christians. A mature Christian can become frustrated with an immature Christian who finds it difficult to simply do the right thing. However, if the more mature Christian is to have any effect on that one, he must patiently and lovingly encourage, guide and teach the weaker one through a study of the Word and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Recite the week's memory verse, "*And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.*" 2 Corinthians 9:8

Meditate today on Paul's words, "*I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people.*"

Ask God to help you cast aside your own desires and thoughts and focus on the people you will be around today, being to them what God wants you to be in order to win them and/or encourage them.

DAY 4 – Serve All

Ask God to open your heart and speak to you this morning the message He wants you to hear and to prepare your heart and mind to serve the people He's called you to serve today in the way He will enable you to do it.

Yesterday we studied Paul's words recorded in 1 Corinthians 9:19 concerning making himself a slave to all people. Continuing that thought, read Mark 10:44-45.

Write verse 44 in your own words.

Verse 43b says, "*and whoever wants to be first among you must be a slave to all.*" So it seems significant that God wants us to become slaves "of all" in order to win more to Him. Even if we have a servant or slave mentality, it is natural for us to limit our servanthood to those whom we choose to serve. However, please catch the significance of the two little words, "to all." God doesn't give us the choice to select those who perhaps "deserve" our service; He desires that we serve ALL.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Picture in your mind being in a stadium watching runners run a race. Imagine the expressions on their faces. You would probably see determination and focus. Then one person crosses the finish line and what expression do you picture on his/her face? Would you see satisfaction and joy? In verse 25, Paul tells us, "*Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*" Paul followed that up by saying he doesn't run with uncertainty and he doesn't fight as one beating the air. In other words, he possessed assurance and purpose in the work God called him to do. When we serve the God who created the universe and who sustains the universe today, who created each one of us with a purpose, we can be assured that He has the power to give us what we need to do the things He calls us to do. Think about this for a few moments. God gives you assurance and purpose to fulfill His plan for your life. Record below your thoughts about how that should make your life different from how it would be without those two things.

John McArthur, in his commentary on this passage, says the following: "These Isthmian games were held at Corinth and were therefore intimately familiar to those to whom Paul was writing. Contestants in the games had to prove rigorous training for ten months. The last month was spent at Corinth, with supervised daily workouts in the gymnasium and athletic fields." This was similar to the Olympics which we see today. Think about the training the athletes go through to participate in races or other competitions such as this. And yet these athletes are doing all of this for basically two things: recognition and satisfaction. The tangible prize at the Isthmian games was a pine wreath and at the Olympics, it is a medal. The greater prize, though, is the fame and acclaim the winner receives, as well as the satisfaction that comes from hard work.

Applying that to the race run by all Christians, the prize at the end of our race is far greater than that of the athletes. It is a prize that lasts for all eternity. Also, unlike the participants in a physical race, more than one person wins. We are not competing against each other, but against our fleshly desires and frailty.

McArthur continued with these thoughts: "In a sense, every Christian runs his own race, enabling each one of us to be a winner in winning souls to Christ. Paul therefore counsels all believers to 'run in such a way that you may win,' by setting aside anything that might hinder the reception of the gospel. Holding tightly to liberties and rights is a sure way to lose the race of soul-winning. Many of the Corinthian Christians seriously limited their testimony because they would not limit their liberty. They refused to give up their rights, and in so doing, they won few and offended many."

What are some liberties or rights you need to set aside that may be hindering you from running your race?

Ask God to help you relinquish your rights and give Him everything so that nothing hinders you from running your race and impacting every person that He puts on your radar.

Meditate today on your memory verse, "*And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.*" 2 Corinthians 9:8

DAY 5 – Serve intentionally

Continuing the passage we studied yesterday, read 1 Corinthians 9:27.

How can you discipline your body and bring it into subjection to what God calls you to do?

