

# **2012 Focus 40 For Young Adults**

*Transforming Hearts...*

*Transforming Lives*

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40 Daily Devotions for the 360 Revolution

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## 1. Faithful Steps

I want to tell you about a girl named Rachel, but I need to start with Laura. This is Laura's story in her own words:

**The summer of 2010 at IYC Orlando, I finally let God have full control. He was trying to use me and had been knocking for a long time and I finally answered. I was ready to share this with everyone but I wasn't exactly sure how. The last night of IYC, there was a 360 challenge. Pick 3 friends, pray 6 days a week and miss 0 opportunities. This was perfect! I prayed hard, and God put three girls' names on my heart, one being my best friend. When I got home, with my student leadership team we also filled out a 360 list. And the Lord put three other girls on my heart including two girls that I hardly ever spoke to. I prayed for these girls daily and one night after small groups my best friend, Rachel decided it was time to answer God's knocking and she accepted Jesus into her life! This really had me fired up. I knew that God was going to do huge things and he had already started.**

A couple of months later, Rachel heard about a mission trip to Chelyabinsk, Russia, that our youth ministry was going on. The Lord spoke to her about going, and she stepped out in faith and went. While on the trip, God really worked through her life. One night in the service, God empowered Rachel to share her story, which was a huge step for her and a great encouragement to the Russian and American students at the camp we were helping with.

Now Rachel's faith continues to grow. She is a leader in our youth ministry and at school. She is passionate about God and reaching her friends. Because of Rachel's faith, her family is more committed to Christ.

It is incredible how God will use us to reach our friends. As we pray, God works and life change happens.

**Scriptures: I Timothy 4:12, I Corinthians 3:5-7, Mark 16:15**

**Eric Reeder**

## 2. Endurance

*I wonder if Billy Graham dealt with this as thousands flocked to the altar, I thought as speckles of spit hit my face. I had to squint my eyes in light of the barrage of insults, profanity, and threats that poured forth from the mother*

I had the false image of evangelism: After I expressed God's love, I expected people to fall to their knees immediately and forever live the freedom of the gospel. But what about people like this? people who laugh at you, ignore you, or just hate you and what you say? Maybe they don't get it or don't seem interested. I found myself unconsciously selfish in my intentions about sharing the gospel. A favorable response would make me feel like a more "successful" Christian – whatever that is.

It has taken me awhile to change my mindset. We aren't responsible for people's decisions. Every opportunity we have to express God's love and sacrifice is a single seed planted. It's the Holy Spirit who intervenes and trades a heart of stone for a heart of flesh.

What if your voice of love is the only voice in someone's life? What if you are the only image of Jesus for someone to watch? Share the good news because God deserves to be proclaimed and because you truly care for people who are separated from the God who created love. Sometimes your voice will seem to fall on deaf ears or angry hearts, but stay strong. God's love is the city on a hill. People notice.

**Scripture: Romans 10:14-15**

**Caleb Weeks  
Student Ministry Intern  
First CHOG  
St Joseph, MI**

### 3. More Than Conquerors

What does it mean to be a “conqueror?” The dictionary defines the word *conqueror* as “someone who vanquishes; a victor.” Conquerors come away from battles victorious. So how do we become a conqueror? Through him who loved us. If we are not in Christ, then we have no power or authority to conquer anything.

Christ has conquered death to show us the love of God. It was not a reward for anything we ever did or could do. God shows us his unstoppable love. Nothing will ever get in the way of that, because all things have been conquered by Christ.

Think of a church where every person knew without a doubt that nothing could ever separate them from the love of God. How powerful would their witness be? Think of how passionate they would be for Christ.

What hinders you from fully understanding that nothing can separate you from the love of God?

Write out a list of all the things that you feel might separate you from his love.

Now take a pen and write *VOID* over this list. Those things have no power over you. They no longer matter.

Challenge: Write the word *conqueror* on a piece of paper. Keep this in your wallet or purse to remind you that you are a conqueror through him who loved you.

**Scripture: Romans 8:37-39**

**Kody Hope  
High School Student  
Eastside CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 4. Prayer Makes a Difference

Years ago, before I was introduced to the 360 Revolution concept, I used to pray for those around me who didn't know Jesus. One of my ministry fields was the gym. I used to compete in weightlifting and was in the weight room most days of the week. I would write down on my prayer list some of the guys I saw regularly and had interaction with, and would pray for them regularly. What I found is that when I prayed for an opportunity to share Jesus' love with them, some incredible things happened.

For example, I remember praying for a particular guy and, one day over at the dumbbells, he gave this huge opening to talk about spiritual things. It was just crazy how it happened. I believe that, without my praying regularly, it would have never happened. God did some incredible things in that place. People came to find Jesus and others who had been walking away from him came back. God did an incredible work. A men's accountability/Bible study group started at Cracker Barrel. Soon we had to begin more groups because it got too large. If there hadn't been consistent prayer, I doubt it would have ever happened.

The 360 Revolution now challenges me to look 360 degrees around myself to see where God is at work—then to get involved, praying for at least 3 persons who don't know Jesus 6 times a week, missing 0 opportunities to share his love.

**Scripture: Ephesians 5:10–17**

**Andy Stephenson**

## 5. In His Wake

During the winter of my sophomore year of college, I busied myself setting up internships for the fast-approaching summer. I'd made connections with people in California and decided that an internship with an urban ministry in San Francisco would allow me to step outside of my comfort zone and grow. As my internship time drew near, my idealistic views of that experience grew. I dreamt of becoming friends with people in billowy skirts that strived for peace and love for everyone. I imagine days spent in the park with the kids underneath the California sun. I was not at all prepared for what the next five weeks had in store.

My eyes grew wider with every day that passed. Poverty, neglect, and brokenness engulfed entire districts of the city, particularly the one that I was living in. And the only thing that could break my heart more than witnessing this was the realization that city hall was one block east of the heart of despair. I became enraged at the lack of justice and love I saw demonstrated. How could these people with their suits and briefcases ignore the men and women only yards away who didn't even own a pair of shoes? Overwhelmed with discontent and heartache, I couldn't see past these travesties. I woke up every morning and indulged in a big cup of indignation and continually asked God where he was in all of this.

