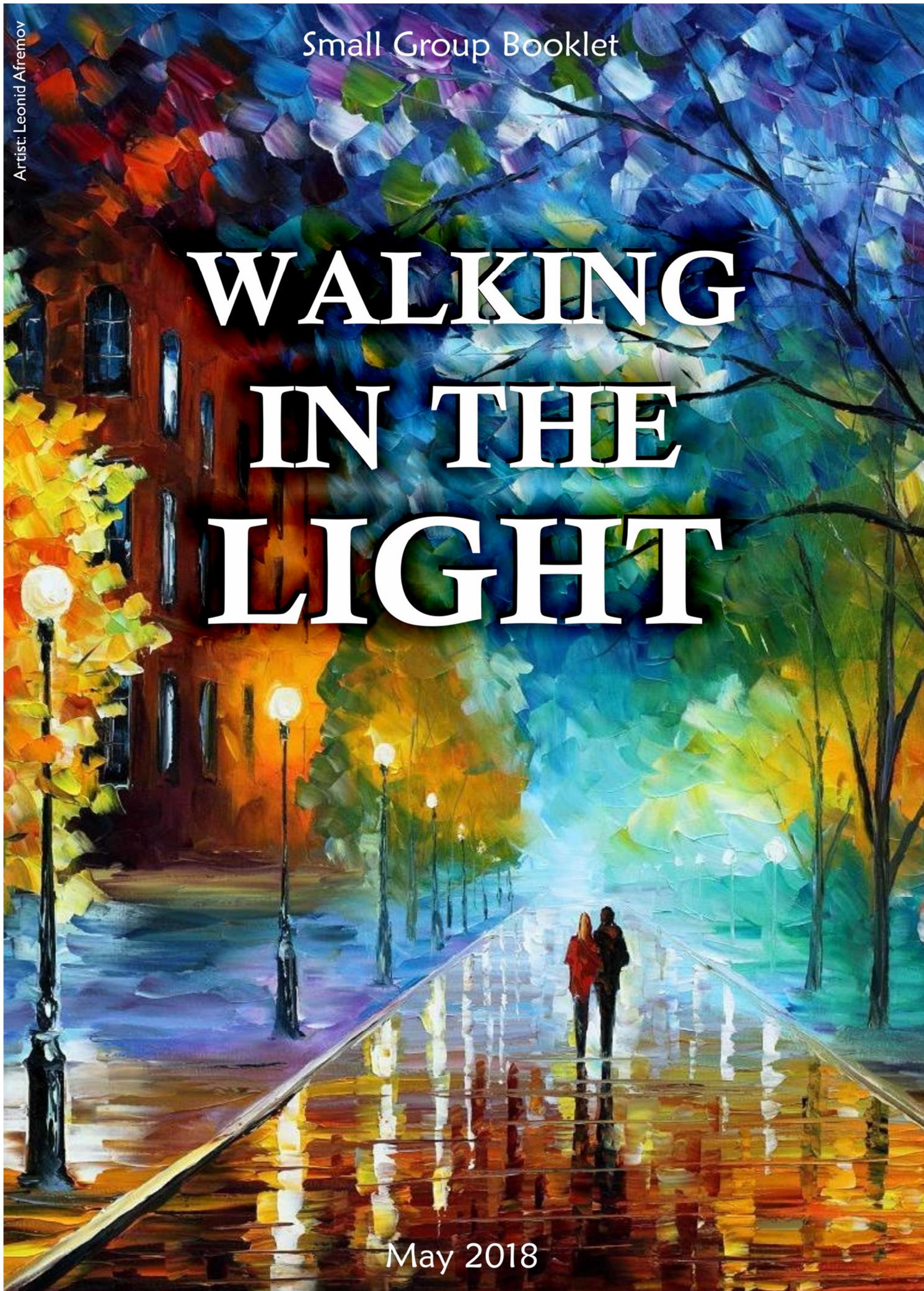


Small Group Booklet

Artist: Leonid Afremov

# WALKING IN THE LIGHT

May 2018





# Walking in the Light

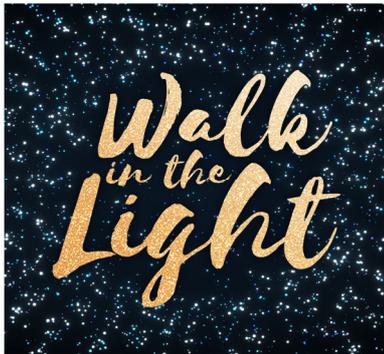
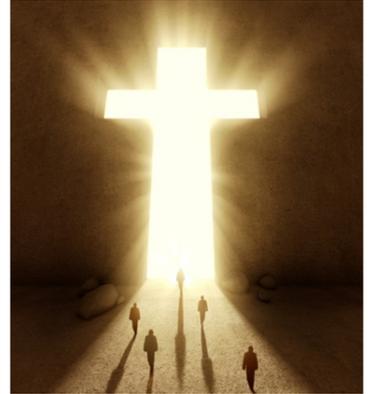
***“The two greatest days of your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why” - Mark Twain.***

Jesus said that he is the light of the world and that whoever follows him will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life (John 8:12). God calls us to live our lives according to Godly purposes – but we have the freedom to make the choice to listen to this call or not. When we choose to follow Jesus’ call we “Walk in the Light”. Living in God’s purpose gives our live meaning.

*For thought: Having more to live with is no substitute for having more to live for.*

## **Ephesians 5:8-11 (NIVUK)**

***For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.***



## **Psalm 56:13**

***For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.***

## **1 John 1:7**

***But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.***

## **THE MISSION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA:**

God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation”. The Methodist church believes that the sufficiency of the gospel is demonstrated by the salvation and transformation (sanctification) of all nations.



**Our Vision:** *“A Christ – healed Africa for the healing of Nations”*

## **Methodists believe the church is called to**

1. A **deepening spirituality.**
2. A resolve to be **guided** by God’s mission.

3. A rediscovery of “every member ministry” or the priesthood of all believers.
4. A commitment to be one so that the world may believe.
5. A re-emphasis of **servant – leadership** and **discernment** as our model for ministry.

The Missions Charter (2004) states the following: We invite the people of God throughout Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, to join us as we put ourselves at God’s disposal to carry forward God’s mission in this sub-continent:

1. Let us each **renew our personal commitment** to Jesus Christ and seek **to grow in grace** and in love for God, one another and the world.
2. Let us ensure that our mission of healing and transformation is holistic, embracing all the imperatives for mission.