I wonder how many of us fully realize the importance of the race we are running in our day-to-day lives. Probably not many of us. An important way to gain that focus is by beginning each day in God's Word and really allowing Him to speak to us through His Word and His Holy Spirit, then meditating on His Word throughout the day. Another way to gain that focus is to be conscious of our eternal destiny and the real reason for running the race.

Let's look at these in more detail. First, we cannot over-emphasize the importance of beginning each day in a study of God's Word and talking with Him, making sure to listen to what He wants us to hear. It's amazing how powerful He is in filling us with His character and His desires if we only give Him the time and focus to do it.

Second, it's crucial that we meditate on God's Word throughout the day and allow Him to apply it to our circumstances as He sees fit.

Third, just as our physical bodies get fit through exercise, our spiritual bodies get fit through exercise of faith and perseverance. The more we practice trusting God, the more we know we can trust God; the more we persevere, the more we realize that God is able to help us persevere. Then when we reach an obstacle, we can pinpoint other times God worked to bring us through another obstacle and be encouraged that He will do it again. Wouldn't you love to be remembered by your children and others close to you as a person who trusted God completely and persevered through all of life's obstacles, not in your own power but by allowing God to empower you? What a legacy!

Fourth, God gave us a mind to be able to think and reason, so we have the capability to choose to follow Him even when our heart is not in it. Then our heart can come along after we've made the decision. Here is a statement that we all need to grasp: God is more concerned with our obedience than our happiness. That may sound harsh, but think about it. When God tells us something to do, He is directing us in the plan He has for our lives. Because we don't fully see the plan, our heart may not be thrilled with the immediate instruction. However, our command is to obey and the decision to do that is made with our mind. Then through yielding to God's plan and experiencing being in the very center of His will, contentment and peace grow into joy that encompasses happiness but is so much more.

As we're writing this Bible study, we are both attempting to lose weight. One thing that we recently discussed is how we know what to do and what to eat and not eat, and the choice to do all of that is made with the mind. We have a book that was written in the 70's called, *Think Yourself Thin*, and it is about using our mind to do what it was designed to do—think about what we eat before we eat and while we eat. The same principle applies to all of life. God gave us a mind that is capable of making the choices we know are the right ones from repeated study of His Word, so when we're faced with choices, we should be able to think and, through prayer, do the right thing. It may be granting forgiveness to someone, it may be granting grace to another, or a multitude of simple acts God asks us to do. If you have children, you have probably witnessed them doing something

inappropriate or just not smart and you said to them, "What were you thinking?" (Emphasis on "thinking") Do you think God ever wants to ask you the same question? The difference is that He knows exactly what you were thinking!

Read 1 Peter 1:3-4.

Describe the inheritance awaiting us in heaven at the end of our physical life's race.

If athletes are so diligent in preparing for a race that provides a reward that will fade away and fame that will be forgotten, how much more should we prepare for a reward that last for eternity!

Meditate today on 1 Corinthians 9:24b: "*Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*"

Ask God to give you a true servant's heart for all that you come into contact with today. Ask Him to help you value them as the people loved by God that they are and to help you obey His every command as you interact with them and perform the work before you.

DAY 6

Ask God to open your heart and speak to you this morning the message He wants you to hear and to prepare your heart and mind to serve the people He's called you to serve today in the way He will enable you to do it.

Read Philippians 1:3-6.

In Paul's expression of thanksgiving for the Christians at Philippi, he says that his request for them was made with _____ and for what? _____

As Paul wrote these words, he was imprisoned for his preaching of the gospel. Because he was unable to preach the gospel to anyone other than those who went to see him, he was thankful for those who were carrying on the work of sharing and teaching the gospel. What an encouragement it had to be for him to know that those whom He had taught were growing spiritually and doing what he had modeled before them.