One day in my Bible reading, I came across a passage that changed everything. In Exodus 33:17–23, Moses tells God that he is in need of his presence. He needs reassurance from God and asks God to show himself. God sets Moses upon a rock and tells him that he will pass by and Moses will see his back. (In this passage, “back” was meant metaphorically to describe where someone had just been.) God was showing Moses his presence by showing him where he had just been.

My perspective was altered in that moment. Instead of being overwhelmed with the state of living and circumstances of these places, I was able to see how God's love and grace were at work in an astounding way. I noticed the places that God had just been and the glimmers of hope for a change that he left in his wake. Although despair and heartache will remain as long as humanity exists, we Christians have the ability to see the light and be the light. Recognizing God's presence in the most desperate of situations is not an easy task; however, if we are able to do this we can effect change and highlight God's joy and eternal love.

**Scripture: Exodus 33:17–23**

**Rachel Huddy**

## 6. Consumer to Contributor

Growing up in a pastor's home, I became very familiar with the church. We were in the building multiple times a week and attended every type of church event imaginable. My concept of church was typical for many in my age group, as I simply wanted to have fun and play games. In reality church was more about my enjoyment than an act of worship and giving. I was stuck in the mind frame of a consumer.

It may not be surprising that we live in a consumer culture. Everywhere we look, our minds are bombarded with the newest, best, and most amazing products the world has to offer. If many of us were honest, it becomes apparent that the consumer has taken the place of the servant.

However, as we look at the early church, we find a picture of community that goes beyond the self. Acts 2:44–45 tells us “the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.” If we look to the heart of this passage we find a drastic difference between a church of consumers and a church of contributors.

It can be easy for us to become consumers of what the church offers. Our acquisitive culture has taught us to do it. Our selfish nature wants to find out what the church can do for us, while in reality the church is not here for our pleasure. As believers in Christ, we are the church and we are here for the world!

If the church is not simply here to entertain us, but a body of believers uniting to share the gospel with the world, what is our calling? It is not enough to claim you know Jesus, for as James says, “Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror” (James 2:19). But as Jesus says in John 13:37–39, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

How will you love God? How will you love the world? How can you move from being a consumer to a contributor?

**Scripture: Acts 2:42–47**

**Preston Kegley  
Dir. of Student Outreach  
Eastside CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 7. Many Believed

Jesus was traveling from Judea to Galilee when he made a pit stop in Samaria. He sat down at a well, and asked a Samaritan woman for a drink of water. The Samaritans and Jews didn't hang out with each other. The Jews hated the Samaritans. So when Jesus' disciples arrived on the scene, they were surprised to see Jesus talking to her. Jesus was talking to someone who wasn't in the "in" crowd. In fact, she was from the crowd that Jews didn't want to be associated with. Jesus crossed over all the social barriers, and had a conversation with her about who he was, and what he already knew about her life. The Samaritan woman had five husbands, and at that time was living with someone who wasn't even her husband. However, Jesus extended his love and grace and offered her "living water"—himself.

I absolutely love what happens next in this story. The Samaritan woman goes back to town and shares her encounter with Jesus with her community. Then she invites them to go meet him. Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony: "He told me everything I ever did" (John 4:39). They became followers of Jesus because this woman shared her story with them.

This story encourages us to share our own Jesus encounter with others, even people whose lives are different than ours. Maybe you have been thinking about sharing your story with a certain person, but have some fears about it. Does it feel like you will be crossing a social barrier to reach out to certain classmates? Remember that Jesus is with you. You can do it! Ask him to help you, and watch what he will do.

**Scripture: John 4:39-42**

**Alise Merrow  
First Church of God  
St Joseph, MI**

## 8. The Heart Surgeon

My dad, who is 79 years old, recently went to the doctor because of some poison ivy. Through the process of solving the poison ivy issue, they discovered a much more serious problem. My dad's heart was really messed up. One artery was completely blocked, and others partially clogged. They quickly scheduled a surgery and before long we were all anxiously awaiting the results. It was pretty scary to know a surgeon was cutting open his chest and patching up the problem with arteries taken from his legs.

Finally, the surgeon came out and gave my family the news that the triple bypass was a success. Relief, joy, thankfulness! We expressed our gratitude, and the surgeon responded with a big smile. He knew exactly how many heart surgeries he had performed (over 8,000) and stated he still gets excited about every heart he has a chance to heal.

I sense our God, the great physician, has that same attitude toward people with hearts that need spiritual healing. So many people wander through life unaware of their life-threatening heart issue. They have hardened spiritual heart; the life blood of Jesus is blocked from their hearts; and they don't even know they need surgery. Jesus cares for these people. Scripture tells us that Jesus intentionally hung out with "sick" people. Look how Jesus responded to the Pharisees when they questioned him about associating with the tax collector Matthew.

Do you avoid hanging out with "sick" people, afraid you might catch their disease? What would Jesus have you do? Who do you know that needs a spiritual cure? What will you do to introduce them to Jesus, the great heart surgeon?

**Scripture: Matthew 9:9-13**

**Chris Spitters  
Student Ministry Pastor  
St Joseph, MI**

## 9. Just Keep Steppin'

In my youth, I brought many friends to church with me. One girl really seemed to get it; she continued coming for a few years and ended up bringing some of her own friends to church. Eventually, she through some tough times and fell away from the church, but one of her friends continued to attend. Eventually, that friend felt a call to ministry and pursued that call to study youth ministry. How could this odd, intricate plan have unfolded the way it did, other than by the design of God?

As Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” Notice that the psalmist compares God’s Word to a lamp that guides our feet along the path, not a big spotlight on our final destination. It only illuminates the next step in the path, but if we step in faith, God will reveal the next bit of the path to allow us to keep stepping in faith as God’s Word guides us.

Don’t lose faith if things don’t look like you think they should. By God’s design, we can’t see the whole plan. Just trust and obey, knowing that each step you take will keep you in line with God’s purpose to take you right where God wants you.

**Scripture: Psalm 119:97–105**

**Evan Cottle  
Student Ministry Intern**

## 10. Sin

Are there secret sins in your life? Numbers 32:23 reminds us that “our sins will find us out.” Not “may” find us out or “could” find us out—they *will* find us out.

My mom used to tell me in high school that if I did anything wrong, she would find out. And she was right. She always seemed to have a way of discovering when I got into trouble.