3. Let us **participate in God’s mission** in ways that are appropriate to our local contexts and in partnership with the wider church and community.
4. Let us **celebrate our diversity** and the gifts God has given to each of us; support each other; challenge each other and pray for each other ([www.methodist.org.za](http://www.methodist.org.za)).

We celebrate May as Mission Month at BMC. In the light of the Methodist vision for mission, we will focus on hearing God’s call and growing in Christ so that we can serve and heal the nations together. We hope everybody will reassess their walk with God. Let’s support each other on this important four-week journey as we learn to walk with purpose in His light.

God Bless you!

*Pete & Nadja*

**TO KNOW, TO GROW, TO GO, TOGETHER!**

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## WEEK 1: TO KNOW

*Psalm 139: 1-20*

*Acts 9:1-22*

### COMMENTS:

God wants us to **know** that we are loved. God meets each of us at some stage in our lives. For some people this encounter with God comes as a soft whisper that calls us into a life-long process of growth – as illustrated in Psalm 139; for others it is a dramatic, life-altering experience that is remembered forever – as illustrated in Acts 9:1-22. The amazing thing is that God approaches each individual in a very personal unique manner.



**A Quiet, life-long call:** *Psalm 139.* God keeps calling us, no matter where we are on our life journey or what we have done in the past. God keeps on knocking until we open the door of our hearts. God never gives up on us! *Read Psalm 139: 1-11:* Even when we try to hide from God – God keeps an eye on us. God knows us and our thoughts; there is nothing that will surprise God about us. God knows when we get up and go to sleep. This call of God begins while we are still in our mother's womb. (*Psalm 139: 13-16*). God's hand of blessing and peaceful presence has been with us from the day we were conceived, and continues with us until the day we die (*Psalm 139:16*).

**A Dramatic Turnaround:** *Read Acts 9: 1-5:* Saul/Paul was changed from a fire-breathing persecutor of the followers of Jesus to a staunch defender of the Christian faith. This came from a personal encounter with Jesus. Having met Jesus, Saul's life is changed, and he becomes a preacher of the Gospel (*Read Acts 9: 20-22*).

