

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

Week Seven: *Destroying Division, Healing Hostility*



A key theme in the New Testament is how Jesus destroys barriers of hostility between divided people. Discord and hostility are not just something distant and external to us. The idea of “us” and “them” is a human condition where we all develop strongholds of suspicion, prejudice, fear, and ignorance. When the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in [Acts 2](#), the very first miracle the Holy Spirit performed was to anoint the believers with a supernatural gift to speak the good news of Jesus to thirteen different nationalities and ethnicities that were gathered outside ([Acts 2:5-12](#)). This miracle of languages would be repeated throughout the early church (see [Acts 10:46](#) and [Acts 19:6](#)) as God broke down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile (see [Ephesians 2:12-18](#)). The miracle deepened to include the ability to pray with the power of the Holy Spirit in spiritual languages to break down more strongholds of division (see [Romans 8:26](#), [1 Corinthians 14:1-3](#), [12-14](#)). God is revealing one of His most important agendas: unity and love.

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

- **Do I want God enough to trust Him** with supernatural power for ministry in my life?
- **Do I want God to empower me [us]** to deal with the dividing wall? Am I ready for “them” to become “us”?
- **Do I want this enough to seek God relentlessly** for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all of us?

A Special 40-Day Prayer Emphasis:

During the fall season at Mt. Hope, we are challenging everyone to step into a focused, purposeful, and fervent prayer emphasis. In addition to the four daily readings from Acts, create some space each day this week to pray with the verses and examples provided later in this handout.

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: Settling Religious Controversy

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 11:1-18](#).

Reflect: *“There’s nothing new under the sun,” Ecclesiastes 1:9* says. Controversy is commonplace to religion as people try to stay faithful to what they understand to be true. When Cornelius and his family trusted Christ, Peter had to defend whether Gentiles (non-Jews) could become Christians without first converting to Judaism through the ritual of circumcision. In the early church, Jewish Christians did not see themselves as a separate religion. They believed Jesus simply fulfilled all the promises of Judaism. But as the Gospel was preached to Gentiles and they began to trust Christ, this new controversy had to be settled. Peter’s defense of God embracing the Gentiles was how he observed the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them and how the Spirit spoke to him in a vision. God led Peter; he trusted God’s wisdom and power and he obeyed.

- *Are there people or people groups that you think are farther from God than you? As you consider relating to them, how are you postured towards them? Do you care deeply for their salvation in Christ, or are you more concerned with avoiding controversy or awkward relational dynamics with them?*
- *Who do you think God may have placed in your life that is hungrier for God than you perceive? If you knew they were open to faith, would that make it easier to share Jesus with them? Why or why not? What do you need from God to help you?*

Pray: *God, help me to trust the leading of your Holy Spirit as I interact with people throughout my life. Please lead me to those you want me to invite into your kingdom. Open doors of opportunity to share the good news with those who are truly ready to receive. In Jesus’ name!*

(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 103](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Two: The Hand of the Lord Will be With You

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 11:19-30](#).

Reflect: Many of us fear sharing faith with others because we think we don't know enough or that we won't be successful. We fear making a fool of ourselves or losing relational credibility. As respect for Christianity diminishes around us, we may feel ill-equipped to be His witness to others. As the early Christians began to spread the "good news about the Lord Jesus," do you notice God's response? "The Lord's hand was upon them, and great number of people believed" ([Acts 11:20-21](#)). It is not our strength, ability, or even readiness that translates into effectiveness in sharing the good news with others. It is the Lord's hand—the power promised in the Holy Spirit that enables us to be His witnesses ([Acts 1:8](#)).

- *Do you trust that God can empower you where you feel weak and ill-equipped? What hinders you from trusting His power to be enough for you?*
- *Are you hungry to see others understand who Jesus is and to trust him with their lives? What other interests and agendas in your life have higher value to you than witnessing for Jesus?*

Pray: *God, help me overcome my fear that I do not know enough or have enough ability to share the good news of Jesus with others. Help me to recognize your hand upon me in the power of the Holy Spirit. Give me the strength you've promised and use me for your glory. In Jesus' name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 16](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Three: Perfect Peace No Matter the Circumstance

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [12:1-19](#).

Reflect: Throughout human history, politicians have hungered more for power than morality. When King Herod saw that the murder of Christians gained him political power with the Jews, he doubled down on his persecution of the church—not because he cared one way or the other about Christianity. It was because he could extend his precious political power. Peter would be his next victim, save for the supernatural intervention of the angel of the Lord. But notice Peter's posture prior to God's deliverance: "Peter was sleeping" in perfect peace even while he

faced torture and execution ([Acts 12:6](#)). The one who trusts in the Lord will find themselves in perfect peace... no matter the circumstances!

- *Do you trust God with every circumstance in your life? What could threaten you that would be "too much" for God to handle?*
- *Is there anxiety in your life that keeps you from resting well in your trust of the Lord? Where do you need to surrender your worry to God? Do you think He is truly capable of leading you through those troubling circumstances?*

Pray: *God, help me to rest in you with all my heart. Reveal to me where I have given anxiety too large a space in my life. I surrender to you everything that I fear. I release control. I trust your power. In Jesus' name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Isaiah 26:1-9](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Four: God deposes kings... a Word before our election!

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 12:19-25](#).

Reflect: It is quite pertinent to our immediate cultural angst about an upcoming election to consider how God deals with those in political power. [Daniel 2:21](#) tells us that God "sets up kings and deposes them" at His discretion and in His timing. [Romans 13:1](#) reveals that no authority exists except that which is established by God. This is hard for us to fathom as we look at the corruption and ungodly character of many in the highest positions of power, and even more difficult to understand when we consider evil tyrants and dictators throughout history. But how God dealt with Herod should help us trust God no matter the outcome of any election or political development. God is sovereign and His Word will spread no matter the environment!

- *Are you anxious about our current political situation in America? What troubles you about it? Can you release this fear to God?*
- *Do you believe God is capable of leading you and protecting you through whatever political or economic storm may come our way? Why or why not?*

Pray: *God, I surrender to you my fear and anxiety about politics. I confess that you are sovereign, and that no political situation will hinder your Word. I choose to trust in you. Accomplish your will in me. In Jesus' name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 46](#) 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!