

The Normal Christian Life: *Not Weak, Not Weird, Not Wandering*

Week Eight: *What Good is Your Life?*



A biblical, God-centered view of self recognizes that good that has been intrinsic in us all along because **God has created it** by His sovereign will. However, we were not created with great value for our own sake. The good that God has baked directly into our specific, precise, and individual design is not so we can feel good about ourselves for our own joy and mental wellbeing. There is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit invested in each one of us for a very distinct purpose. Jesus promised power from the Holy Spirit for the work of serving others (**Acts 1:8**). The Spirit manifests Himself through a variety of gifts, and service, and outcomes—all to serve others and all given to us by the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:4-11**). Our life is **good** because we **do** good things for the **common good** of others. We do these good things not in your own strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit—an outflow of God’s Spirit in our lives.

So what? What am I supposed to DO with this?

- **Do I want ministry to be the central purpose** of my life?
- **A better way to consider it:** what Kingdom do I want to live in?
 - **The Kingdom of self:** where pleasure, accomplishment, comfort, and security is my entire focus.
 - **The Kingdom of this world:** where structures, systems, politics, culture, and agendas reign.
 - **The Kingdom of God:** where the things of God are primary; where my hope and trust is in the Lord; where what pleases me is God’s glory and presence.

A 24-Hour Prayer Vigil:

Seek God’s power and direction for Mt. Hope as we search out His will for our future. [Click here](#) to grab one or more 30-minute slots during our **24-hour prayer vigil November 9 – November 10** to cover our church in bold prayer. We’ll provide guided ideas on what and how to pray. Then join us as we wrap up with a mighty **prayer meeting and worship night, Sunday, November 10 at 5:00 p.m.**

This week, make a commitment to *invest four blocks of time* to meditate on God’s Word slowly and carefully, to reflect on the internal leanings of your own heart, and surrender to God for His help.

- You can also watch our **“Daily Six”** video series released each day this week—*Monday through Thursday*—that parallels these readings from the Book of Acts. (<https://www.youtube.com/@mounthopechurch1651>)

Day One: What Did God Just Say?

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon **Acts 13:1-12**.

Reflect: Most Christians have a hunger to understand and know the will of God for their lives. Some of this comes from the pragmatic awareness that if we could know and follow God’s will, it will likely go well for us, as His will is good. But at a deeper level, truly devoted Christians desire to serve and follow the purposes of God not just for their own wellbeing, but also for the fulfillment of God’s agenda. There is a clue to how we can hear what God has to say to us. The believers were *“worshipping the Lord and fasting”* and then *“the Holy Spirit said...”* and then they were *“sent on their way by the Holy Spirit”* (**Acts 13:2-4**). Worship means to ascribe worth (*“worship” comes from an old English term “worthship”*). As we center ourselves of the worth and value of God in our lives, to include the surrendering of our will that fasting fosters, we are in position to properly hear from the Holy Spirit. God is more than willing to speak to us; we just need to be ready to hear—which worship and fasting cultivates.

- *What is God worth to you? What place does He have among things you value in your life? Where should He become more valuable to you? What other things need to be knocked down a rung for God to have His proper place in you?*
- *Are there things you could fast from—hobbies, interests, media, social media, etc.—that would help center your heart and mind on the true value of God to you? Should you plan today to fast from something and pray for God’s leadership in your life?*

Pray: *God, reveal to me the true worth and value I am ascribing to you. Help me to see the things that I hold in higher value than you. I want to release them to you. I choose to fast from _____ for you. In Jesus’ name!* (ALSO: Consider praying **Psalm 139:23-24** as your own prayer to God!)

Day Two: What Have You Been Appointed To?

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 13:13-52](#).

Reflect: When invited by the synagogue rulers to share a word of encouragement, Paul gave a lengthy and detailed account of the promises about Messiah in the Jewish scriptures (our “Old Testament”) that Jesus fulfilled. He particularly focused on King David, one of the most central figures in Judaism whom the Lord used as an example of the coming Messiah. He noted how David had “*served God’s purpose in his own generation*” ([Acts 13:36](#)). We each have been given a unique purpose. Our lives are useful to God, especially when we recognize what He has appointed us to and step towards it.

