

Falls Creek Youth Camp 2025 After-Camp Quiet Time Guide LEVEL UP

We're so glad you spent last week with us. We hope that you have continued to think about and apply everything you learned and are excited to LEVEL UP as you focus on finding contentment in Jesus by spending time alone with Him, submitting to Jesus as you learn what He wants through Bible study and prayer, promoting unity with your brother and sisters in Jesus through cooperation in missions and fellowship, and surrendering your plans to God as you focus on personal holiness and serve.

To help you in your journey, here are more quiet time guides. They should last you three weeks with weekends off. We encourage you to discuss them with your youth group or invite some of your other friends to go through them with you. If you don't have a youth group, we hope that you will continue to meet with the church that brought you to camp and consider becoming a member of the congregation so they can support and encourage you. If that's not possible, we encourage you to look for a Southern Baptist church in your community to connect with. The church you came to camp with should be able to help you with that. When you find one, let them know you're there and want to be a part of what they are doing so they can help you take next steps and LEVEL UP.

Wherever you land, know that we are praying for you and love you, and we can't wait to see you next year!

Monday

Heart check:

- *What do you know to be true about God? Did you learn it from Him or from someone else?*
- *Do you know enough about God from personal experience to handle hard times in a way that honors Him and benefits you? Explain.*

Study:

King David wasn't born into a royal family. During his early years, he didn't know he would become king. He spent his days and nights out in the fields with his sheep on his own far from home, but he wasn't lonely. David spent that time with God, thinking about Him and getting to know Him. David faced dangers as a shepherd. Several times, he had to kill lions and bears who tried to steal his sheep, but he was brave because he knew God was with him.

One day, the prophet Samuel visited David's family. King Saul had disobeyed God, and God planned to replace him. Guided by God, Samuel visited the family of Jesse and chose David to be the next king of Judah after Saul. Because Saul was still alive, David continued to live just as he had for a while. When his brothers went to war with King Saul, David's father sent him to take food to his brothers. When David arrived at the camp, he watched a giant named Goliath taunt God's army. Angered by Goliath and the army's reluctance to represent God well, David volunteered to kill Goliath with a slingshot and no armor (see 1 Samuel 16-17).

Read 1 Samuel 17:37.

What had David's time alone with God taught him?

How had David's time alone with God in the fields with his sheep prepared him to represent God well on the battlefield?

What can you learn from David's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Tuesday

Heart check:

- *How do you respond when you feel threatened? Do you rely on God to guide and protect you, or do you take matters into your own hands?*
- *How does the amount and quality of time you spend alone with God impact the way you handle situations?*

Study:

King Saul appreciated David's help with the Philistines, but he grew jealous of the attention David was getting for it. Convinced that David would kill him and take his throne, King Saul began to chase after David to kill him first. Confused by King Saul's behavior, David retreated to the wilderness with a band of fighting men. As King Saul pursued him, David moved from place to place, and God protected him (see 1 Samuel 17, 23).

While he was in the wilderness with his men, David learned even more about God's provision and faithfulness. Even though David was surrounded by a support system, his heart and mind were focused on God alone. A gifted musician, David wrote a song about what he learned.

Read Psalm 63.

According to this song, what did David's time alone with God teach him about God?

What did David's time alone with God teach him about how God takes care of His faithful ones?

While David was in the wilderness, King Saul came very close to finding him. David knew where Saul was and snuck into his camp. Instead of killing Saul when he had the chance, David cut off a corner of Saul's robe and left. When he was a safe distance away, he showed King Saul what he had done to prove that he could have killed him, but didn't (see 1 Samuel 24).

How might the things that David learned about God have influenced his behavior toward Saul?

How, then, did David's time alone with God benefit him? How did it benefit Saul?

What can you learn from David's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Wednesday

Heart check:

- *Whose opinion means most to you in this world? Why?*
- *Who is most deserving of your consideration and cooperation? How do you know?*

Study:

David eventually became king after King Saul's death. During his reign, King David united the twelve tribes of Israel and chose Jerusalem to be the capital city. He also brought the Ark of the Covenant to Israel. The ark was a wooden chest covered in gold. It held the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God on stone tablets, the rod of Aaron, and a pot of manna, the food that God provided for His people as they wandered in the wilderness. The ark represented God's promise to be with His people, guide His people, and provide for them. Bringing it to Jerusalem was a big deal, and David celebrated in a big way. Dressed only in an ephod, a simple linen garment, David danced like no one was watching even though they were. He was the king, but he didn't care what people thought of him. His wife Michal was embarrassed by his behavior and told him so (see 2 Samuel 6).