No matter how we come to follow Jesus – we are tasked with sharing this knowledge. The followers of Jesus are God's chosen instrument in introducing people to God. The beliefs,



teachings and behaviour of Christian people influence how our world experiences God. The Christian Church is the place where the followers of Jesus gather together and help people deepen their spirituality. It is the members of the church that ultimately love others into God's family. Together we are the church! Our personal interaction with others, the authentic love and care we show, will

determine how the rest of the world reacts to our beliefs.

If you are exploring Christianity, then know that God loves you and has purpose for your life. If you believe, but have veered of the track a bit, God never gives up on you. If you are living a Christ-centered life, God calls you to continuous spiritual renewal. True conversion comes from a personal/unique encounter with God and leads to a new life in relationship with God. Someone once said that we are all created with a “God-shaped hole” inside of us and that only God can fill that space – God is calling!

Once we have heeded God’s call and started on our journey of faith, we need to be careful not to judge people who are not in the same spiritual place as we are. **Read Acts 9: 10-18.** Ananias judged Saul by his past reputation and was hesitant to go to him (with good reason, as he was persecuting Christians), but God sent him to make Saul see again. We cannot limit the change that God works in the human heart. God calls us to walk closely with him and follow in the light of Christ. Jesus promised that his yoke would be gentle and that we will find rest for our souls. God guides us through life in a loving way. Trust God’s voice as you follow the Light.

**Matthew 11:29**

***Take my yoke upon you and learn for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul.***



**SMALL GROUP:**

This week we are going to spend some quiet time with God. You can sit in silence in the group or find a quiet spot where you can answer the questions below. You are welcome to play the following meditative song whilst people sit quietly (12 minutes long – available on YouTube): ***God is Love from Misty Edwards (Prophetic Soaking)***.



- Who is God to you: A crutch in times of difficulty? A distant benevolent dictator? A friend? A shelter in times of danger? A kind of spirit that doesn’t make much sense?
- Do you think this is a realistic image of God? Identify your “blind spots” where God is concerned.
- What can you do to get closer to God and improve your relationship?

**When you are ready, renew your commitment to God by praying this prayer:**

**Dear God, I admit I am a sinner and need your forgiveness; I choose to turn from my sin and accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord. I commit myself to you and ask you to send the Holy Spirit into my life, to fill me and take control, and to help me become the kind of person you want me to be. In Jesus’ name. Amen**

*Know that you are saved, forgiven and very much loved!*

**Group Leader:** have candles available for each member to light when they have finished the meditation to commemorate this special moment (in silence). If some members want to talk about their experience when everyone is finished, they may do so. Finish the meeting by singing or saying the Lord's Prayer together (see below).

**Small Group member:** Do something to commemorate this very special moment.

- Go home and in your quiet time light a candle and pray your own prayer to God.
- Write the date in your Bible (next to a verse or on the inside cover).
- Share with someone else your new/renewed commitment (in the group or with a family member/ friend).

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, for ever and ever.  
*Amen.*



*Sunday: 2 Peter 1:3*

He chose and called us. He gives us everything we need through him.

*Monday: Romans 10:15*

I have a role and purpose. I have been called and will be sent.

*Tuesday: Amos 5:4*

Seek God and live.

*Wednesday: Jeremiah 29:13*

You will find God if you look with your heart.



*Thursday: Psalm 69:6*

Let those who hope on God and seek him not be put to shame because of me.

*Friday: Proverbs 8:17*

God loves you and if you look for him, you will find him!

*Saturday: Romans 10:17*

We believe through the message in the Bible.



## WEEK 2: TO GROW

*John 14:15-26,*

*Hebrews 5: 12-14*

*1 Peter 2: 1-12*

### COMMENTS:



We now know that God created and calls each one of us. We are known by God, and we can **know** God. When we truly believe and experience his unconditional love, we cannot help but love him back. The encounter with God's love is an invitation to **grow** in our faith. This is not a static love, but instead it grows and matures us as God's people. Here is both a promise and a warning.

**The Promise:** *Read 1 Peter 2:1-12.* We are expected to "grow up" in our understanding of our salvation (vs 2). We move from an infant faith to maturity. This can only take place when our faith is built on Jesus as the cornerstone of our existence. We allow ourselves to be moulded into a house of praise for God; a people who are owned by God; a calling to bring light into darkness.

