

Spread the Word Student Devos
Week Five

(*Note:* This week’s devos were written by students who took up challenge and participated in Spread the Word.)



Day 1

Mark 12:31 says, “The second [most important commandment] is this: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

I always imagined myself as a nice person, but thinking about it now, being nice to friends is easy for anyone. I realize that many times I get edgy with people who get on my nerves. I like to stick to my own group, ignoring those outside it. When I begin to think of all this, I wonder how nice I really am.

Jesus said in this verse to love my neighbor as myself. Hmmm. Most of the time when I think of my neighbor, I picture a person who lives near my house. That is true, but when I looked up *neighbor* in the dictionary, I found that it also means “fellow human being.” I don’t know about you, but when I think in terms of “fellow human being,” that includes a *lot* of people outside my group of friends and the people who live on my street.

Most days, I tend to get caught up in what I’m doing and forget to think about anything—or anyone—else. Maybe I’m tired and don’t feel like listening to my lab partner tell me about her problems. Maybe I’ve had a crummy day and get disrespectful when my mom asks me about it. How tired I am or what my day was like shouldn’t affect how I deal with other people, but it does. Jesus said that the most important commandments are to put *God* first and *others* second. There is no *me* in the equation!

If you think about how God calls Christians to be his witnesses, it’s easy to see why we should be kind to our neighbors. Every time we show love to our neighbors, we are also sharing God with them. The step for us to take is to shift our focus from ourselves to others. Where is your focus? Instead of “How can I help *me*?” ask “How can I help *others*?”

Take action! The next time you don’t feel like being nice to a neighbor, do it anyway. Work with God and let him mold you into the witness he wants you to be.

—Amanda Kapp

Day 2

Matthew 5:46–47 says, “If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? And if you greet only your brothers (or sisters), what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?”

Ever since I was little, I’ve been extremely shy. The thought of getting up in front of a large group of people could make me cry. That didn’t help me to make friends; I was too

frightened to approach anyone, and no one tried to approach me. Everyone had their own friends, and they didn't want to bother with the "quiet girl." I can't count how many nights I cried myself to sleep because I wasn't brave enough to initiate a friendship. I hated that! Over time, I was able to work myself out of my reserved behavior and make some friends, but I will never forget my past loneliness.

You know that God wants you to love our enemies and you already love your friends, but what about those people in-between? Like the person you see at youth meetings who keeps to himself, or that kid at your school who's really quiet? You might think, "Well, they go to church; I'm sure they're doing fine." So you never go talk to them. You never bother to see if they have any friends.

God wants us to reach out and minister to everybody, regardless of how hard it is to strike up a conversation with them. "*If you greet only your brothers (or sisters), what are you doing more than others?*" Jesus didn't only hang out with his disciples, did he? Are you caught in a clique? Do you *only* hang out with certain people? Think about it: Do you try to make new or shy people comfortable, even when you don't feel like it? Are you reaching out to people who are hard to get to know?

Try to get to know the "quiet kids" in your school or church. Put yourself in their shoes. You could be fundamental in their walk with Christ. And who knows? Maybe one of them will turn out to be your future best friend.

—*Celia Childress*

Day 3

James 1:22–24 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a [person] who looks at his (or her) face in a mirror and, after looking at himself (or herself), goes away and immediately forgets what he (or she) looks like."

That's great for others, but not for me. How many times have you seen someone doing something great and thought, "Wow, but I couldn't ..."? Too many people take that view when it comes to their spiritual walk. "Jesus had words of great wisdom; the world would be better if people would do what he said"—and yet they never decide to do it themselves.

Many of my friends know about Jesus. They know who he is, they know what he is to me, and they have had the option their entire lives of choosing him; and yet, there's that note of effort that always seems to scare them off. Living for God is not easy, and I will say that directly. Living for Satan is easy, but what does it end with? Destruction and despair.

In *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis, the devil writes letters to his demon nephew. Satan tells him that his "ward" can think as much as he wants about changing the sin in his life as long as he doesn't actually do it, because thinking about it and not doing it is

utterly useless. As long as we “deceive” ourselves and believe that thinking is the same as doing, we seem to be happy. But that’s so stupid! As James said, we might as well have forgotten what we look like! And yet, how often do we not listen to the Word when we should?

At times I haven’t been very quick to respond to the Holy Spirit, but I can advise you from experience: *Throw everything else away and act when God tells you to!*

Is God whispering something to your heart that you haven’t put into action? Go, do it now.

—*Lindsey Antonides*

Day 4

First Corinthians 10:12–13 says, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to [people]. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

Who do you ask about how to build a house? A carpenter, of course. And who exactly would be the best person to ask about how a car works? Obviously, a mechanic. But then who should you go to when you’re dealing with temptation? Someone you trust who has also dealt with temptation sounds like the likely candidate.

When writing to the church in Corinth, Paul gave a powerful reminder that none of us has enough personal strength to always overcome temptation. Now, if he had just ended there, things would have seemed pretty hopeless for those of us striving to follow Christ’s example. Fortunately, Paul went on. He said that we are not alone in our temptations. There are many others out there who are going through what we are going through. So what’s the best course of action? Seek out these people. The saying “Two heads are better than one” is true! Paul just told us to put that into practice.

As some of us already know, even if we have someone else to help build us up and keep us accountable, temptation can still be tough. That’s why Paul said what he did in the last part of verse 13: “God is faithful.” How awesome is it to know that? God has promised that he will never allow our temptations to be more than we can bear and that he will always provide a way out.

So what can we take from the advice that Paul has given to us? First, ask yourself, “What are the temptations in my life that I am struggling with?” Once you have figured this out, find someone you trust to keep you accountable. (Remember, two heads are better than one.) And then, trust in God and remember that he will always remain faithful. When you’re faced with temptation, look for the way out that God has promised to provide. And once you’ve spotted it, don’t hesitate to take it!

—*Josh Boldman*

Day 5

Second Peter 1:4 says, “He has given us his very great and precious promises.”

What’s your dream marriage? Imagine that you married the perfect guy or girl. Your wedding was perfect. Then, after your wedding day, you both packed your bags and headed home—to separate homes. Now you call each other, oh, about once a month, if that, if you really need to. You call if you have a really, really bad day. Oh, and you get together on holidays to celebrate and also on your anniversary, but then you head back home—to your separate homes. You rarely talk, just occasionally.

Sound like a good relationship? I don’t think so....

Is this how your relationship with God is? The one who created you? Your Savior who you gave your life to? The one who made the heavens and the earth? Did you get saved but now only talk to him at Christmas? Do you only run to him when you have a bad day and the world turns against you? Do you even talk once a *month*? Do you read his letter to you (the Bible)? Do you even have a relationship with him—a real relationship? How’s your communication? Do you talk to him as much as you talk to your best friend? Or do you leave him out in the cold until *you* want to talk?

Why not have the *perfect* relationship with God—just like your dream marriage? I challenge you to invest in a dream relationship with your heavenly Father. What do you have to lose? Nothing. What do you have to gain? One amazing life!

—Erin Hostetler