Read 2 Samuel 6:20-22.

What had David's time alone with God taught him about what God deserves from us?

What had David's time alone with God taught him about what to do with people's opinions of our obedience to God?

King David made some serious mistakes in his lifetime, but he always repented and humbled himself before God. In return, God kept his promise to preserve the family and the throne of David forever (see 2 Samuel 7). God's people experienced all kinds of hardships after David died. They even spent a significant amount of time in exile, but God did not forget His promise to David. Eventually, Jesus, the Savior of the World, was born to a descendant of David. King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus will reign forever.

During his lifetime, some of the people David trusted most turned on him, but God never did. David always trusted God and was content to rely on Him for all things.

How might things have turned out differently for David and his family if he hadn't spent so much time alone with God?

What can you learn from David's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Thursday

Heart check:

- *Have you given God the time and opportunity to teach you about Himself without distractions?*
- *How does this affect the way you approach Him with your needs?*

Study:

When Ahab became king of Israel, he did more evil than all the other kings of Israel. To please his wife Jezebel, Ahab even worshipped the false god Baal. He built a temple and an altar for Baal. This angered God, so He sent the prophet Elijah to visit King Ahab. Elijah told King Ahab that there would be no rain or dew for the next few years unless Elijah said so. King Ahab didn't like this, of course, so God told Elijah to flee to the desert.

While Elijah was alone with God in the desert, God took good care of him. God sent ravens to bring Elijah meat and bread, and Elijah drank from a brook that ran through the desert. When the brook dried up, God

told Elijah to go where a widow lived. God had commanded the widow to feed Elijah. When Elijah arrived at the widow's home, he asked for food and water. The woman gave Elijah water, but explained that she only had enough food to fix one more meal for her son and herself before they resigned themselves to starvation.

Elijah told the woman to make the meal, but feed him first. He also told her that God had promised to keep flour in her jar and oil in her jug until it rained again. The woman did as Elijah said, and God kept His promise to provide for the woman and her son (see 1 Kings 16:29-17:16).

Read 1 Kings 17:17-24.

What made Elijah think that God would raise the widow's son back to life? What had God shown Elijah during his time alone with God in the desert?

What can you learn from Elijah's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Friday

Heart check:

- *Do you spend enough time alone with God to know what He wants from you specifically?*
- *Have you learned enough about God in private to take a stand for Him in public? Explain.*

Study:

After three years of famine had passed, God told Elijah to go to Ahab, so he did. Elijah told Ahab to assemble the people of Israel and call the prophets of Baal together to determine once and for all which was real, Baal or God. When the people had assembled, Elijah told the prophets of Baal to prepare a sacrifice and ask Baal to accept the sacrifice by lighting it on fire. They did, but nothing happened. They danced and cut themselves and screamed, but Baal did not answer them.

Then Elijah prepared a sacrifice for God. He put the sacrifice on the altar and soaked it with water, then prayed a simple prayer asking God to show the people that He was the one true God. God answered immediately by lighting the soaked sacrifice with fire, and the people declared that God was truly God. Elijah had all the prophets of Baal killed according to God's command. Once the people knew and

understood that God, not Baal, controlled the weather, Elijah told Ahab that rain was coming (see 1 Kings 18).

Read 1 Kings 18:41-46.

How did Elijah know that God would send the rain? What had he learned while standing for and alone with God on Mount Carmel?

God had just proven Himself publicly to all of Israel. How did He prove Himself to Elijah privately when the rain came (v. 46)?

What can you learn from Elijah's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Monday

Heart check:

- *Do you think you can hide from God? Do your actions back up your answer?*
- *How has God proven Himself to you in your darkest moments? Have you given Him a chance to do so?*

Study:

Queen Jezebel was not happy that Elijah had ordered the prophets of Baal to be killed. She promised to kill Elijah by the same time the next day, so he ran for his life. When he was a day's journey into the desert, he sat down under a tree and asked God to let him die. This time, God didn't do what Elijah asked. Instead, He fed Elijah and let him take a good nap.

When Elijah was rested and energized, he ran for forty more days and nights to hide in a cave instead of going back where the people were and trusting God to preserve him. God could have gotten angry with Elijah, but He didn't. Instead, God showed incredible patience. He asked Elijah what he was doing in the cave and listened while Elijah ranted. Then God displayed His power to Elijah by shattering huge rocks on the mountainside, sending a powerful wind, and causing an earthquake where Elijah could see without being hurt. Then God gave Elijah further instruction, and Elijah obeyed (see 1 Kings 19:1-18).