**The Warning:** *Read Hebrews 5: 12-14.* Followers of Jesus are to move beyond "the milk" of spiritual beginnings to "the solid food" needed for a lifelong faith in Jesus. We are to grow up in our faith from the basic principles of spiritual childhood into an adult faith. This invites us to be open to a lifetime of learning about our faith and growing in our relationship with God.

This growth is nurtured by the work of the Holy Spirit. *Read John 14: 15-26.* The Holy Spirit is God's presence on earth. The Spirit of God comforts us (vs 16), teaches us (vs 26), and

remains in us (vs 20). He is our guide and counselor, leading us in the way we should think, feel and go by revealing God's truth.

This does not mean that we will not face difficulties or temptations; but God wants us to know that he has overcome the world. We do not face the darkness alone. God wants us to be confident in who we are and what we believe. He will equip us to do what needs to be done and his peace that passes all understanding will be with us as we grow in our faith and face life's challenges.

Our growth is assisted by reading, study, listening to teaching and reflection. The Bible is still our best source for getting to know God. It is filled with wisdom and guidance on how to live. We need to read it, meditate on it and memorise it. In addition to this, read books, listen to those who are wise in God's things, and join together with others who follow Jesus. Never pass up the opportunity to learn something new – even if it is difficult to hear. Our best growth often comes through hearing something that makes us uncomfortable.

*We have chosen to answer his call, now we have to believe that he will lead us to fulfill our God-given purpose.*

1. **We need to change.** We have been made new. Love requires actions - it's not just a feeling.
2. *We need to accept that we live in a **broken world** - it is what it is.*
3. *We need to accept that **we cannot do it alone** – we need the Holy Spirit.*
4. *We need to believe that **God is light** and that he **has overcome the darkness of the world.***
5. *We need to believe that **God has created us for a purpose** and until we find it and blossom, we will feel empty and unfulfilled.*
6. *We need to believe that **God equips** those he calls. The fruit of the spirit will be evident in our lives.*



#### SMALL GROUP:

Listen to “Come Holy Spirit” by Vertical Worship / Church Band (YouTube).

#### Lyrics:

I want to hear the power of your word. I want to feel the weight of glory fall.  
I want to know the one who overcomes. I want to see, I want to be undone.

**Chorus: Come, Holy Spirit, Come. Rush in like a flood. Heaven open up. Come, in never ending waves. I am swept away. Holy Spirit Come.**

I want to hear the voice the storm obeys. I want to feel your presence in this place.  
I want to know a pure and righteous love. I want to see, I want to be undone.

**Chorus:** Come, come fall afresh on me, fall afresh on me.

Nothing else, Nothing else I know, nothing else, nothing else comes close. **Repeat.**



Light a candle to symbolise the presence of the Holy Spirit.



**Answer the following Questions:**

**1. Galatians 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

- Do you know anyone who clearly displays the fruits of the spirit? Which “fruit” do they display and how has it influenced your life?
  - Which one is your best quality (fruit) and which one still needs work? What are you going to do about it? Ask someone to hold you accountable.
2. Is there a group of people that you struggle to love? Think of a culture, or a language, or a political grouping that irritates you intensely. Write down the reasons why this is so in the block below. Now next to each reason write an idea of how God can help you grow in tolerance of these differences.



*Sunday: Isaiah 42:10-12*

Do I praise God with everything I do?

*Monday: Colossians 1:25-27*

Do I present the word of God to others? Can they see the Holy Spirit in me?

*Tuesday: Acts 13:2*

What have I been set apart for?

*Wednesday: Exodus 4:11-12*

God helps me with whatever I need to say or do.

*Thursday: Matthew 4:17*

We do not know when God will come. What is standing between you and him?

*Friday: Mark 1:38-39*

Where can I expand my horizons to spread the Gospel?

*Saturday: Romans 10:13-15*

Those who haven't heard cannot believe. Who am I telling?