Although the leadership and members of the Southwinds churches are not in Paul's situation of suffering for preaching and teaching the gospel message, they are thankful in the same way for the people who are coming alongside them this summer to help spread the gospel to people who have not heard it. Paul's words, according to the Holman translation, are, "*because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*" It could get overwhelming to the Southwinds Christians because of the number of unreached people if it were not for people like you investing yourself, your time, energy and money to help reach these people. As people come to know and accept Jesus, there is much to be done to disciple them.

Matthew 9:35-38 records Jesus words regarding a similar situation: "*Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then he said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'*"

What emotion does this passage say Jesus had when he saw the multitudes? _____
This came from His love for them and intense desire that they have the abundant life He knew was available to them. Your Southwinds leadership teams also have compassion for the people within their reach and are tremendously encouraged by other people who volunteer to help reach them. Jesus' words, "*The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few,*" is so very true in Calgary. Without people like you coming alongside them, there would be fewer people reached with the gospel and much less of an impact made for Christ in the communities. It would be impossible to really put into words how much you are appreciated and how much you have encouraged them.

List some of the things you have done in Calgary this week that you have done for the glory of God and that you know have encouraged the people of Southwinds.

Verse 6 of our Philippians 1 passage says, "*being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...*" That is also our prayer for you as you complete your work in Calgary and return home to continue the work of Christ. We pray that you will hold steadfast to your sharing the gospel as long as you have life or until Jesus returns.

As you finish your week in Calgary, consider the work that God has ahead of you. Set your mind on obeying every command of God so that others along your life's path will also be thankful for your help and encouragement.

Meditate today on Philippians 1:3, "*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,*" and rest in the joy that you have been faithful in serving God this week and in encouraging those who regularly serve in Calgary.

Pray that God will fill you with compassion for the people you are serving, that He will empower you to have an impact on their lives, and that He will be glorified.

DAY 7

Thank God for the experiences you've had this week and the lessons you've learned. Meditate for a few moments about what God has said to you this week and what He wants to say to you as you complete the week and head back home. Write below the thoughts that come to mind.

Here is a summary of what we've discussed in this Bible study this week.

First, we discussed the importance of being prepared to serve God by serving the people of Calgary. A huge part of being prepared is experiencing God's grace and allowing it to flow through us in every work we do. Write below the memory verse for this week from II Cor. 9:8.

Next we discussed the importance of sowing generously vs. sparingly and how the decision to do that is made in the heart. It's just so critical that we allow God to direct our hearts in order to be obedient to His will. We also learned that God supplies and multiplies the seed and the fruit. What change have you discovered you need to make in order to consistently practice the act of sowing generously?

Third, we studied Paul's words recorded in 1 Corinthians 9 that said, "*I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people.*" We know that it's a conscious, intentional decision to make ourselves slaves to others and in that, Christ is seen more fully than in any other way. After all, that's exactly what His sacrificial death on the cross was and it was followed by His resurrection. Our giving of ourselves to others allows God's same resurrection power to be displayed in and through us and He is glorified. This week as you have served people in Calgary, how did you feel about making yourself a slave or servant to them? What did it require of you?

Fourth, we learned the importance of disciplining our bodies through the exercise of faith and perseverance, which are encouraged through the study of God's Word and a rich prayer life. Faithfully serving God, whether on a designated mission trip or in day-to-day life, requires continually abiding in Him and allowing His strength to flow through us. Did you experience God's supernatural strength and grace in doing His work this week? If so, give an example below.

Fifth, we looked at the importance of using our minds to make choices to obey God's commands. This is not something we can always do on our own, but something that we can do through God's enabling grace.

Last, we discussed Philippians 1:3-5, which says, *"I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."* (HCSB) As you leave to return home, please know that the people of both Southwinds churches are extremely thankful for you and all the work you've done to help spread the gospel in their communities.

Meditate once again on the memory verse of the week: *"And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work."* 2 Corinthians 9:8

Pray that God will continue the work in you that He has done this week and that He will give you great sensitivity to the lostness of the world around you no matter where you are.