This is even more true of God. He loves us and knows that sin is extremely harmful to us. So God wants us to “come clean” for our own protection and to help us obtain true life (see 1 Tim. 6:19).

Often a student shares with me how they got caught doing something that they thought no one would ever know. Like a fake Facebook account where they posted inappropriate things, an addiction to pornography, or gossiping about others.

Jesus came to shine light in our darkness, and when we try to keep those kinds of things hidden, we hinder his work in us. Any private sin in our life never gets better, but festers the more it is hidden. On the other hand, if we will confess our faults one to another and to the Lord, we will be healed (James 5:16). We will be healed because we get it out into the light of the day where God can deal openly with it.

Check out Proverbs 28:1 and put it in your own words. Then read Colossians 3:5–9 and do an inventory of your life. Which of these sins do you need to confess?

**Scripture: Colossians 3:1–10**

**Mark Shaner  
Eastside CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 11. The Path

What a summer! As I wrapped up my summer internship with the First Church of God in Saint Joseph, MI, I could not help but reflect on the road that God had placed me on. Working as the intern for the Benton Heights campus, and having just accepted Christ into my life two summers previous, how could I have an impact on the youth? I mean, I was out of culture, out of style, and out of intelligence. But apparently, I was not out of influence!

Immediately after being hired on as part of the core staff at the church, I began praying that God would use me to direct souls into his Kingdom. I trusted God for the salvations of six attendees of the youth group, and that they would come to Christ that very summer and use their testimonies to impact their families, friends, and even unreached people. At first, it seemed to be a lost cause. Maybe I wasn't an adequate teacher. Maybe I was not in the right place. Maybe someone else would be better. After countless hours of praying and wrestling with God, I knew what the problem was: I was relying on myself for their salvation and not trusting in the grace and sufficiency of Jesus Christ.

Immediately after surrendering the youth group back to the Lord, they began to commit their lives to Christ. One after another, after another, after another, until eventually six young people were won for Christ and still more.

Do you believe that where God guides, he will provide? What if the road that he has chosen does not match up with your desired destination? Will you still follow?

Pray, listen, and follow. The Lord knows what is best for you. Take a step of faith today and ask the Lord to show you his way.

**Scripture: Proverbs 16:3, 9**

**Colt Slack  
Student Ministry Intern  
First Church of God  
St Joseph, MI  
(Benton Heights campus)**

## 12. Planting the Seed

When Devlin was in high school, his mother was diagnosed cancer. He literally watched her die, and became angry with God. After time, he became an atheist..

While Devlin was in college, he met a girl named Nora. Nora was a youth ministry major at a college not too far away. As their friendship began to take root, they had several conversations via Facebook debating whether or not God was real. Those conversations would get so heated that Nora would have to leave Facebook occasionally, and just agree to disagree. After a few days passed, they would chat again.

Once Devlin entered into a relationship with a girl who was also an atheist, Nora and Devlin lost contact with one another, but Nora began to pray for him. After almost two years, he contacted her out of the blue via Facebook chat. Devlin told her that he had finally received confirmation that God does exist and he was trying to straighten up his life. He apologized for some of the things he had said, and thanked her for speaking the truth even when all he wanted to do was argue.

Don't be afraid to speak truth into someone's life, even when they think you're crazy. As God's disciples, we are called to speak the truth, and be obedient when he calls us to speak to others. You may never see the fruits of your labor like Nora did, but don't share the truth of Christ in hopes of receiving affirmation. Just love others and share the truth without expecting anything in return.

**Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:6-9**

**Kim**

## 13. The Power of Prayer

At one time in my life, I felt purposeless. I wanted to do more in order to fit into God's grand plan. I didn't realize that I was about to serve an amazing part in it.

As a camp counselor in Indiana, God blessed me with the most amazing group of girls. Each one of them held unique personalities that balanced each other out in a harmonious way. One girl, however, seemed out of step with the others. Her name was Jordan and all she did was cry. Day in and day out, she continued to cry. I asked her a few times if there was anything I could do. She said no.

On the fourth day of camp, when we had our worship service, she began to sob again. I pulled her to the side and asked what was troubling her. She began to share that she was crying for some friends who were struggling with relationships and conflicts at home. I asked her if I could pray over her. She appeared to be stunned, but shook her head yes.

I prayed for God to heal Jordan's heart so she could encourage and comfort her friends. I prayed for her to feel God's presence and love in their troublesome situations. Soon afterward, camp ended and we said our goodbyes.

About 3 months later, I received a message from Jordan. She told me she wanted to commit her life to Jesus and be baptized. She said she had made this decision the night I prayed for her. She had never felt God's love as she did that day, and decided she wanted to be a part of something like this.

Prayer is a powerful thing and sometimes we forget the impact it makes. When a friend comes to us with a problem, it's easy to say, "I will pray for you." But do we follow through? Sometimes, friends who don't have a deep relationship with Christ ask us to pray about their problems, when they really need to surrender their lives to the Lord.

I challenge you to offer prayer for a friend the next chance you get, whether that person is a Christian or not. Don't give them a "prayer I.O.U.," but pray for them right then and there. It can make a difference without your even knowing.

**Scripture: Colossians 4:2-6**

**Meghan Hines**

## 14. Hearing and Responding

Heidi Cox was listening. She had recently quit coaching because she felt that God had something else in mind for her to do. One day, during the Focus 40 fast in April of 2011, she heard God calling her to direct a Vacation Bible School—not on church grounds, but in her local community.

She knew that Jim Nipp, a man in the church, owned a vacant building in one of the poorer areas of town. Soon after, he showed up at Heidi's small group meeting—a group he had never attended before—which confirmed to Heidi that she ought to do this. Almost immediately, plans for the VBS were underway.

Heidi was amazed at the number of people who approached her, asking how they could help. The result was a weeklong VBS, culminating with a “block party” style cookout, clothing and backpack distribution, and a simple presentation of the gospel to children and their families.

God is calling each of us to reach out with the love of Christ. Are you listening? How will you respond?

**Scripture: Romans 10:13–15**

**Tami Byrd  
Associate Pastor  
South Memorial Drive CHOG  
New Castle, IN**

## 15. No Salt

Have you ever tasted a French fry without salt on it? Or imagine the taste of an unsalted pretzel. I bought some cashews once and mistakenly got the “salt-free” kind. Nasty! Some food just does not taste right without salt.

