

WEEK 2:

JESUS WORKS IN US

A grid of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 rows and 15 columns of lines.

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Looking Back: What did God teach you this past week as you read the daily devotions? What opportunities did you have to apply what you learned?

Looking Up: Play the video and consider the discussion questions together.

What are some reasons we might think we can't do things God calls all believers to do (serve in the church, share the gospel, etc.)? Have you ever felt that way?

Who is someone in the Bible whose weakness or failure encourages you? Explain.

Why are our weaknesses and inadequacies incapable of diminishing God's work in and through us?

Read Titus 1:1-3. In your own words, express Paul's understanding of God's purpose and his role in it.

Read Acts 2:36. What can we know for certain?

“God is so great and powerful that He preserves His promise even among the most sinful people and policies imaginable.” Does this mean we shouldn’t concern ourselves over sinful people and policies? What does it mean?

Read Romans 8:28. All things are not good, but all things work for good. Give an example of this from Scripture. Give an example of this from your life.

Read Philippians 1:6. What was Paul sure about? Outside of words, how can we know he was sure about that? Outside of words, how can people know you are sure about that?

Looking Forward: How will you take what you learned today and apply it to your life this week? Take a few minutes to plan your next meeting and spend some time in prayer together.

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DAY 1—READ ACTS 2:36

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

If you have ever read or watched a good mystery, you know you need to watch for clues to piece a solution together. But if it's really well done, you'll need a narrator (or the characters) to connect the dots for you at the end, revealing the clues you missed along the way. Reading Acts 2:29-35 we see this is what Peter did for the crowd of Jews listening. We might wonder how the crowd could have missed it. But in the moment, it wasn't so easy to connect the dots. Peter revealed that this plan of Jesus being Lord and Messiah had been in the works for a long time. He took them back through Scripture to show them what they had been missing.

As Peter connected the dots, many in the crowd recognized all the clues they had missed. They had seen Jesus as a criminal to be crucified; yet through His death and resurrection, God revealed Him as the Lord and Christ. Imagine hearing that the person you thought was the bad guy, the one you killed, was actually the Messiah that you and every generation of your family had been waiting for. Even though the Jews, the people of Israel, were God's chosen possession, they had so deeply misunderstood God that they rejected Him in Jesus.

We are all filled with our own biases, desires, and agendas. When we look at Jesus through those lenses, we miss Him and the gospel message completely. But when we look at our world through the lens of Scripture, we see God revealing who Jesus is and what He desires of us.

How does Acts 2:36 express our problem and God's promise?

What does it mean that Jesus is Lord and Christ? How should that change your life right now?

What are some things that might cloud our point of view about the work God has been doing throughout time and history?

Tell God about the things that sometimes cloud your view of Him. Ask Him to work on these things in your heart.

DAY 2—READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:20

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

We know from Old Testament history God has kept His promises to His people. We also know it from the examples and testimonies of people like Abraham (see Romans 4:20-22), Moses and Joshua (see Joshua 21:45), and Paul (see Titus 1:1-3; Philippians 1:6). But the very best evidence we have that we really can trust God to keep His promises is Jesus. We know God will keep His promises to us because He has proven Himself trustworthy through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Every one of God's promises in Scripture is fulfilled directly or indirectly in Christ. They have to be. There's not one other person in Scripture or even in the whole history of the world who could have rightly thought, "God can use me, because I am pretty great." We all have baggage. We all have messed up. Thinking in the pattern of today's verse, while the promises of God find their "yes" in Jesus, they are "no" when we try to bring them to fulfillment in our own power.

Thankfully, the fulfillment of God's promises are not ever actually up to us. They're not up to our goodness; they're up to God's goodness.

All of God's promises are "yes" to you in relationship with Jesus Christ. There is nothing He has promised that isn't "yes" to you in Jesus. Are you saying "yes" to His "yes"?

How does 2 Corinthians 1:20 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

What does it mean that Jesus is the "yes" of God's promises to you?

Read Ephesians 1:3-14. Think about God's promises to you in Christ. List what stands out to you as most encouraging in your current season of life.

Thank God for all the ways He has said "yes" to you in Jesus Christ. Confess any situations or thought processes where your answer to His "yes" has been "no." Ask Him to help you learn to not waver but to anchor in His unchangeable promises fulfilled in Jesus.