What do you think Elijah learned about God during his time alone with God in the desert?

How do you think this helped him get back to work when his work was hard?

Read 1 Kings 19:19-21.

How did God respond to the concerns and feelings Elijah had expressed to Him in private?

Why do you think Elijah was content to continue to serve God?

What can you learn from Elijah's story?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

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Tuesday

Heart check:

- *What has God done to help you trust Him?*
- *Why do you think so many people have trouble trusting God? What have you done to help?*

Study:

Jacob, the father of Joseph, was also called Israel. The descendants of his Jacob's twelve sons were called Israelites. After Joseph, Jacob's favorite son, brought his brothers and their families to live in Egypt, the Israelites flourished. Soon, there were so many of them they became a threat to the Egyptians. The Egyptian Pharaoh who loved Joseph died, and the new Pharaoh didn't care about Joseph or his family. Instead of encouraging the Egyptians to work with the Israelites, the new Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites and told his people to kill every baby boy born to the Israelites, who were also called Hebrews.

During this time, a Hebrew woman gave birth to a baby boy and hid him in a basket in the river so he could live. Pharaoh's daughter found the baby and raised him as her own son. She named him Moses. When Moses grew up, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave and killed the Egyptian for it. Afraid that he would be caught, Moses ran away from the Pharaoh, who was indeed trying to kill him. Moses ended up in a place called Midian, where he showed kindness to some young women and was invited to join their family by the girls' father Jethro, who happened to be the priest of Midian. Moses married Jethro's daughter Zipporah and was happy with his new family.

Meanwhile, the Pharaoh who had been chasing Moses died. God's people cried out and asked God to deliver them from slavery, so God had a conversation with Moses from a burning bush (see Exodus 1-2).

Read Exodus 3:5-22.

God told Moses to go to Egypt and set His people free, but Moses was afraid. God was patient with Moses. He didn't just tell Moses what to do and leave it at that. Instead, God explained as much of the plan as Moses could handle at the time and reassured Moses that He would be with him.

How did God respond to each of Moses's concerns?

Prayer is just conversation with God. The way God responded to Moses in conversation is very similar to the way He responds to us in prayer.

How does this encourage you?

Read Exodus 4:18-23.

What did Moses decide to do after his conversation with God? What do you think gave Him the courage?

How might spending time in prayer with God give you the courage to do what He asks you to do?

Once Moses was on the road, God revealed more of His plan. Moses would continue to talk to God throughout his mission to get instructions and encouragement.

What do you think Moses had learned about God by talking things through with Him?

How does this story encourage you?

How does it challenge you?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

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Wednesday

Heart check:

- *How do your prayer habits affect the way you feel about God?*
- *How do your prayer habits affect the way you interact with the people around you?*

Study:

Moses did everything God told him to do, and God rescued His people, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt (see Exodus 5-14). Then God proposed a covenant, a binding contract, with the Israelites.

Read Exodus 19:5-6.

What did God ask of the Israelites?

What did God promise in return?

The Israelites accepted God's offer, and God gave Moses a list of rules for them to follow called the Law. God wrote the Law on tablets of stone for Moses to keep. God also gave Moses instructions for a temple that God wanted His people to build. It took forty days for God to tell Moses everything He wanted Moses to know. By the time Moses came back down from the mountain where he had been talking to God, the people had grown restless. Moses's brother had built a golden calf for them to worship. When Moses saw this, he was so angry that he smashed the tablets he was carrying (see Exodus 20-31).

Why do you think Moses was so angry?

Why do you think Moses cared so much more about doing what pleased God than everyone else did? What had he been doing that they hadn't been?

How does this challenge you?

Thankfully, God's people repented (turned away from their sin) and God forgave them. God renewed His covenant with the Israelites through Moses. God told Moses to lead them to the land He had promised Abram, Isaac, and Jacob. He also wrote the Law on two new stone tablets for Moses to keep. Again, Moses was with God for forty days (see Exodus 33-34:28).

Read Exodus 34:29-35.

How did time talking to God affect Moses?

How is this like the way talking to God affects people today?

Why do you think Moses kept submitting to God when the rest of the Israelites had such a hard time doing it?

What can you learn from Moses's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Thursday

Heart check:

- *How does reading your Bible help you do what God wants you to do?*
- *How do you respond when the Bible reveals a mistake you've made?*

Study:

Even though God had blessed them greatly, the Israelites did not keep up their end of the covenant very well. By the time King Josiah ruled, the Law had been all but forgotten, and the temple was being used to worship false gods.