Christ followers have a lot in common with peanuts and pretzels. We need to be salty! Jesus says we are called the “salt and light” of the world.

We know the grace and forgiveness God has given us through his Son Jesus. This gives us great joy. We should not hide it, but share it with everyone who’s willing to listen.

Today, spread your “salt” so that others may experience God’s forgiveness in their own life. Be ready to shake some “salt” on people around you, bringing the flavor of Christ to their lives.

Who is it in your life who does not know that Jesus loves them unconditionally? Ask God to give you the courage and opportunity to share his love with them.

**Scripture: Matthew 5:13–16**

**Josh Canfield  
Ministry Intern  
Eastside CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 16. When We Fail Christ

When was the last time you shared your faith with someone? Was it on a street corner, with a bullhorn and tracts? Or was it while you were in line at Target?

Jesus tells us in John 13:35 that people will know that we are disciples by the way we treat each other. The greatest commandment includes loving God *and* loving other people. Our faith should be such a fundamental part of our lives that we express it in our everyday actions.

Craig was out doing some last-minute Christmas shopping with his family. After circling the parking lot for 20 or 30 minutes, he finally saw an open spot. He raced toward it, only to be beat by another car. He honked, yelled out the window, and created quite a scene.

Craig made several more circles around the parking lot before he found another, less appealing spot, and parked there. He and his family went into the store. Who should be at the exit but the same guy he had just assailed in the parking lot. This gentleman approached Craig and his family, extended a hand, and told him that he seemed to have a lot of anger. He then began to share his faith with Craig and explained that, with God's help, he could release that anger and be much more fulfilled in life.

Embarrassed, Craig had to admit that he was pastor of a local church.

Sometimes life gets the best of us and we lose sight of what God has called us to be. So often we emphasize having "outreach events" when evangelism needs to start right where we live. When we share the fruit of the Spirit with the people around us—at the grocery store, the mall, the bank, or even on the road while driving—our faith is convincing.

**Scriptures: Matthew 22:36–40; James 2:8**

**Mandie Marine  
Student Ministry Intern  
First Church of God  
St Joseph, MI**

## 17. If David Can Do It, Anyone Can

David was a typical middle schooler. He liked hanging out with his friends, playing soccer (even though he wasn't very good at it), and being a part of my church's student ministry. When he first heard about the 360 Revolution at church, he decided to take the challenge. He simply thought he was being challenged to care about his friends like Jesus.

Most of David's friends were on his soccer team, so he put down the names of some of the guys on his team on the list and invited them to the student ministry. They really enjoyed coming, and several months later a few of them accepted Christ and were baptized. Then they invited some of their friends. Before long, they had a carpool of soccer kids from the neighborhood going to church each week.

A few years later, David's family had to move out of state. On his last night at church, his youth group prayed for him. The group leader asked anyone whom David had invited to the student ministry to stand up. A few of his friends from the soccer team stood.

Then the leader asked anyone else who had been invited by them to stand as well. Several more students stood. Then the leader asked others to stand who had been invited by that group of students. Amazingly, more than sixty students were standing.

More than sixty students were coming to our church—and some were now believers—because one middle schooler decided to care about his friends like Jesus. If David can do it, anyone can do it.

**Scriptures: Romans 8:28, 31–32**

**Chip**

## 18. Listening to the Wise

I remember a particular camping trip when I was a member of Boy Scouting. A group of us were young and wanted to try our hand at fishing—many of us for the first time. One of the adult leaders came along and offered show us how to properly tie our hooks onto our lines and bait them. I arrogantly declined, believing I could tie the knot myself.

It was a long day on the lake—especially for me, as I lost several hooks and caught no fish. On our way back to our campsite, the adult leader said that he had been watching me. He also admitted that he had made the same mistakes in his youth. How easy would it have been for me to take the advice of one who had learned from such experiences!

Learning never ends. We don't cap our wisdom when we reach a certain age. The writer of Proverbs reminds us never to forget the wisdom of those who have sat and talked with God. We need to apply their knowledge to our own lives so that we may continue to be effective followers of the Lord.

Think about an individual within your church or community who has taken a walk with God much longer than your own. Ask this person to mentor you and pour their wisdom into your life.

If you already have such mentors, thank God for providing wisdom through such special individuals. Finally, ask God to help open your own heart to others younger than you, who are looking to grow in Christ. Be intentional about these relationships and ask God to help you lead them in their walk with Christ.

**Scripture: Proverbs 22:17-21**

**Charlie Holcomb**

## 19. Making a Difference

Have you ever wondered if what you were doing even mattered? Have you ever asked yourself why you put so much effort into things, even though it doesn't seem to make a difference? That's how I felt for most of my high school years when it came to my 360 friends. I tried and tried and prayed like crazy, but nothing seemed to move them toward a relationship with Christ. I felt like I was letting God down.

I didn't start to see God work in the lives of my friends until much later. One of my friends, Zack, began serving God five years after I began praying and sharing Christ with him. Another friend, Bryan, started searching out his relationship with God just a year ago and began to ask questions about what it meant to be a Christ follower. I am now graduated from college and Zack is following God with his whole heart. Bryan is still asking great questions and recently started reading a book about Christian leadership with me.

That's how God has shown me the power of my 360 journey. He has proven that his timing is amazing and that he eventually will honor our perseverance.

Think about your journey with your 360 friends. In what ways has God shown himself to be completely in control of this relationship, and that his timing is much better than yours?

What long-term goals or visions do you feel God has given you for your 360 friends? List these, first for your 360 friends as a group and then specifically for individuals in your 360 group.

**Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-19**

**Cody Bracey**

## 20. What to Say

I'll never forget the first time I helped someone come to know Jesus. I was in high school, and Lois was a friend who sang with me in choir. I don't recall having any conversations with her about God, religion, Jesus, anything like that. She knew I was a follower of Jesus, but I don't recall being very intentional about approaching her on the issue.

One day, she just asked if we could talk. We found a private spot, sitting on the floor in a music practice room. She just came right out and said, "I know you're a Christian, and I want to know how I can be one too."

