

ACTION STEPS FOR THE WEEK	
<b>Monday</b>  <b>Action Step 1</b>	How united is your church? Pray and ask the Lord to help your church be a united front for Jesus.
<b>Tuesday</b>  <b>Action Step 2</b>	Don't skip by question #5 too quickly. Think about some action steps.
<b>Wednesday</b>  <b>Action Step 3</b>	Think about how you have been, or not been, showing love to others around you. Where can you improve? Where do you need to seek forgiveness for past wrongs?
<b>Thursday</b>  <b>Action Step 4</b>	Don't skip by question #4 too quickly. Think it through and make it happen!
<b>Friday</b>  <b>Action Step 5</b>	
<b>Saturday</b>  <b>Action Step 6</b>	Vow to invest in a life. Seek to make a difference in the lives of those around you. Start in your own home and expand from there.
<b>My biggest area for prayer and work this week</b>	

DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR:

## LIVING IN COMMUNITY



*"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples."  
~ JESUS (John 13:35)*

## MONDAY

### READ: John 17

During my junior high and senior high days, I got into three fights. It was in the middle of these three incidences that I developed first-hand knowledge concerning the power of the fist! All five fingers balled together as one become a powerful force that can inflict much damage. Such is the power of many becoming one.

In fact, during the fights I was in, and the many that I witnessed, I *never* saw anyone stretching out all five fingers and trying to jab their opponent. Five separate fingers on the attack would have done minimal damage to the opponent and would probably have ended up hurting the attacker more!

This is like how many churches can be. Instead of everyone working together as one to inflict powerful damage against Satan, we all do our own separate thing—often with minimal success.

1. What is Jesus' prayer for His followers in verses 22-24?
2. How have you seen this at work in your church?
3. How have you seen the opposite of this at work in your church?
4. Are your words and actions working to create unity or disunity in your church?
5. What can you do to help create unity in the church?

### PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for your brothers and sisters in Christ
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, doing more to create disunity than to create unity
- ◆ Ask God to help you create unity in our church
- ◆ Ask God to bless the church with unity of purpose

## SATURDAY

### READ: Hebrews 5:11—6:3

There are two major lakes in Israel. One of them is the Sea of Galilee. This “sea” receives water from underground springs and outlets that water through the Jordan River. Because this sea takes in water and then releases it, much life exists in and around this lake. It is a cornucopia of plant, animal, and fish life.

The other major lake in Israel is the Dead Sea. This lake takes in water from the Jordan River, yet it has no outlets. Because it is constantly being fed but never outlets, the salinity of the water prevents any growth of plant, animal, or fish life.

Likewise in the Christian life, it is possible to continually be fed spiritual food and yet do more harm than good. Taking in so much but never releasing it to others creates stagnation and lack of life. Yet, if you take what you are taught and share it with others, everyone can have life!

1. What is the author of Hebrews major lament in this portion of Scripture?
2. In chapter 6, what is he calling everyone to do?
3. Have you been guilty of always being fed but never feeding others?
4. Who is in your life that you can begin to feed?

### PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for the people in your life who have taught you spiritual truth
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not teaching others
- ◆ Ask God to help you continually be fed but to also feed others
- ◆ Ask God to show you who you can teach about Christ

## FRIDAY

### READ: Colossians 3:1-17

In his book, *Lee: The Last Years*, Charles Flood reports that after the Civil War, Robert E. Lee visited a woman in Kentucky who took him to the remains of a grand old tree in front of her house. There she bitterly cried that its limbs and trunk had been destroyed by Federal artillery fire. She looked to Lee for a word condemning the North or at least sympathizing with her loss. After a brief silence, Lee said, "Cut it down, my dear Madam, and forget it."

Robert E. Lee's point to this woman was that it is better to forgive the injustices of the past than to allow them to remain. If we allow them to remain, bitterness can take root and poison the rest of our life.

1. What does verse 13 say?
2. This is hard to do without verse 14. Why is love so important when it comes to forgiveness?
3. How can a refusal to forgive hinder you fulfilling verses 1-5?
4. Is there anyone that you need to offer forgiveness to?
5. If so, when will you do so?

### PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God that He has made a way to forgive your many sins
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, a lack of forgiveness in your heart
- ◆ Ask God to help you forgive as you have been forgiven
- ◆ Ask God to clothe you with love

## TUESDAY

### READ: Acts 2:42-47; Acts 4:32-37

Here's a bad joke for you: How do we know there were cars in Bible times? Answer: Because Acts 1:14 tells us that the disciples were all in one "Accord." (I told you it was bad!)

Honda's aside, I want us to focus today on this phrase "all in one accord." Looking up the "accord" in the dictionary, you will find it to mean: "harmony" or "agreement." Looking at the word in the original Greek, you would find that word to mean "one passion." In other words, we read that the early church was united with one passion. That passion was to grow closer to Christ and help others grow closer to Him as well.

1. How do we see this "one passion" playing out in Acts 2 and 4?
2. What was the effect on those outside the church as they saw the disciples and other followers of Jesus living out this one passion?
3. Would you say that your church is focused on this one passion?
4. Would you say that you are helping your church focus on this one passion?
5. If you answered "No," what can you do to begin doing this?

### PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for the example of the early church
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, living for your own selfish passions and desires for the church instead of this one passion
- ◆ Ask God to help you live for Him and center on Him
- ◆ Ask God for the strength and desire to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow that one passion

## WEDNESDAY

### READ: John 13

One fine blue-skied day, Tonto and the Lone Ranger were riding through a canyon together. Suddenly, both sides of the tall-walled canyon were lined with Native American warriors on horses. They were dressed for battle and covered with war paint. Startled, the Lone Ranger turned to Tonto and asked, "What are we going to do my friend?"

"What you mean 'we,' Whiteman?" Tonto replied.

Oh, how easy it is turn on one another! We fight, argue, gossip, backbite, deny, give the silent treatment, and more. All the while Christ calls us to love one another.

1. What a contrast in our Scripture today! While Christ is calling His disciples to love and showing the extent of His love by washing their feet, the disciples are arguing, planning betrayal, and preparing to deny. What do you believe Jesus was thinking while all this was going on?
2. What do you believe Jesus is thinking today as He is still calling His followers to love yet there is so much strife in His church?
3. Write out John 13:35
4. How much proof of discipleship is the love for each other at your church showing a lost world?

### PRAYER

- ◆ Thank Christ for the tremendous love He showed you by suffering and dying for your sins
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not showing your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ
- ◆ Ask God to help you truly love others
- ◆ Ask God to help you prove your discipleship through a tremendous attitude of sacrificial love and action

## THURSDAY

### READ: 1 John 3:11-24

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less."

1. When someone in life, or someone in the church, makes a decision you take personally, how do you respond?
2. According to verse 15, is it possible to hate someone and still be a Christian?
3. Is there any bitterness or anger in your heart toward someone in the church or in your life? If so, how will you deal with this in order to protect your own eternity?
4. What are some ways that you can show love to someone this week who perhaps has not treated you so kindly?
5. When will you do these things?

### PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His love of you in spite of your many sins and failings that have offended His holiness
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, saying you love Him yet harboring hatred or dislike in your heart for another
- ◆ Ask God to help you love unconditionally
- ◆ Ask God to show you how to love someone who has done wrong to you