King Josiah became king when he was eight years old. When he was eighteen, he sent some of his men to collect the money that had been given at the temple so it could be distributed fairly among the workers. While King Josiah's men were at the temple, the high priest told them he had found the Book of the Law somewhere in the temple. Not thinking much of it, King Josiah's men brought the book to King Josiah (see 2 Kings 22:1-9).

Read 2 Kings 22:10-13.

What did King Josiah realize when he heard the words of the Book of the Law?

What had the Law revealed to Josiah?

King Josiah sent his men to ask Huldah the prophetess what would happen because of their breaking the Law (see 2 Kings 22:14).

Read 2 Kings 22:15-20.

What did God plan to do to those who had rebelled, but not repented?

What did God plan to do for King Josiah? Why?

King Josiah assembled God's people and read the Law to them. Then he renewed their covenant with God and promised to keep God's commands with all his heart. He then destroyed everything in the kingdom associated with worshipping false Gods (see 2 Kings 23:1-30).

Read 2 Kings 23:25.

The Bible reveals God's will to us just as the Law revealed God's will to His people in Josiah's day. When we read it, we have two choices. We can ignore the words and suffer the consequences of rebelling against God, or we can repent and start doing our best to obey God with His help.

How were you encouraged by the story of King Josiah?

How were you challenged?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

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Friday

Heart check:

- *What's more important to you, the position you hold at church or making a difference for Jesus?*
- *If the members of your church gave you a nickname based on the way you interact with them, what would it be?*

Study:

Barnabas wasn't one of the original twelve apostles that spent so much time with Jesus during His ministry. He joined them later, but he became a vital part of their ministry. Barnabas's real name was Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas because it means Son of Encouragement. Barnabas was literally so kind and supportive and did so much for the community of believers at that time that his friends gave him a new name. Barnabas didn't just hang out with the apostles. He made personal sacrifices as he participated with them, selling a field he owned so he could give it to the apostles to use however they wanted (see Acts 4:36-37).

Which is better, being a fun person that keeps things light at church or being someone who gets involved on a personal level? Which do you want to be?

When the early church was scattered by persecution, believers shared the good news of Jesus wherever they went. When Barnabas heard that the Greeks in Antioch had put their faith in Jesus, he didn't just smile about it and go on about his business. He went to find Paul, and the two of them left everything to spend a year with the new believers in Antioch, teaching them how to walk with Jesus by faith. They did a

wonderful job of it. Followers of Jesus in Antioch were the first to be called Christians, or little Christs (see Acts 11:19-26).

What would happen if every new follower of Jesus knew someone who was willing to walk with them through their first year of being a Christian?

The apostle Paul wrote much of the New Testament, so we talk a lot about what he did during the early days of the Church, but Barnabas was there for much of it doing the very same things that Paul did. He spoke just as boldly and experienced just as much rejection, and he did it with just as much joy as Paul did. When conflict came up in the church, Barnabas didn't leave it to the other apostles to deal with, but got right in there with Paul and Peter to iron things out (see Acts 13-15).

Read Acts 15:36-40.

What did Paul and Barnabas argue about?

Did Barnabas let one disagreement with a prominent member of the church keep him from doing what God wanted him to do?

What can you learn from Barnabas's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

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Monday

Heart check:

- *Are you more focused on what God has asked you to do or what you wish He would ask you to do?*
- *Are you content to be the person who gives to your brothers and sisters in Jesus, or do you need things to feel even?*

Study:

Priscilla and Aquilla were a married couple from Italy who believed in Jesus. When the ruler of Italy kicked all the Jews out of the country, they went to Corinth, where they met the apostle Paul. Paul was a tentmaker just like they were, so they became friends, and Priscilla and Aquilla invited Paul to live with

them. After a while, Paul stopped making tents and devoted himself to preaching the gospel of Jesus only. For a year and a half, Priscilla and Aquilla supported Paul's ministry (see Acts 18:2-11).

How might things have been different for Paul if Priscilla and Aquilla had let their deportation stop them from serving the gospel? How might Paul's ministry have been affected?

How did Priscilla and Aquilla's commitment to missions and the community of believers impact the Gentiles to whom Paul preached?