Just then I wished I had spent a little more time memorizing Scripture so I could be prepared! I didn't know what to say. So I prayed, and then just started talking. A crazy thing happened. My nervousness left me, my mind cleared, and I just spoke with a confidence that was not my own. Suddenly, I recalled some Scriptures I had read and experienced, and I began sharing them with her. Later I came across Luke 12:11–12, which confirmed for me what had happened that day.

Knowing that the Spirit's got my back gives me great confidence, no matter what situation I am in! Scripture does tell us to "always be prepared to give an answer for the hope you profess" (1 Pet. 3:15). But isn't great to know that the Holy Spirit will give us the right words when we need them?

So Lois and I talked for about an hour, we prayed, and she became a Jesus follower. Nothing I had ever experienced compared to the joy of introducing my friend to Jesus! Do you know that joy?

**Scripture: Luke 12:11–12**

**Chris Spitters  
Student Ministry Pastor  
St Joseph, MI**

## 21. How They Will Know

One of the hardest things I've had to do since becoming a Christian is witness to my family. At times, I have felt like an alien in my own home. I remember asking my Christian friends, "What should I do? My parents don't want to hear anything about God or the Bible from me."

Finally, I realized that the best way I could show the love of Christ to my family was by living an authentic faith, showing the love of Christ in every moment and every interaction.

In John 13:34–35, Jesus instructs his disciples to love one another as he loved them. He says, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." So many times, the best way we can show our faith to those closest to us is by living out the love that Jesus has poured into our hearts.

We do need to pray for them, and we do need to take every opportunity to talk with them about Christ. But those closest to us are watching our lives. Let's show our relationship with Christ through our actions. If we let his light shine through us, all will see.

**Scripture: John 15:9–17**

**Erica Hartley  
Ministry Intern  
South Memorial Drive CHOG  
New Castle, IN**

## 22. Influencing Others

I sat in a school cafeteria, listening to a group talk about the Cub Scout program. My son was interested in starting along the Scouting trail. The speaker challenged the parents about stepping up to be a Scout leader. I decided it would be a good opportunity to have some fun with my son, so I became a den leader for Pack 915. Both my son and I walked home that night having joined the Boy Scouts of America program.

Fast forward to today. I am still a leader with the Cub Scout Pack. Here is the really cool part: It's given me the opportunity to influence a number of people who were living far from God. Mike was one of those guys.

One day, as Mike and I waited for a Scout program to start, we chatted about our everyday lives, just small talk. At some point, the discussion came around to our jobs, so I shared I was a student ministry pastor. Mike said that he and his family were looking for a church to attend, so I invited Mike to church the next day. I never imagined that he would show up, but there he was. It was incredible! Guess what happened next? Mike received Christ! And so did his family!

If you would have told me that my involvement in Scouting would be a way to lead people to Jesus, I would have not believed it. Watching Jesus completely transform people's lives is AWESOME!!!

Here are a few challenges to consider:

Get involved in something where you can have influence on people who are far from God. Consider how your involvement could lead them to Christ.

Be transparent about your faith in Jesus and the change Jesus has made in you. Your story might connect to theirs.

Be a friend. Get to know people around you who are living far from God. Listen to their life stories. Give a shoulder to cry on when there are bad times. Celebrate with them in the good times. Christ may use your friendship to reach them.

**Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:12-14**

**R.W. Moody, Jr.**

## 23. The Provider

It's one thing to obey God when you have what you need. It's easy to start a trip when your gas tank is full. But what if God calls you to move before you have the resources? What if you have to drive on empty?

There I sat at my volunteer recruiting meeting. Alone. The only sound came from the clock that seemed to count down the inevitable death of my dream. *Great. Launching an inner city youth ministry alone. I've always wondered what a nervous breakdown felt like.*

Then came a voice came so clear that I jumped: "Who do you think I am?" It was God, of course. I then realized how foolish it was to question his capability. His ways are above my ways and his provision is infinite. Promises of his provision shot through my head: Matthew 6:31-34, 2 Corinthians 5:7 and Deuteronomy 31:6.

I was thinking with a man's mind, blinded by the need I saw. God had to remind me of the provisions he already possessed. Then I could move forward.

By the end of the week, I had more volunteers than I could use. I had to figure out ways to deal with excess volunteers and money. The flip from scrounging to managing was exhilarating.

Don't trust God because he will provide; trust him because he is God, even when you are driving on "empty."

**Scripture: Isaiah 55:8-9**

**Caleb Weeks  
Student Ministry Intern  
St Joseph, MI**

## 24. Obedience

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus told his disciples, “I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. Come now; let us leave” (John 14:30–31).

The images in this verse are powerful and overwhelming. “The prince of this world...has no hold on me.” Can you imagine living in such a way that the things of this world have no hold on you? “No hold”—Is that possible? Is it possible for the latest video game, the latest fashion, the latest fad, the next temptation, the next desire, not to have any hold on you? Wouldn’t that be an awesome way to live, not bound by anything on earth?

As if that is not enough, Jesus says, “The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.” Jesus does “exactly” what the Father commands? Wouldn’t that be a liberating way to live?

I have had moments when I felt the world had no hold on me and I was doing exactly what God wanted me to do—and I have those moments when I was not. What is the secret? What makes the difference?

The secret to living a life unbound by the things of this world is found in the first eight verses of the next chapter. Read them for yourself and let the truth sink in.

**Scripture: John 15:1–8**

**Mark Shaner  
Eastside CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 25. Impossible to Reach

It feels great to know that God is calling us to something—until it's something we know is impossible. Then, it's scary, intimidating, and uncomfortable.

At the International Youth Convention in Anaheim, I was exposed to the 360 Revolution. Of all of the people in the world I might reach, God put my own father on my heart. He and my mom divorced when I was young. There was infidelity, lying, verbal abuse, and countless other things. If there was one man I knew God couldn't reach, it was my dad.

But God called me to share Jesus Christ with him, so I tried to be hopeful and obedient. I prayed for my dad constantly. I began calling him more often just to show I cared how he was doing. I tried to see him more often. But discouragement settled in as one year passed, and another, and another. My senior year, I decided to take a huge risk on my birthday and tell him that all I wanted was for him to come to church with me. Everything in me expected an, “I don't think so.” He said yes, though! God brought him to church that Sunday and just about every Sunday since then.

God is faithful. He doesn't work according to our timing. He prepares hearts and brings them to his throne when it's the perfect time.