## WEEK 3: TO GO

*Matthew 28:16-20*

*Luke 10: 1-12; 17-20*

*Acts 1: 1-8*

### COMMENTS:

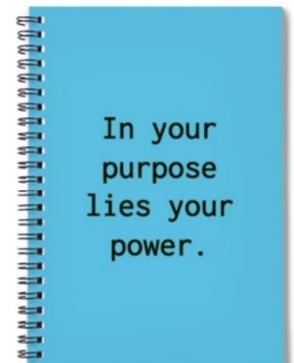


We have seen that God created and calls each one of us to **know** our spiritual value. We also see that God enables us to **grow** spiritually by equipping us to live out our purpose by giving us the Holy Spirit as our helper. We now discover that we are commissioned to **go** with his authority and tell the Good News to others in his name. **Read Matthew 28: 19.** We are not just to live a life that is an example to others, we actively have to go out there and make a difference in this world.

When we live out our purpose, we blossom into the people God created us to be. We feel connected to God and others in a very real way. We walk in with confidence even as the darkness surrounds us. We have peace, knowing that our lives as “workers” for Jesus are dedicated to sharing him with others.

**Read Luke 10:1-12.** Jesus warned his disciples (and the further 72 that he sent out), that following him would not always be easy (**Luke 10:3**). He pointed out that they will experience resistance. But when we do God’s will, and with God’s backing, doors will open, hearts will change and lives will be transformed. The church is a safe place to start reaching out, because you have people by your side that not only share their specific passions but also add their own experiences and talents as well. Once you share your life in this way, you will (like the disciples) see the results of your ministry and realize that there has never been anything more rewarding.

**Read Acts 1: 8.** We not only work for God in the church. The disciples were told to go for God in Jerusalem, which was their spiritual home – the equivalent of our church. They were then told to go to Judea (the neighbours), to Samaria (those Samaritan heretics), and to the end of the world! We begin in our spiritual safe space, but we are soon called into mission beyond this, into uncomfortable places that need the Gospel of Jesus.



Your purpose will normally embrace your talents, passions, spiritual gifts, and past experiences. You will find other people naturally confirm and affirm your gifts. When you feel the peace that passes all understanding, keep moving forward in his light– do not delay. Not one of us has unlimited time. Opportunities to serve and change a life may only come once. Hear Jesus saying to his disciples (including you): Go now! I'm sending you!



### SMALL GROUP:

1. What blessings / resources / talents has God given to you to use to go with the good news?

- Physically: Are you in good health?
- Spiritually: What are your spiritual gifts (encouragement, service)?
- Emotionally: What are you passionate about (people / nature / animals)?
- Hobbies: What do you love doing (arts, crafts, sports)?
- Blessings: Do you own a home, car, clothes, and food?

Are you sharing your gifts with the world? Dream of what you can do (if you do not already) that would combine most of the above-mentioned blessings. List some possibilities below.



2. What would the cost be for you to follow Jesus? What comforts, social obligations, family, hobbies, free time would you have to give up or put on the back burner?
3. Jesus said in **Luke 9:62** *“No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”* How does this statement make you feel?



**Listen to: Hugh Masekela- Send Me (Thuma Mina) (YouTube)**

#### Lyrics:

I want to be there when the people start to turn it around -when they triumph over poverty.  
I want to be there when the people win the battle against AIDS. I want to lend a hand. I want to be there for the alcoholic.  
I want to be there for the drug addict. I want to be there for the victims of violence and abuse.

I want to lend a hand. Send me.

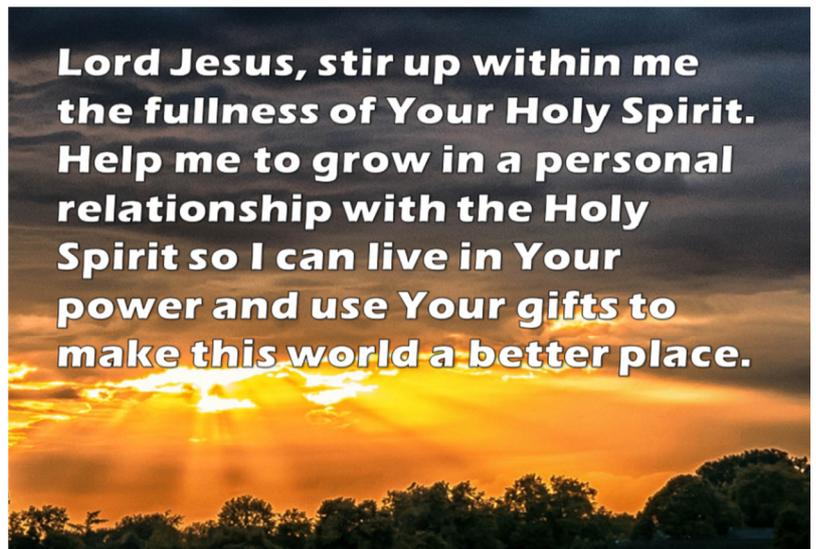
[Chorus] *Thuma mina (thuma m'na). Thuma mina (ezizweni). Ndizoya ndithandaze. Thuma mina (thuma m'na). Thuma mina (ezizweni). Ndizoya ndithandaze.*

I want to be there when the people win the battle against AIDS. I want to lend a hand. I want to be there for the victims of violence and abuse. I want to lend a hand. Send me.