When Paul left Corinth to go to Ephesus, he took Priscilla and Aquilla with him. Priscilla and Aquilla continued to support themselves and to disciple the believers in Ephesus. After Paul left Ephesus, a man named Apollos came. He was a highly educated man who knew the Bible very well. He believed in Jesus and talked about Jesus accurately, but he didn't have the whole story yet (see Acts 18:19, 24-25).

Read Acts 18:26-28.

Who all would have been impacted if Priscilla and Aquilla had let jealousy of Paul's freedom or Apollos's skill or discontentment with their own God-given assignment keep them from playing their part in God's plan well?

We don't know much more about Priscilla and Aquilla other than the fact that they remained committed to supporting missionaries, teaching the truth of the gospel, and showing hospitality to their brothers and sisters in Jesus. We know from Paul's letters that Priscilla and Aquilla risked their lives for him at some point and that a church met in their home (see Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19).

What can you learn from Priscilla and Aquilla's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

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Tuesday

Heart check:

- *What are you willing to endure to make sure your brothers and sisters in Jesus have everything they need? What are you not willing to endure?*
- *How are you contributing to the health and welfare of future Christians?*

Study:

One could argue that the apostle Paul was more committed to missions than any other disciple. Once a zealous persecutor of Christians (see Acts 8:3), Paul put just as much energy into spreading the gospel of Jesus as he ever did try to stop it, probably more. Paul spent most of his life after putting his faith in Jesus on the move. As he traveled, Paul preached the gospel of Jesus in Jewish synagogues and to the Gentiles. He established churches, helped those churches get and stay organized, and disciplined leaders like Timothy for those churches. Whenever he could, Paul returned to the churches he had established to check on them. When he couldn't return or was delayed, he wrote letters, many of which ended up in our New Testament.

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

How deep did Paul's discipleship efforts reach? What would happen if each of us invested in someone else with future generations in mind?

Paul wasn't afraid of conflict. He didn't go looking for disagreements, but he didn't back down when he thought a decision might be made that would hinder the spread of the gospel in any way or get in the way of people putting their faith in Jesus. Although Paul didn't go looking for conflict, it often found him. Those who opposed the gospel he preached did everything they could to stop him, but they didn't.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28.

What does Paul's commitment to continue to spread the gospel in spite of his hardships tell you about his love for people? His love for Jesus?

Paul did what he could to support himself during his missionary journeys, but was willing to rely on the support of others like Priscilla and Aquilla when it worked for everyone. Knowing how it felt to give and receive such support, Paul encouraged early churches to give to one another when they were in need.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

Keeping in mind what you know about Paul, why was he so qualified to talk about giving and self-sacrifice?

How did Paul's commitment to missions and community impact the early church?

How has it impacted you?

What can you learn from Paul's example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

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Wednesday

Heart check:

- *Do you keep obeying God when He doesn't do what you want Him to? Why or why not?*
- *Which is more important, obeying God or being blessed? Explain.*

Study:

Zechariah was a Jewish priest. The Bible says that he and his wife Elizabeth "were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly" (Luke 1:6). Even so, they did not have any children. We don't know why, but Elizabeth was considered barren. In those days, barrenness was disgraceful. People assumed that you had done something wrong and God was punishing you. This was not true for Zechariah and Elizabeth, but they had no way of proving it. They longed for a child and prayed for one even though they were well past the age when most people have children.

When it was Zechariah's turn to perform his priestly duties, he went to the temple to burn incense (see Luke 1:1-10).

Read Luke 1:11-17.

Considering what the Bible tells us about them, why might God have chosen Zechariah and Elizabeth to be the parents of John the Baptist?

Why is it so important to continue to pursue personal holiness and serve well even when things aren't going the way you want them to?

Zechariah had a hard time believing what the angel Gabriel told him. When he asked how it would happen, the angel told him he would be mute until the baby was born. Sure enough, Elizabeth became pregnant shortly after Zechariah returned home. She remained in seclusion until the birth. When John the Baptist was born, all his relatives came to celebrate his birth. It was customary for baby boys to be named after their father, but Zechariah insisted that his name be John like Gabriel had instructed. As soon as Zechariah told them this, he was able to speak. He prophesied about the coming of Jesus and about the way John would prepare the people for Jesus (see Luke 1:18-25, 57-80).

Read Luke 1:80 and Matthew 3:1-6.

What unusual choices did John make as a grownup?

How might these choices have been different from what Zechariah and Elizabeth imagined for their son?

How do you think they responded to John's choices and the way God used him? Why do you think so?