- *Do you believe that God has a plan to use you for a distinct purpose? Do you know what that purpose is?*
- *Have you ever asked God in prayer to reveal what He wants to do through your life? Consider asking other believers who know you well to pray with you and help you discern God’s purposes for you. It is likely others can see it better than you!*

Pray: *God, I want to serve your purposes for my life. I do not want to just live for myself and my own comfort. I want to be useful to you and your agenda in the world. Reveal to me what that purpose is. Help by believing friends to discern this with me. As you reveal it, I will do it. In Jesus’ name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 100](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Three: Poisoned and Confused Minds

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [14:1-18](#).

Reflect: As Paul and Barnabas traveled through various cities, they encountered both opposition and exaltation. In Iconium, Jews who opposed their message about Jesus stirred up and “*poisoned the minds*” to turn people against them. Nevertheless, Paul leaned into the persecution and kept “*speaking boldly*” about Jesus ([Acts 14:2-3](#)). In sharp contrast, when they proclaimed Jesus and healed people in Lystra, the crowd exalted them as gods. As we consider serving Jesus in a confused and often hostile culture, it would serve us well to disregard both the opposition and the affirmation of fellow humans. Being that “*we*

too are only men, humans like you,” we should simply focus on the good news of the living God who can deliver us from “*worthless things*” ([Acts 14:15](#)). The opinions of man—either positive or negative—matter little.

- *Where do you lean too heavily on the opinions of others to define your identity or worth? Where have you given people too much power over you to control your mood, self-esteem, or value?*
- *Are you willing and able to let God solely define and direct you? Where do you need to think and feel differently about yourself?*

Pray: *God, help me to place all my identity in who you define me to be. Reveal to me where I give too much credit to the opinions of others about my identity, value, and purpose. I choose to trust you only. In Jesus’ name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 85:8-13](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Four: We Must Go Through Many Hardships

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 14:19-28](#).

Reflect: Hardship is inevitable. We spend a lot of time and energy trying to avoid hardship, but try as we may, it always seems to find us. For those who follow Jesus with their whole heart, hardship occupies a different space in our lives. Not only do general hardships in life still occur to us, but we may also face challenges related to following Jesus in a hostile world. Paul was stoned and left for dead. Yet the very next day he bounced back up to his mission of sharing Christ in every city he could. Rather than caring for his severe wounds (as would be normal), his orientation stayed outward, strengthening and encouraging the believers. He stated quite matter of fact: “*We must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God*” ([Acts 14:22](#)).

- *What space does hardship occupy in your thinking? Do you have much anxiety about it? How hard do you try to avoid hardship? Are you able to trust the Lord with your problems?*
- *Has following Jesus caused you any direct difficulty in life? How has that been? How have you turned this over to the Lord?*

Pray: *God, help me to trust in you with all my heart, and to live boldly for you. Reveal to me where I allow discouragement to pull me away from you and your purposes in my life. I choose to be courageous in Jesus’ name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 23](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Mt. Hope Church 40-Day Prayer Initiative

October – November 2024

For 40 days, would you join us in praying and fasting for God's provision and power to rest upon our church? Would you pray for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life, in the lives of people connected with our church, and for the direction and ministry of our church?

Each day, pray over the Bible verses provided. Read the passage from scripture out loud, carefully, slowly. Use the example prayer to help you pull out of the verse some ideas of how you could put the prayer in your own words!

ALSO: Join us for a 24-Hour Prayer Vigil Saturday, November 9 through Sunday, November 10. The Mt. Hope family will sign up for 30-minute prayer times throughout a 24-hour period to call upon God for the future direction and provision for our church.

DAY ONE:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Psalm 1:1-3

- God, I delight in your Word...your counsel. I surrender any place in my mind where I am following the way of the sinful. I renounce the ideas and counsel of the ungodly in my life. I choose to meditate on your Word day and night. I believe and trust that you will bring prosperity to my endeavors as I meditate on your Word! In Jesus' name!
- God, pour out your Word into our church. Stir the people of Mt. Hope to be in the Word daily. Transform us by your Word. Reveal your Word to every one of us. Accomplish what you sent it to do in our lives! In Jesus' name!

DAY TWO:

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 26:3

- Oh, God...you give me peace. I receive this peace in Jesus' name. I trust in your to be my safety in all my circumstances. Where I am stressed, I surrender it to you, and I believe you for my help and comfort. I renounce anxiety and restlessness. I stand steadfast in my trust of you, and claim a sound, peaceful, stable mind. In Jesus' name!

- God, strengthen the people of Mt. Hope. Lead us to rest and steadfast trust. Make us a church that is completely dependent upon you! In Jesus' name!