Has God called you to reach someone that you feel is impossible to reach? Have you been discouraged by the lack of progress you have seen? Remember what the apostle Paul told his Christian friends in Galatia: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Gal. 6:9).

**Scripture: Galatians 6:1**

**Kristi Knight  
Student Ministry Intern  
Madison Park CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 26. Remember

I was an avid street-hockey player growing up, and in my own mind I was pretty good. Once when I was in elementary school, I was out playing hockey with some friends when I stole the puck and began powering toward the opposing goal. As I approached the net, my little brother skated into my path. Rather than stop, I jumped over him!

Does that sound a bit farfetched? In reality it is. If you were to ask my dad, he would tell you that I didn't jump over my brother, but fell over him—doing a flip in the air and landing flat on my back. But my memory tends to edit the facts somewhat.

The tendency to distort the past in our own favor has many parallels in the story of Israel. God repeatedly delivered them from their enemies, but they soon forgot that. They liked to think their success was due to their own skill and achievement. They thought they could take care of themselves, so they began to rely on themselves. Then a stronger adversary would confront them and they would have to learn how to depend on God all over again. He had to remind them of his promises and the miraculous ways he had delivered them in the past.

We find in Scripture many references to remembering what God has done. As God prepared to lead his people into the Promised Land, what did he say about remembering? (See Deut. 4:1–14.) What did he want them to remember?

Joshua 4:1–7 describes their situation after 40 years of wondering in the desert. Moses has passed on the leadership role to Joshua, who is finally leading them into the Promised Land. Why was it important for them to remember again how God had provided? Why was it important to tell others how God had provided?

What are some ways God has provided health, safety, and deliverance in your life? How can you remind yourself and others around you of God's faithfulness?

**Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4–9**

**Preston Kegley  
Dir. of Student Outreach  
Eastside CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 27. Zero Focus

Making a 360 list has always been difficult for me. Not because I don't want to or don't think it's necessary, but because I have always grown up around church people. All my friends went to church and I was only involved in church activities. So when I was supposed to identify three unbelieving friends, I drew a blank. I felt bad that I could not identify three "lost" friends, and thought I could not participate in the 360 Revolution.

A wise friend helped me realize there was more to it. I was so focused on the 3 that I forgot about the 6 and the 0. I could still pray 6 times a week that God would show me who he wanted me to share my faith with. I could still miss 0 opportunities to show God's love to everyone that I encountered. I was so distracted by the task of identifying the 3 that I missed real opportunities to share Christ with others.

I challenge you to live a life of missing 0 opportunities. No matter who you meet or where you are, let the love of Christ shine through you.

**Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16**

**Zach Shaner**

## 28. Neighborhood Evangelism

In August 2007, my family moved from the Midwest to the state of Texas, to a new city where we only knew a handful of people. We had purchased a home that we had seen once. We knew very little about the neighborhood, and even less about our neighbors.

That first day was a memorable one for sure. We had started driving from New Albany, Indiana, early that morning and did not arrive in Houston until 10:30 P.M. Tired from a long road trip, my family emptied what we needed from the vehicle and crashed in the living room. The next day, we got up to head to Wal-Mart for supplies. Walking out our front door to get into the car, we were approached by a neighbor from across the street. He kindly introduced himself and welcomed us to the neighborhood. This was the beginning of a great relationship with our neighbor Bob. Soon after meeting Bob, we were introduced to other neighbors on the block.

Over the years, our relationships with our neighbors have become some of the warmest that my family has experienced. We shared life with each other after Hurricane Ike left us powerless. We have held neighborhood parties together. We have watched each other's homes and dogs when someone was out of town on vacation. The best part of it has been that, as a family, we have been able to share Jesus Christ with neighbors who are living far from God.

So where do you live? Do you know for certain that everybody on your street knows Jesus? Is it possible that some of your neighbors are living far from God? There might be a big mission field right across the street from where you live.

How do you start reaching them? Here are some things to consider:

Meet your neighbors and get to know their names. Get to know about their families. Get to know about their interests. Leave your house and meet them.

Take a walk around your neighborhood and pray for your neighbors. You might not know all that is going on in their lives, but you can still pray generally for them.

Make an investment in the lives of those neighbors. You might help out with simple tasks, or just sit and listen to them.

Share everyday life. The more that you get to know your neighbors, the more you will be able to do this. When you share your life, talk about your friend Jesus.

Imagine what would happen if you started being intentional about reaching your neighbors for Jesus Christ.

**Scripture: Luke 1:57-58**

**R.W. Moody, Jr.**

## 29. Becoming Disciples

Recently, I heard a sermon series at my church on becoming a disciple of Christ. Our pastor shared many Scripture texts and stories that illustrated the characteristics of a disciple, but one in particular pulled at my heartstrings: *A disciple of Jesus touches lepers*.

Mark 1:40–42 says, “A man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man... Immediately, the leprosy left him and he was cured.”

Touching lepers is definitely out of my comfort zone. This disease attacks the central nervous system. It ruins the skin tissue and eliminates any feeling in the outer extremities such as arms, legs, fingers, and toes. It grows progressively worse, eventually ending in death. In New Testament times, a law required any leper entering a village, town, or city to announce themselves by chanting, “Unclean! Unclean!” People were extremely worried about contracting this disease.

Who are the lepers of the twenty-first century? Many faces come to mind: the girl who eats lunch alone because no one wants to eat with her, the neighbor no one ever goes to visit, the boss everyone dislikes, even people at church who are not very well-dressed. What if I am the only person who actually cares for them? What if they have only you to show them the love of Christ?

Disciples touch, spend time with, care for, and love lepers. I challenge you to reach out to the unlovely people around you and make an impact in their lives.

**Scripture: Luke 14:25–28**

**Tyler Williams**

## 30. 360-Degree Vision

Kaley is a girl in our high-school student ministry. Just yesterday, she sent me a Facebook message with exciting news. She has taken on the 360 Revolution challenge, but with a slightly different angle. She is going to take the blinders off of her spiritual eyes and look for people all around her (360 degrees) all day long, and pray for them.

So as she entered Wal-Mart she prayed for a sad woman sitting on the bench outside. Just a brief prayer, then she was off to do her shopping. When she left the store with bags in hand, God drew her attention back to this woman on the bench. So Kaley asked the woman if she could pray for her. (You can imagine the surprise on the woman's face.) Kaley had an opportunity to pray for that woman to find a new job and obtain the food she needed.