What can you learn from Zechariah and Elizabeth's example of surrender?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

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Thursday

Heart check:

- *What do you do when following God's instructions could make you seem strange to other people?*
- *Does the way you currently live your life make it easier or harder for you to make sacrifices when God wants you to? Explain.*

Study:

John the Baptist was born to Zechariah and Elizabeth, who were both righteous people devoted to God's glory. John's birth was a miracle because his parents were past childbearing age. When the angel Gabriel told Zechariah that John was coming, he gave special instructions concerning John. First, he named John. He also said that John was not to take wine or other fermented drink. When John grew up, he went to live in the desert far away from people. He wore clothes made of camel's hair and wore a leather belt. He also ate locusts and honey (see Luke 1:1-11; Matthew 3:4).

John was different. The unusual choices he made were consistent with the Nazarite vow, a promise made by devout Jews. It was a way for them to separate themselves from society and focus on personal holiness. John waited in the wilderness until God told him it was time to prepare the people for Jesus's coming (see Luke 1:80).

When John got the word from God that it was time (see Luke 3:2), he began to preach repentance. People came to John from all around to be baptized by him. Jesus Himself came to John to be baptized, not because He needed to repent, but because He wanted to show He was fully submitted to God and His requirements and to identify Himself with those He came to save. John didn't want to baptize Jesus—he

felt unworthy—but he did it. John may have been unusual, but he still had opinions and preferences. He simply chose to surrender and do what God asked of him, whatever it was (see Matthew 3:13-17).

What evidence do you see that John’s effort to focus on personal holiness in the desert paid off?

Once Jesus began His ministry, John’s ministry became secondary, and some of John’s disciples were unhappy about it. John didn’t let it stop him, though.

Read John 3:22-30.

Why do you think John was so willing to fade into the background when his disciples weren’t? What had prepared him to do so?

John wasn’t getting all the attention anymore, but that didn’t keep him from speaking the truth as God had commanded him. John ended up in prison for speaking the truth to Herod about his incestuous marriage. He was eventually beheaded for doing so. Before he was killed, John sent his disciples to Jesus.

Read John 11:1-6.

What does this passage tell you about John? Why does this make his absolute surrender so remarkable?

What can you learn from John the Baptist’s example?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you’re thinking and how you’re feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Friday

Heart check:

- *Are you willing to give up your idea of how things should go and accept God’s? Why or why not?*
- *What typically happens when you do things God’s way? Your way?*

Study:

Peter was one of Jesus's twelve apostles. In fact, he was one of the three who got to be with Jesus during special moments the other apostles missed: Jesus's transfiguration (see Mark 9:2-3), Jesus raising Jairus's daughter from the dead (see Luke 8:49-56), and Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest (see Matthew 26:36-38). Peter loved Jesus, but he didn't really understand what kind of leader Jesus would be for a long time. He witnessed miracles and was the first to confess that Jesus was the Messiah (see Matthew 16:16), but he was hoping Jesus would be the kind of Messiah that would lead them to political victory. When Jesus tried to tell Peter that He was going to be crucified, Peter argued with Jesus, and Jesus rebuked him (see Matthew 16:21-23).

When things went exactly the way Jesus said they would, Peter could have abandoned Jesus and not looked back. He did deny Jesus right at first just as Jesus had predicted, but Peter knew Jesus too well and loved Him too much to live His life for anyone else (see Luke 22:54-62).

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His apostles on the shore while they were fishing. Peter jumped out of the boat and swam to Him, eager to make things right (see John 21:1-14). Jesus didn't hold Peter's mistake against him, but cooked the apostles' breakfast and gave Peter a special assignment.

Read John 21:15-19.

Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times whether he loved Jesus?

Why do you think Peter was hurt?

In this passage, Jesus tells Peter that doing what he has promised to do will eventually cost him his life. Peter isn't thrilled about it, but we see throughout the book of Acts that the martyrdom Jesus predicted for Peter wasn't enough to make Peter disobey.

What had Peter learned about the benefits of doing things Jesus's way? How did he learn it?

What had Peter learned about the cost of doing things his own way? How did he learn it?

What can you learn from Peter's example of surrender?

Respond:

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need and make any promises you need to make. Ask Him for His help fulfilling those promises.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Well done, friend! We are so proud of you and hope you will continue this helpful habit you've developed. If you want to follow another study guide going forward, we suggest *The Devo to End All Devos*, which is available for free on the Bible App or on our website. We developed this resource to teach you how to

study the Bible on your own. It covers all the basic doctrine you need to know while teaching you three effective methods for self-guided Bible study. You might find it helpful to do the study with a friend!