DAY 3—READ TITUS 1:1-3

¹ Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, ² in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began ³ and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior.

How do you typically introduce yourself to people? If you look through the New Testament letters, it is interesting to see how Paul greeted and introduced himself to his audiences. His letter to Titus is a great example. While identifying himself as God's servant for the sake of all believers, Paul didn't even end the first sentence before turning his attention to who God is and what He has promised.

We see that Paul only viewed himself in relationship to God and His promises. Nothing else mattered. His words and actions flowed from the hope of eternal life, understanding God has promised it and God never lies. That promise, God's age-old plan and purpose to save His people, was revealed in Christ. Like Paul, we can count on this promise, even anchoring our very identity in it.

Every indicative about who God is informs us about who we are and moves us to imperatives about how we should live. Because God never lies, faith in Him carries with it the promise of eternal life and the call to godly living. This is no less true for you than it was for the apostle Paul. In every generation God works in those who trust in Him to anchor themselves to His unchangeable promise and serve Him by proclaiming the truth and building up others who would trust in Him.

How does Titus 1:1-3 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

When people meet you, do they also quickly learn about the work Jesus has done and is doing in you? Why or why not?

How is the fact that God never lies crucial to carrying out the purposes He has entrusted to you?

Thank God that who He is defines and determines who you are and what you do in the world. Invite Him to help you depend fully on Him who promises eternal life and never lies.

DAY 4—READ PHILIPPIANS 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes people take this verse out of context and apply it to human plans and pursuits. For instance, we might encourage someone to stick to his or her job by saying, “He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it.” While that may serve as helpful motivation, Paul’s meaning was different.

The good work Paul referred to was the initial work of salvation in the lives of the Philippians, as well as in your life and mine. What is He faithful to complete? The process of salvation through sanctification as you grow and become more like Christ each day and, ultimately, through your glorification when you arrive in heaven one day. Paul put it another way when he wrote that God is at work changing us into the likeness of Christ “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

This is good news! God doesn’t quit in the middle of your sanctification. He doesn’t throw up His hands in disgust when you mess up and say, “That’s it. I’m done!” He doesn’t grow impatient when you don’t get it right away, and He doesn’t ever grow tired of teaching you. However, He does use difficult situations, experiences, and relationships in that process.

So Philippians 1:6 is a good reason to stick to it, just not for the reason you might have thought. The completion date isn’t the end of a project or a job or the positive outcome of any earthly circumstance—it’s the moment you enter heaven and stand before Jesus who has completed the work in you.

How does Philippians 1:6 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

How have you seen God change your heart to be more like Christ?

Do you easily become frustrated with yourself or fail to give yourself grace when you don't see the kind of growth you'd like to in your sanctification? How does knowing God won't give up on you change your thinking?

Thank God for the ways He has already made you more like Christ and for how He will continue to do so. Ask Him to continue His work in you until that day of glorification when you are in the presence of Jesus.

DAY 5—READ ROMANS 8:28-29

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

What in life is so important to you that you would operate under a “by any means necessary” mentality? Maybe you work long hours so that you can reach desired successful outcomes. Maybe you’ve experienced a difficult phase of parenting or marriage in which you were willing to do whatever it took to succeed. There are times in all our lives when we will choose to endure a difficult process because the end result is that we demonstrate we are who we say we are and who we set out to be. But what about our spiritual lives? Are we willing to endure a difficult process when we may not see the immediate result? What if the good that God is working together in our lives is something we won’t realize this side of heaven?

Sometimes people think about Romans 8:28 without also considering verse 29. If we do that, we can miss the point. The good that God is working all things together for in your life is defined in verse 29. It’s not to make you rich or to help you marry someone really good-looking. Simply put, His aim is to make you more like Jesus. So when you think about it all together like that, it means if you’re a believer, God will use any means necessary for spiritual growth to take place in your life. It’s that important to Him. In Christ, your good and His glory are one and the same.

How does Romans 8:28-29 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

Identify a "by any means necessary" experience that God used to show you His goodness. Would you say that experience has helped to conform you to the image of Christ? Why?

How does verse 29 help you persevere?

Thank God for His work on the cross that is the ultimate example of His unwavering love for you and continued faithfulness. Thank Him for using any means necessary to conform you into His image.