DAY THREE:

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways... For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalm 139:1-5; 13-16

- God, I thank you that you know every thought, every desire, every action, every initiative of my life. I thank you that you are with every detail of me. I renounce the lie of Satan that I am insufficient, broken, a failure, or incapable. I receive and stand in faith upon your intimate love over me. In Jesus' name!
- God, reveal to our church and our people the uniqueness you have created in us. Reveal to each of us the unique place we have in your church, and how the specific way you created each of us is for a purpose designed to build your church. In Jesus' name!

DAY FOUR:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

- God, I trust in you alone. I renounce my dependence upon my own understanding as all there is to truth, and I confess that your Word is more truthful than anything I can perceive. I acknowledge and confess that you are present with me in every moment and every circumstance, and I choose to trust you. In Jesus' name.
- God, lead our church to be a ministry of truth led by your Holy Spirit. Help us to make the leadership decisions in front of us by the wisdom and leading of the Spirit, and not by human understanding. Reveal yourself to us in our steps, our thoughts, our decisions, and our direction. In Jesus' name!

DAY FIVE:

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Isaiah 1:18

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:18-19

- I confess that in Jesus' name, I am forgiven and cleansed entirely. I renounce the lie that I am still marked and still defined by that sin. I confess that I am free, forgiven, cleansed, and accepted, in Jesus' name!
- God, cleanse us of any hidden sins, or any corporate sins that might be affecting our church. Wash us entirely in the gracious blood of Jesus for all that is wrong among us. In Jesus' name!

DAY SIX:

This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.

Isaiah 30:15

- God, I rest in the grace and mercy of your salvation. I have given you my heart in repentance from my sin. Now, I sit quietly and trust. I renounce all shame and anxiousness over my past. I trust you to be my strength. In Jesus' name!
- God, as a people, as a church, we rest in you. We depend on you for our future. We submit ourselves to you. Help our pastor, our Elders, our board, our staff, and our leaders to rest solely and dependently upon you. In Jesus' name!

DAY SEVEN:

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Isaiah 30:21

- God, I receive your wisdom and guidance in my life. I trust that you will speak to me of all that you desire for me to do. I will not stand in my own strength and understanding but will trust in you. In Jesus' name!
- God, reveal your specific direction to us. In particular with the building expansion we are exploring, reveal precisely each step, each provision, each decision to us. In Jesus' name!

DAY EIGHT:

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:29-31

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9

- God, I receive your strength. I renounce the lie that I am incapable, or that I have no strength left. My strength is not the issue; it is your strength, O God, in which I stand. I rejoice that your power is perfected in my weakness. I receive your power, rest, strength, energy, and way in my life. In Jesus' name!
- God, pour out your strength into our church. Provide power for healing, for victory, for deliverance, for freedom. Strengthen us for the tasks ahead and renew us from our weariness. In Jesus' name!

DAY NINE:

"No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD.

Isaiah 54:17

- I rejoice that nothing the devil can forge against will prevail, for God is with me. Lord, I thank you that you will vindicate me. I renounce the lie that I must defend myself. I renounce any lie of the devil that seeks to hold me in fear. I am secure in the Lord Jesus Christ!
- God, protect us from the attacks of the enemy against our church and the people of our church. Deliver us from all evil, and from any evil spirits that are arrayed against us. In Jesus' name!

DAY TEN:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:10-11

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

- God, accomplish your Word in my life. I receive your Word as all truth; I confess it is more authoritative than anything I can perceive. Divide and discern within me the true attitudes of my heart. I renounce all the lies the enemy sends against me, and I stand upon the Word of God as my victory. In Jesus' name!
- God, powerfully spread your Word through the teaching ministries of Mt. Hope Church. Enable every teacher, small group leader, mentor, and friend within our church to speak the Word of God boldly. In Jesus' name!

DAY ELEVEN:

For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Isaiah 57:15

- God, I confess to you the contrite humility of my heart. I renounce the lie of my insufficiency and I renounce the pride and determination of my flesh. I accept the strength of your Spirit with in me. In Jesus' name!
- God, help our church to be humble and contrite before you. Help us not fall to the trappings of human success or popularity. Help us not to pursue a worldly polish to our ministry. We submit ourselves to you and trust you for your power to come solely from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name!

DAY TWELVE:

“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’”

Isaiah 65:1

- Thank you, God, for revealing yourself to me. I ask you to do the same for my friends and loved ones who are far from you. Chase after them, call to them, and reveal yourself to them. In Jesus' name!
- God, reveal yourself to everyone in Loudoun County through our church and the many other churches like us who are seeking your face. Pour out a mighty awakening and revival in our county. In Jesus' name!

DAY THIRTEEN:

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

- God, I confess that I am blessed in my dependance upon you. I will not fear the challenges, shortcomings, needs, and insufficiencies in my life, for you are with me. I trust that you will bring forth supply into my life. I renounce worry and fear. I receive joy, peace, and confidence from you. In Jesus' name!
- God, we trust you for provision, resources, and strength to accomplish what you desire in our church. You are enough for us. We do not need the power of man. We will not fear the absence of resources. We trust you have enough to supply us all we need. In Jesus' name!

DAY FOURTEEN:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 29:11-14

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

- God, I thank you that your plans for me are good. I stand in your hope. I renounce the lie that my future is bleak. I trust that you are with me, and that you are working in my life towards good outcomes. I choose to seek your face, to seek for all of you. I give you all of my heart. In Jesus' name!
- God, we trust you for the direction of this church. Lead us. Reveal to us where you are taking us and what you want to do next within it. Mt. Hope belongs to you. Please do your work here among us! In Jesus' name!

DAY FIFTEEN:

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Lamentations 3:22-29

- God, I rejoice that your mercy and love for me is constant and fresh every single day. I renounce the lie that the circumstances around me are too great. You are my portion; you are all that I need. I wait patiently for your salvation from all my concerns. I have hope in you. In Jesus' name!
- God, thank you for the healing you have brought to so many people at Mt. Hope. Continue to be the strength and deliverer of all of us. Rescue your people from the hardships that seek to consume them. Empower us to be a church of refuge and support to everyone in need. In Jesus' name!

DAY SIXTEEN:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Joel 2:28-29

- God, I receive the new work you are doing in me. You have changed my heart. You have taken out the hardness and placed in me a soft spirit. I receive your Holy Spirit within me. Move me, O God, to follow you in all my ways. Pour out your Holy Spirit over me and lead me in new directions. In Jesus' name!
- God, pour out your Holy Spirit in a mighty baptism upon Mt. Hope. Fill us with your Spirit in the same way you filled the early church! In Jesus' name!

DAY SEVENTEEN:

I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed.

Joel 2:25-26

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

- All the damage of my past has been restored by you, O God. Thank you for making me so brand new, that anything from my past no longer has a hold on me, and it no longer defines me. I receive the brand-new creation that you have formed in me. I renounce shame and I receive your new identity for me. I confess and rejoice that I am an entirely new creation—nothing of the old remains. All is made new, in Jesus' name!
- God, lead everyone who encounters Mt. Hope Church to a brand-new life. Restore the wounded and broken among us and through us! In Jesus' name!

DAY EIGHTEEN:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor...Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

Luke 4:18-19, 21

- God, I rejoice that you have come to set the captive free. Free my friends and loved ones. Give them sight to see the fullness of your Gospel. Set them free from all demonic oppression. I renounce the devil's blinding of their minds. Reveal yourself to them. I stand upon the fulfillment of the promise of scripture that you will set them free, in Jesus' name!
- God, anoint Mt. Hope Church to proclaim the Gospel in our community. Use us powerfully. Draw the broken, the oppressed, the needy to our church to receive the Holy Spirit's power and deliverance over them! In Jesus' name!

DAY NINETEEN:

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Luke 6:38

- God, I receive the abundance you want to pour into my life in return and in measure with my generosity. Use that which I give to others and to your work. I trust you to meet my needs where my own provisions are insufficient. In Jesus' name!
- God, pour out abundant provision for the physical needs of our church. If you indeed are leading us to an expansion of our facility, we trust you to supernaturally provide for the financial resources to do so. Lead me—speak to me—about what part I should play in sacrificing with generosity for our future! In Jesus' name!

DAY TWENTY:

I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Luke 10:18-19

- God, I rejoice that you have written my name in the Book of Life, that you have saved me. I stand in the joy of that salvation and receive the authority you have given me, in Jesus' name!
- God, overcome the enemy through Mt. Hope Church. We stand in your authority. In Jesus' name!

DAY TWENTY-ONE through FORTY: Repeat. Seriously... go back and read and pray the same verses and the same petitions each day. But this time, expand your thoughts and put fresh dependency on the Lord!