[Bridge] *Esitimeleni (thuma m'na). Emabhasini (ezizweni). Emateksini (ndizoya ndithandaze). Emapatini (thuma m'na). Emabheshini (ezizweni). Emashabini (ndizoya ndithandaze).*

Ebusuku (thuma m'na). Nasemini (ezizweni). Asilale (ndizoya ndithandaze). Ebusuku (thuma m'na). Nasemini (ezizweni). Asilale (ndizoya ndithandaze).

Pray together:



*Sunday: Luke 10:2*

Am I in the harvest field?

*Monday: Acts 18:23*

Am I strengthening the relationships between people, God, and each other?

*Tuesday: Colossians 1:6*

Has Grace produced fruit in me?

*Wednesday: Romans 1:13-15*

Do I recognize the opportunities to talk about Jesus when the present themselves?

*Thursday: 1 Corinthians 9:16*

Do I want to tell others about God in my life?

*Friday: Isaiah 52:7*

Do I spread peace wherever I go?

*Saturday: Mark 3:14*

Does our small group have purpose?





## WEEK 4: TOGETHER

*Matthew 22:37-39*

*Acts 10: 9-48*

*Ephesians 4:1-7*

### COMMENTS:

TO LOVE  
AND BE  
LOVED

We have seen that God created and calls each one of us to **know** our spiritual value. We also see that God enables us to **grow** spiritually by equipping us to live out our purpose by giving us the Holy Spirit as our helper. We then discovered that we are commissioned to **go** with his authority and tell the Good News to others. This task is something we are called to do

**together** with others.

Jesus teaches that the greatest commandment is our calling to “love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”. But this is only the beginning. **Read Matthew 22:37-39.** The encounter of God’s love is then followed by another great commandment, “to love your neighbor as yourself.” It would seem that the response to the love of God is not only to return love to our Creator – but also to love God’s creation.

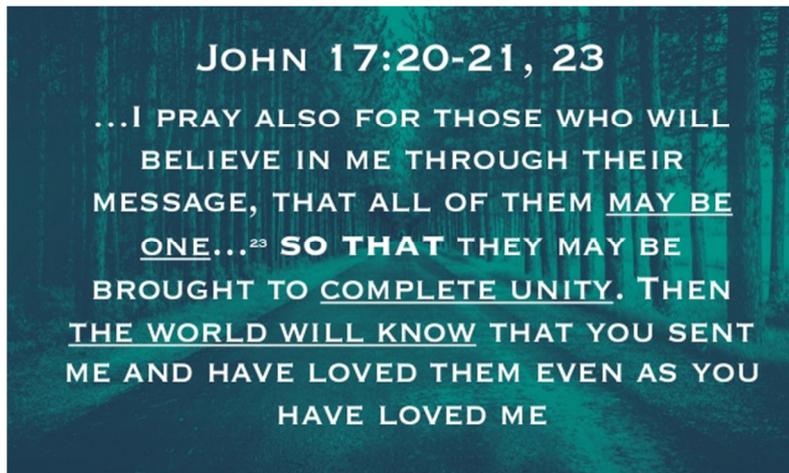
Loving our neighbour is not an optional extra to our love of God. Our love of God includes loving our neighbour. But such love does not come naturally to us. It is hard to love others, because they disappoint us and hurt us. The difficult thing is that God asks us to love our neighbour no matter who they are, what their history might be, what they look like, or the way they think. That means that we are called to love everyone no matter what culture, personality, gender or political affiliation they have.

**Read Acts 10:9-48.** Peter is asked to meet with Cornelius. This is a very difficult request for Peter to agree to (**Acts 10:28**). Jewish people would not meet in the home of a non-Jewish person. This would have been considered socially, culturally and religiously impossible. But Peter discovered that his love for God led him to ‘love his neighbour’, and so he enters the home of a Roman centurion – a man who normally would be considered to be an enemy. Peter discovered that his Christian faith called him to love God in community with others.