Kaley has developed 360-degree vision. God is training her eyes to see people who were invisible before. Her eyes are being opened by the Holy Spirit. Doesn't it make you wonder who you would begin to notice and pray for, if you had 360-degree vision?

**Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-4**

**Chris Spitters  
Student Ministry Pastor  
First Church of God  
St Joseph, MI**

## 31. Follow Through

God is speaking to us all day long, every day. It happens while we are at school, walking the halls, practicing for a sports team, or having lunch with friends. He speaks to us during our quiet time, while walking in the woods, or sitting in silence. We can decide to accept what God is saying to us, or we can simply say no.

Check out how two sons reacted to a command from their father (see Matt. 28:28–32). One son verbally said no, but later did what his father asked. The other son said yes, but never really got around to following through on his commitment. So who was the faithful son? The one who meant well but never followed through, or the one who spoke definitely but eventually obeyed?

At this time of year, we remember Christ dying on the cross to give us life. Aren't you glad that Jesus was a faithful son, willing to do everything his father asked of him? If Christ was willing to die a painful death for us, why should we not be willing to glorify God by doing what he asks us to do?

What is God calling you to do? Are you going to obey him, even if his command seems difficult or even impossible? Will you respond in rebellion or obedience? Will you follow through on your commitments to God?

**Scripture: Philippians 2:5–8**

**Josh Canfield  
Ministry Intern  
Eastside CHOG  
Anderson, IN**

## 32. Becoming Like Children

Do you remember when you knew adults simply as “grown-ups” and believed that their world was far bigger and more complex than your own?

Interestingly, when the disciples come to Jesus and asked who would be the greatest in heaven, Jesus asked a child to stand before them. He then told his followers that, even to set foot within the Kingdom, all of them must change and become like the little one.

None of us should forget two particular characteristics of children.

First, notice that Jesus says, “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” This speaks to not only to a child’s humility, but to the fragile innocence inherent to children and their awe-filled view of the world. Like children, we should never cease asking questions and striving to learn about our heavenly Father. We need to continuously lean on Him, acknowledging him in all things.

Second, children make joy a priority. They leave the heavy things to the more wise and able, while they seek enjoyment and peace of mind. They enjoy life, regardless of how undignified they may appear.

Search for two simple ways you can become more like a child. Thank God for being so loving and for always finding joy in us, his children.

**Scripture: Matthew 18:10–12**

**Charlie Holcomb**

### 33. “He Gets Us”

It’s disappointing to be misunderstood. We try with the greatest of sincerity to communicate, only to look into the eyes of our listener and know that we are not connecting. The opposite is equally true. There is great joy in having a conversation with someone who “gets it.” Intimacy comes with true communication, and pain when our words fall on deaf ears. Others may stare at us with blank expressions, God looks upon us with compassion, grace and understanding.

Two travelers were walking down a country road, sharing the grief of recent days. A stranger comes along and inquires why they seem so sad, to which they ask, “Have you been living under a rock?” They believed everyone knew of their pain, and they were appalled by the man’s ignorance. The stranger walked alongside them and listened as they shared the joys of the past three years, followed by the agony of losing their closest friend in a series of horrible events. Having felt the man’s compassion, the pair invited the stranger to join them for the night. That night would change their lives forever. They found a friend who listened, who understood, and who promised to walk the roads of life with them.

We can trust that God “gets us.” He alone is able to fully comprehend what we are saying. Because he knows us like a painter knows his art, we can know the joy of being understood. So start the conversation. Invite him to stay with you and never again journey alone.

**Scripture: Luke 24:13–35**

**Harold Bradshaw**

## 34. Just Keep Swimming

In the Pixar movie “Finding Nemo,” a great scene takes place during Marlin and Dory’s quest to find Nemo. A diving mask with the potential address of Nemo’s location written on it has fallen to the deepest, darkest part of the ocean. They can’t see it. They can’t see anything. They just know that the mask is down there somewhere, and it is crucial to the success of their journey.

During this time, Dory sings to the depressed Marlin, “When life gets you down, you know what you gotta do? Just keep swimming.” She then proceeds to take Marlin by the fin and start their journey down to the bottom of the ocean together.

At the bottom of the ocean, they are chased by a frightening fish with gigantic teeth. But as they try to swim away from this scary fish, they locate the diver’s mask and continue their quest to find Nemo.

While we probably won’t have a frightening fish trying to devour us, we do have an enemy whose entire purpose is to “steal, kill, and destroy.” The epistle to the Hebrews instructs what we are to do at such times. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1–2).

Dory was onto something. When life gets you down, just keep swimming with perseverance the race that the Lord has marked out for you, being sure to keep your eyes permanently fixed on Jesus.

**Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:16–18**

**Adam Rentas**

## 35. God Is Love

Last summer I was in downtown Denver, the site of next year's International Youth Convention, at a planning meeting. As we ventured down the main strip for lunch one afternoon, we discovered there was a gay pride parade going on. I had never felt so uncomfortable. I was disturbed not only by the cross-dressers and flashers, the loud shouts and cursing, but by the fact that almost everyone was under the influence of something intoxicating. Not once did I try to see these people as God's creation.

In retrospect, this really shook me up. I say that I love everyone, but I couldn't even look these people in the eye. I was not allowing Christ's love to shine through me, and I was disappointed in myself. First John 4:21 came to mind: "If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God that he can't see? The command we have from God is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both" (*The Message*). I began praying for God to foster this Spirit of love within me, to stretch me out of my comfort zone once again.

A few weeks later I was in Anderson, Indiana, helping with a service project in a rough neighborhood. We were passing out block-party flyers door to door. At first, I was nervous, but then it occurred to me: Pray. So I did.

As we went door to door, I prayed for the families that lived there and the children riding their bikes down the street. Not everyone opened their door, but those that did were extremely friendly and loved to hear about the opportunity. I was amazed. I could love people that were different than me instead of fearing them and judging them. When my focus was on God, I had no reason to be afraid of them. I could see these people through God's eyes in a way that I had never done before.

A couple of days later, in downtown Indianapolis, I carried on conversations with complete strangers because I felt the Spirit calling me to talk to them. They were waiting for a bus to take them home after a long day at work. This daily routine of being surrounded by people but feeling alone was broken, because I took the time to show them that someone cared.

**Scripture: 1 John 4**

**Lainey Priddy**

## 36. Stalled on the Highway

My husband and I were traveling down the expressway to attend a family Thanksgiving celebration. There was a horrible snowstorm, and the cars had come to a stop. I began thinking that perhaps we should turn back. As traffic started moving again, the car ahead of us wouldn't start, and its hazard lights were not working. We talked with the driver and asked her to sit in our car until we could get help. It was very cold out, and we wanted to make sure she was warm. I'll call her "Sandi."

We were in the middle lane of the expressway, with snow coming down hard all around us, and it was pitch black out. I offered a quick silent prayer to God: "Lord, please protect us."

We called a towing company for help, but they couldn't hear us clearly on the cell phone and thought we were on a different expressway. We then called the police, and they said they would send a tow truck. We just sat, and waited and waited some more. I wondered what was taking so long. I also was afraid that someone might not see us and hit us on the expressway.

Sandi was in the backseat, and she started to cry. I asked her what was wrong. She said that she was in the process of putting her mother into a nursing home, and her brother had just had surgery. She was returning from visiting him in the hospital.

I asked if she knew Jesus, and she replied, "No." I asked if she wanted to. "Yes," she said. Sandi prayed and asked Jesus to come into her heart that night in the car, in the middle lane of I-94 with cars buzzing around us on both sides.

God used a broken-down car in the middle of the expressway and a snowstorm to reach and save his daughter. I now understood why we had to wait so long for help to arrive. God can use any circumstance to reach people.

**Scripture: Acts 8:26-40**

**Alise Merrow  
First Church of God  
St Joseph, MI**

## 37. God's Workmanship

Ephesians 2:10 says that we are “God’s workmanship”—i.e., we are his Masterpiece. I often find it hard to believe. How can I be a masterpiece of God? I’m full of sin and spiritual ugliness, so I don’t know how this is possible.

In fact, Satan is not God’s worst enemy. We are. We hinder God’s work in our lives whenever we are convinced that we are no-good screw-ups, that God can’t love us, or (my least favorite) that we are alone.

At the 2008 International Youth Convention in San Antonio, I heard an interesting story that reflects our dilemma. One of our conference leaders had visited a local zoo, where he came upon the impala exhibit. Impalas are grazing animals that live in the African desert. They are typically between 2.5 and 3 feet tall. The guide at the zoo said, “Impalas can jump 10 feet high from a complete standstill and 30 feet long in a single bound.”

Hearing this, our leader glanced over at the fence holding in the animals. It was no higher than 5 feet. He asked the guide, “Based on what you’ve told us, why don’t these impalas jump right out of their pen?”

The guide answered, “Because, from the time of their birth, they are trained that they cannot.”

Wow! A zoo pen is all these impalas have to look forward too. Unfortunately, we share a similar fate when we allow the lies of Satan to cloud our minds and twist our perception of who we are in Christ.

As you continue in your quiet time with God, take a deep breath and clear your mind in order to truly listen to God. Allow him to tell you who you really are—his “workmanship.” Explore your Bible for more passages about your identity in Christ, and let those passages empower you.

**Scripture: Ephesians 2:8–10**

**Tyler Williams**

## 38. Living on the Edge

Suppose you're rafting merrily down a river, enjoying the scenery and daydreaming. The problem is that you're headed for a waterfall that will, once you land on the rocks below, leave you and your raft looking like you've been dropped from a skyscraper.

Some people on the shore can see you're headed for trouble. Unfortunately, they're too busy picnicking and playing Frisbee with their dog to interrupt their good time and let you know that you are about to cover a considerable vertical distance in a remarkably brief period of time. As you go over the edge, the last thing you think is, "It would have been really nice if someone had warned me this was coming!"

Let's apply this analogy to another situation.

Without Christ, the people we know are headed for trouble. The Bible calls this trouble *hell*—a situation that makes dropping off a waterfall seem trivial by comparison. What's our excuse if we don't try to guide them to safety?

**Scripture: Romans 1:18–20**

**Andy Stephenson**

## 39. Weakness = Strength

So many nonbelievers feel that they are no longer worthy of God's love. And sometimes Christians reinforce that image. Sometimes, in our effort to be good examples, we become judgmental and act as though Christians are perfect beings who never, are not currently, and never will do wrong.

Lately, God has been teaching me that vulnerability and honesty can bring healing in our lives and the lives of others. When we are honest about our struggles and shortcomings (and everyone has them), other people can relate to our story much better. I'm not saying that we need to sound depressing and overly critical of ourselves, but we ought to show how Christ's love has helped us through our struggles and given us hope that empowers us to go on. When we admit our weaknesses, Christ's strength can shine through our lives.

Colossians 1: 12-14 says, "He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins." We need to be intentional about communicating this truth to those around us. If we aren't, we are setting up a false image of ourselves.

Which is more important: offering the hope of Jesus Christ or appearing perfect to everyone around you? Which personal story can God use most effectively: a soul being reconciled to its Maker or a hypocrite trying to keep your shortcomings a secret?

We may feel more comfortable telling about the changes Christ made in our lives in the past than admitting there are things in our lives *at this very moment* that Christ needs to change. But we Christians are on a journey with Christ. The apostle Paul goes on to say, "Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault" (Col. 1: 22).

When we humble ourselves and submit to Christ, we can become effective instruments in his great reconciliation story.

**Scripture: Colossians 1**

**Lainey Priddy**

## 40. Our Spiritual Battle

The Bible says that we are in a spiritual battle. Ephesians 6:12–13 says, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

This scripture also tells us how to prepare for the battle. It says need to wield the weapon of prayer.

I challenge you—no, better yet, I dare you—to pray 6 days a week for 3 people who don’t know Jesus. Pray that you would have a chance to share his love. You will be amazed at what God does. I double dare you!

(P.S.—Don’t be discouraged if something doesn’t happen immediately. Sometimes it takes many faithful prayers over years to bring someone to Jesus. I prayed for over two years for a guy who was against any spiritual conversations. Finally, God opened up a window and...well. that’s another story for another day.)

**Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:3–5**

**Andy Stephenson**