When people and situations are familiar to us we know what to expect and we feel safe. However, when a situation or a person is unfamiliar, we will try to avoid this. This could include the challenges of gender, age, ethnicity, personality or religious differences. Even in our own church where we know the “body” is made out of different parts, we know the

challenge of diversity in worship: for example some people need to clap and dance while singing, and others prefer quieter, more reflective moments. Another challenge is to accept different cultures, different generation and even different nationalities in one church!

Peter emphasizes that “God does not show favouritism but accepts everyone who fears him and does what is right” (**Acts 10:34-35**). Our challenge is to try and understand and accept these differences - otherwise we will always judge others and be misunderstood ourselves. The fact is that God loves us all. We will sit at God’s table because God extends Grace to the rich CEO, the filthy beggar, the clever Professor, the timid woman, and the Xhosa/Zulu/Afrikaans person.



When we choose to “let go” of our feelings, we let God into the relationship. The truth is that we can only change our reaction towards someone else with the help of the Holy Spirit. When we see another person through God’s eyes we cannot help but change. And this becomes the opportunity for us to grow spiritually. We all have fears, passions,

hobbies, loves, things that connect us on a deep level. But overriding all that, our faith in God and our experience of the love of God in our lives, overshadows any human differences that we might have and gives us unity in Christ.

Our oneness in Christ does not destroy our individuality. He has given us our personality and circumstances for his purpose, but we need to find our example in him and walk in his light to become who he created us to be. Let us **celebrate our diversity** and the gifts God has given to each of us; support each other; challenge each other and pray for each other all the time! May our church be the light on the hill!



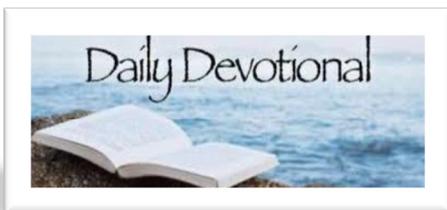
#### SMALL GROUP:

**Listen to Michael Jackson – Heal the world (official video) on YouTube.**

**Consider breaking into groups of 2-3 people, so that each person gets a chance to share the following questions and take the opportunity to be vulnerable and honest. Remind your group of the confidentiality of these discussions. Pray for each other at the end.**

1. Did you grow up isolated from other ethnic groups? How much contact do you have with people from other ethnic groups today? How has this shaped your cultural view of those that are different from you?

2. Which of the following differences limit your ability to reach out to others? *Discuss with your group.*
  - Ethnicity
  - Personality
  - Religion
  - Abilities
  - Sense of Humor
  - Perceived Power
  - Gender
  - Background
  - Language spoken
  - Age
3. Which emotional barriers have you erected that stop you from accepting others? How will you break down the barriers between yourself and those that are different from you?
  - Fear of rejection
  - Feelings of superiority
  - Resentment because of historic unfairness towards you
  - Feelings of inadequacy
  - Not knowing enough (coming across as stupid)
  - Fear of conflict
  - Indoctrinated by current popular beliefs
  - Shame or guilt
4. Pray for each other and the challenges that were discussed today.
5. Commit to engage with someone completely different from you in Christ.



*Sunday: 2 Corinthians 5:18-20*

We are Christ's Ambassadors. Can I reconcile others to God, as I have been?

*Monday: 1 Timothy 2:5-7*

There is only one God.

*Tuesday: Matthew 28:19*

Anyone can come to know God. Am I using the territory given to me?

*Wednesday: Matthew 10:16*

Go out, armed with His weapons!

*Thursday: 1 Corinthians 15:11*

The message stays the same. The messenger is different. Do I believe in what I am saying?

*Friday: Acts 13:1-4*

I can go out, knowing that I have been blessed!

*Saturday: Isaiah 6:8*

Here I am God. Send me!



## SOURCES CONSULTED

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**This book was produced and printed by the Grace of God, and with contributions from:**

*Nadja Atkinson & Pete Grassow – Co-Writers,  
Kerry Wetton – Cover design, Carol Roodt – Proofreader  
Bendi Jabulani Mashinini – Printer.*

**Bryanston Methodist Church, May 2018**

# NOTES:

