

The Growth Journal Magazine

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Happy Mother's Day to Our Sisters in Topeka Correctional Facility from the Little Ones that Love You!



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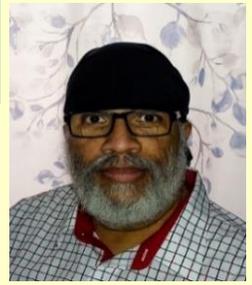


THERE IS MORE POWER
IN ONE WORD
FROM GOD THAN ALL THE
POWER OF THE ENEMY
COMBINED

Food for Thought: "A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one else can take." —Cardinal Mermillod

The 12 Disciples of Jesus Christ – Judas

by Alywin Mitchell



We have been looking at the 12 disciples or apostles. We began with Peter, then James, John, and Andrew. Now we are going to look at possibly one of the most written about and discussed disciples of all, the infamous Judas Iscariot.

Very little is mentioned about Judas before his betrayal of Jesus.

While the Bible tells us how Jesus called some of the disciples, that's not the case with Judas Iscariot. He's simply recorded as being one of the 12 and is always listed last. It must seem like Jesus made an enormous mistake to call someone who was so fatally flawed and would eventually betray him, but all of the disciples were flawed in some way.

The Gospel of John tells us that Judas Iscariot was, believe it or not, in charge of the group's money. His role as guardian of the finances suggests that he may have had money handling experience as well as ability. I have often wondered why Matthew wasn't in charge of the money. He was educated and was a former tax collector. Maybe Jesus thought being in charge of the money, might have been a temptation for him.

An alternative opinion is that Matthew was very good with money and had already proven himself trustworthy to Jesus. If he had been in charge of the money, and Judas was stealing, Matthew might have called Judas out as being a thief. Would Judas have remained a disciple? He might have been replaced with someone else and the prophesy of Jesus being betrayed would not have been fulfilled.

Before he is arrested, Jesus in John 17:12, is praying to the Father for His disciples, Jesus mentions that He "*protected them and kept them safe*" and that none of them were lost except the "*son of perdition.*"

The word *perdition* means "eternal damnation" or "utter destruction." It can also be used as a synonym for *hell*. When a person is called "son of perdition," the meaning is a person is in an unredeemable state, someone who is already damned while he is still alive: the "*son of perdition,*" was Judas Iscariot.

Judas like all of the disciples, left everything to follow our Lord. Judas was actively involved in the ministry, and like the other disciples, he was given remarkable spiritual gifts. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luke 9:1-2

The 12 Disciples of Jesus Christ – Judas Continued

by Alywin Mitchell

Judas walked with Jesus for three years. He saw the greatest life ever lived on this planet up close and personal. He was there and directly witnessed the miracles Jesus performed. When Jesus fed the 5,000, Judas was there. When Jesus calmed the storm, Judas was there. When

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Judas was there. Judas was there and heard firsthand the Sermon on the Mount, so there's no escaping the fact that he knew, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." Matthew 7:13-14 Judas also heard firsthand the warnings Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, so he knew there is a hell to avoid and a heaven to gain.

With Judas's own eyes, he saw the purest evidence of who Jesus was. With his own ears, he heard the excellent teachings of Jesus. With his own feet, he followed the greatest example there is of love and mercy. And still, this man Judas, he still betrayed Jesus! In the end, he abandoned the faith he once professed.

There is something incomprehensible about a person who abandons the faith once they have professed.

Today it seems that many are abandoning the faith they once professed. The story of Judas warns us to guard our hearts, for fear that we too, may drift away.

Satan launched a relentless attack on Judas's soul, just like he makes a relentless attack on everyone who chooses to follow Jesus Christ. But Judas opened the door to Satan.

Judas had kept secret sins he would not confess. Unconfessed sin opens the door to Satan's power. He only gains access when we open the door.

When we choose to get close to Jesus, one of two things are going happen: you will either become completely His, or you will end up even more separated from Him. Satan doesn't gain a foothold in the lives of people who are walking in the glorious light with Jesus Christ.

Finally, the story of Judas tells us that nothing beneficial can come from giving up on Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is of incomparable value, and following Him is worth any cost, even unto death.

I truly wanted this narrative about Judas to be uplifting, encouraging and inspiring, so I will end it this way... To refuse and resist the claim of God on your life is to pick a fight that there is no way you can possibly win, surrender all to Jesus Christ. Continue to walk with Jesus and you will be saved and sustained by His great power.

When Jesus Christ comes in power and glory, I want you and I to be counted among his friends, not among his enemies.

This Momma...

My Poetic Capturing of What I Learned By Seating At The Feet, Observing, and Conversing With Resilient Mommas!

*Written by Anthony J. Butler-CEO/Founder-The VIP (Violence "I" Prevent) Movement, LLC
Multigenerational Speaker-Author-Poetic Presenter-Creative Thinking Consultant*

This Momma made some mistakes, but I will take it all in stride.

Momma...A title I won't deny.

Growing up...Reflections on my Momma...now I'm a Momma and my decisions, my drama, my trauma, my past, my present all collide!

I'm a Momma even after I die (That's A Whole Word Right There!!!) and while I am living...I will start living! Mistakes will not define this Momma. I will live and forgive and pray that they will forgive me for what I said, what I did, I won't deny this Momma has made a decision and I decide today...right now...I will grow through the hurt...sow through the dirt....row in this life boat and when the winds, the waves, the storms, the waves attempt to get me to focus on the mistakes I made...the mistakes my momma made...I will sail with my head held high and make the best out of these upcoming days because this momma's heart cries for love...to give it...to live it...to receive it...that's what God models for us and I will play my role and be a role model from this moment on.

I'm a rolling momma! Row-Role-Roll with the punches and I got a hunch this momma will grow a whole bunch...This momma will be known for bouncing back and extending a hand of peace and whether or not it is embraced...oh well...now I can sleep better with more peace because this momma made some mistakes, but I will take it all in stride.

Momma...a title I won't deny...Growing up...Reflections on my Momma...now I'm a Momma and my decisions, my drama, my trauma, my past, my present all collide!

This momma is stronger, wiser, and nothing, no one, can confine this momma's love and I choose to give it and live in it and feel it!!! This Momma is grateful to have another day, another chance, another opportunity to say... I love me...I love you. My sons, my daughters, my momma...I love me and I love you!

This momma is me and my future choices will be walking...strutting...and stepping in victory!

Being a mother is an entirely unique position from most others. We spend hours painfully bringing a child into the world, with hopes that they will be beautiful, healthy children, and eventually successful adults.

When our children encounter trouble or issues, and/or make mistakes, we feel somewhat responsible. We do our best to support them without coddling them, correct them without condemning them, and love them without spoiling them. All of this is a very tough balance. No mother or parent begins this role with a written handbook. What works for one child or what worked for us as children, may or may not work for the next.



With all of this taken into consideration, there is an undeniable love for our children that isn't easy to part with. A child never leaves our hearts. They never leave our minds. Even the worst mother can't help but think about their child, even if for a brief moment.

Know this, you are loved and thought about. You may have made a mistake or even several and are now being held captive to the consequences, but you cannot escape the love and thoughts of your mother. Even if your relationship is estranged, there are several mothers in this ministry who love you, think about you, pray for you, write to you, and ultimately care about you and your wellbeing.

Keep your head held high, knowing that you cannot escape our love for all of you!

From each and every mother, Happy Mother's Day!

I never baked cookies with my grandma. Not that she didn't bake; her cookies are delicious. For some reason, we didn't do it together. Nor did I help her with her flower bed, though she has gorgeous plants! I'm sure she read to me, but I probably didn't sit still long enough for us to finish a book.

When I was a kid, my grandma set up a classroom so we could play school if we spent any time inside. My cousins and I ran around outside doing who knows what, probably messing with tractors or disturbing cows. If it was winter, we played tag in the basement, and grandma would have cookies waiting for us when we got hungry.

My grandma had ovarian cancer a few years ago. Surgeons removed a majority of it, and chemotherapy got rid of the rest of it. The doctors gave her a low chance of surviving, but she did. Last year, my grandma's cancer came back. She began chemotherapy again.

A few weeks ago, my grandma had a TIA, a minor stroke. When having lunch with her sisters and my mom, her arm felt numb. My mom took her to the emergency room. It didn't take long for the doctors to figure out what was going on, and a few hours later, my grandma was fine.

My mom wasn't fine, and neither was I.

My grandma's body is broken, and it's only a matter of time.

My mom was worried about something like that happening again and not being prepared. Thankfully, my grandma had a list of medications in her purse, but my mom didn't know who to call or tell the doctor if my grandma couldn't.

Grief hit me. It finally dawned on me that I had to start saying goodbye to my grandma. We knew that when the cancer came back, it was only a matter of time before her body wouldn't be able to fight it anymore. Currently, her white blood cell count is low, so she doesn't have to do chemotherapy. Life is semi-normal for her except for the mini-stroke.

The last time I called her, it was hard to talk to her. I want to call her because I know I won't have her forever, but it reminds me that I won't have her forever. The last time I called, she told me about the peace she felt. Ever since the diagnosis, my grandma has accepted that her body is failing and that she will eventually pass away.

God gave her this peace. My grandma explained that she doesn't worry about her situation anymore. The emergency room visit didn't phase her. She knows where she is going after her death, and she is ready.

My grandma never complains about the treatment or how uncomfortable she is. I have always thought she has a quiet strength. Today, the world thinks that strength is the loudest woman or the one with the least clothes. But it's the woman that stays with the same man for fifty-five plus years, raises two successful children, and helps grow a farming empire without complaining-like my grandma.

My grandma has lived a whole life. Not many people can say they watched their grandchildren grow up or met their great-grandchildren. Not many people can look out the window at a dream that became a reality. Not many people have been more loved or cherished than she has.

My grandma is ready.



The pain of grief is different for everyone and every situation. I had felt grief all at once when a friend committed suicide, and slowly over time, like with my grandma. I'm not sure which is worse: a slow burn or being engulfed in flames.

If I don't deal with the slow burn as it comes, it will build up and become harder to tackle. I have volunteered to give my grandma's eulogy and have started composing my speech. It has helped me process what is happening and has helped me grieve. Every time I work on it, I get to relive the good times with my grandma, and it helps.

I'm saying goodbye to my grandma while taking full advantage of the time I have left. I feel like it's borrowed time. If you knew you were going to die soon, how differently would you live? I'm sure you have heard that question before, but have you thought about your loved ones? If you knew your father, mother, grandma, or grandpa would die soon, what would you do differently?

A Mother's Day Blessing

*Just as God gives to each rose
A gentle touch of dew,
And gives to each evening sky
The lovely sunset's hue,
So may He give to you
From His enduring love,
Great happiness and hearts content
And Blessings from above.*

*It's our continued prayer
That the Lord Bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face to shine upon you
And be gracious to you,
The Lord lift up His countenance on you
And give you peace.
Numbers 6:24-26*

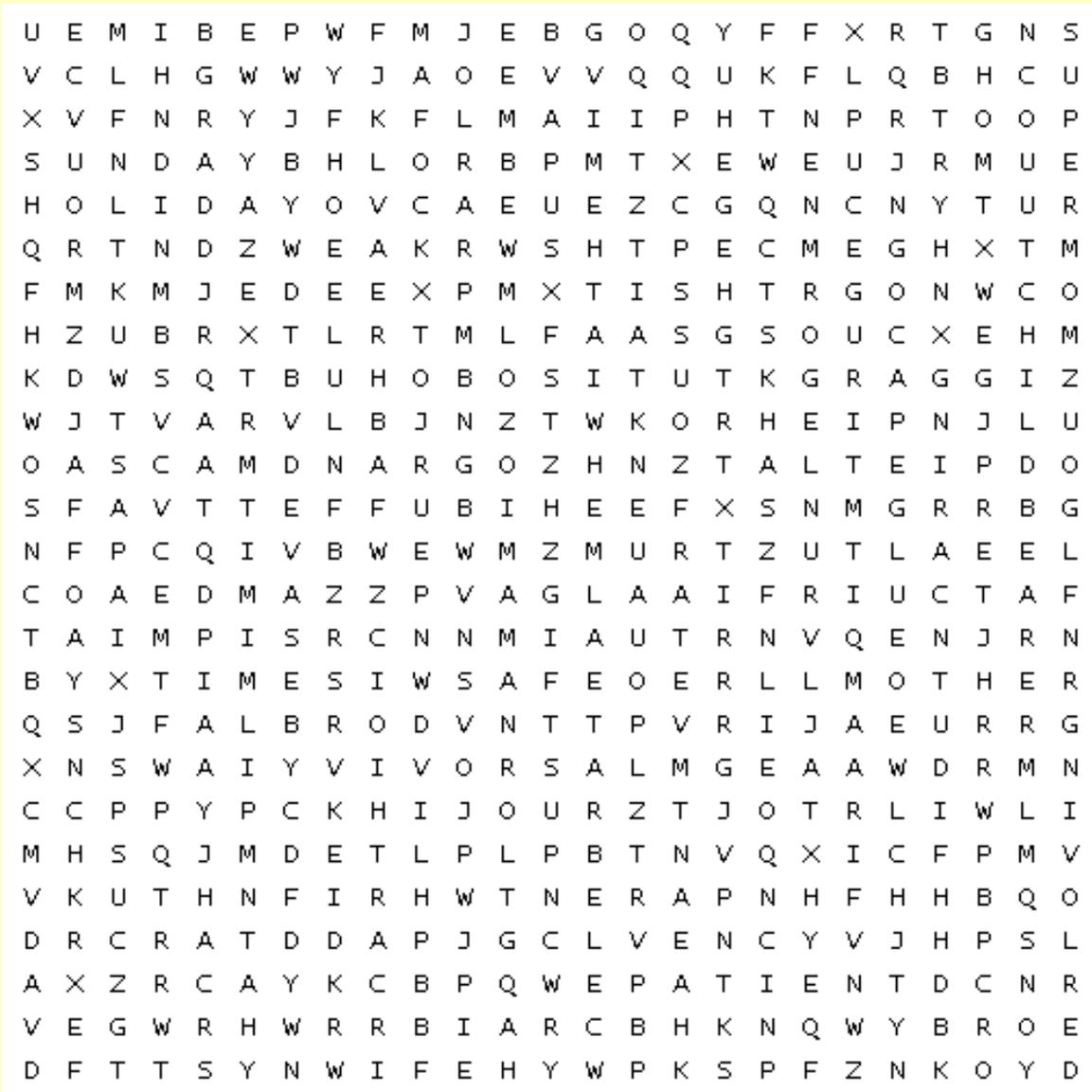
Happy Mother's Day!

Words to Grow By - by Linda Lewis

Be Encouraged!

God does not want you to get discouraged,
But rather to be a prisoner of Hope.
Instead of being chained to sadness, fear, hopelessness or dread,
Let Hope in the Lord feed your faith.
And remember...
God found Gideon in a hole.
He found Joseph in a prison.
He found Daniel in a lion's den.
He has a curious habit of showing up in the midst of trouble, not the absence.
Where the world sees failure,
God see future.
Next time you feel unqualified to be used by God remember this,
He tends to recruit from the pit, not the pedestal.
1 Corinthians 15:58

Mother's Day Word Search



Mother	Child Bearer	Children	Mother in Law
Church	Flowers	Holiday	Patient
Gifts	Wife	Matriarch	Restaurant
Brunch	Family	Glue	Supermom
Grandma	Mama	Beloved	Cornerstone
Appreciation	Thoughtful	Parent	Wise
Celebrate	Buffett	Honor	Protective
Perfume	Stepmom	Caring	Loving
Sunday	Mimi	Grandkids	Tradition

The Walk *by Vernon G, Ellsworth Correctional Facility*

As I sit here and contemplate my walk with God, I fall back to when I was younger, and I was about myself and the world. To anyone I ran over along the way, please forgive me for my attitudes, actions, and opinions. For I never meant to harm anyone along the way. I just wanted what I wanted, and I was not concerned with others and their needs, dreams, and wants. But I should have been.

But as I have gotten older and now know the Lord My God and the way I walk with Him, I often reflect on what it means to be a person of faith.

To me the most immediate thing is love, for without it we are lost. As you know, that is not such an easy thing in a place such as this. How to love when surrounded by so much hate? Then I reflect on John 3:16 (NIV) For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have ever lasting life. So, who am I to hate anyone? So, I ask for forgiveness a lot, no matter where I am. But is hate the same thing as judging someone? If thoughts of discontentment fester, it is the same. So, by that token we, need to ask ourselves what is it about that person or situation that has brought about these feelings? Then the Word of God comes into my heart and mind where it says love thy enemy, pray for those who persecute you. So I let said behaviors go and pray for them and for myself and ask God for forgiveness.

We are to love our enemies as we love ourselves. I think that all God has planned for us hangs on that precept. For God to show us all that He has in store for us, we have to love first. We must accept what is the people, situations, and things in our life. There are things that we will not like or even want, but remember God first, in all things, and that the most important thing is love they neighbor, thine enemy, and most importantly, love they self.

What do you see? *by Vernon G, Ellsworth Correctional Facility*

John 14:20 (NIV) On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

When you look at those around you what do you see? Do you see kindness, humility, goodness, grace, mercy? Or do you see hate, pride, greed, envy, and strife?

Maybe, just maybe, we are looking with the wrong eyes. Are you using the eyes of this world or are you using the eyes given to you by the Lord living in you? For how we see the world is how we see ourselves.

I love the fact the Lord lives in me. It gives me the way to see the people of this world. But being in this world clouds my eyes. I have to use my faith in God and His Word to wipe my eyes clean and see His creation as it truly is.

For everything and everyone is hand made by God and should be viewed as such no matter what the world does to block your view.

1. Learn What's Changed

First, you need to learn what's changed.

If you've been in prison for a while, there's a good chance that technology has changed significantly in the time you've been in jail.

2. Find Housing

In the meantime, you need to find housing.

That said, we know that finding housing can be difficult. First, as previously noted, the world is wildly different from the one you knew. You may not even know where to look. Ask about any resources on transitional housing for newly released inmates, check into your options on that front. Your housemates in such a house know what you're going through and can help you find your footing.

3. Establish a Routine

From there, it's important to establish a routine. Know what you are going to do each day. Have a plan. Don't just get up with no agenda in mind and wing it. That is one of the quickest ways to end up somewhere you don't need to be.

4. Steer Clear of Negative Influences

Whatever you do, it's important, especially in the early days of getting out of prison, to steer clear of negative influences. First, you need to steer clear of the old circles that got you in prison in the first place. Change your playmates and playgrounds.

5. Finish Your Education, If You Haven't Yet

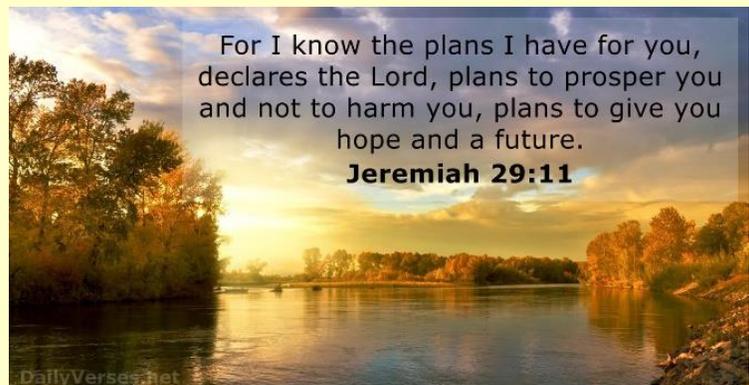
School doesn't teach you everything, but having an education does open doors to your future. So if you haven't finished your education, getting out is a great time to start.

6. Get a Job

Finding a job with a criminal record is not the easiest thing to do, but it is possible. There are many companies that are willing to give felons a chance such as Amazon and UPS to name a few. There are many other felon friendly companies out there as well. Start asking around about them before you get released. Be honest on your job application and in your interview. Apply for as many jobs as you can until you find one.

7. Finally: Pray, Pray, Pray and Pray some More

Ask God to open doors, show you favor and to line you up with men and women that can help you in the right direction. God is faithful and wants what is best for you. As a matter of fact He already crafted a plan of success for you before you took this detour. He is waiting to restore you back to that plan.



ANNIE'S STORY

(Article from Prison Fellowship)



Annie believed three lies about herself: that she was unloved, alone, and worthless. When she looked in the mirror, she just saw a young, single mother struggling with addiction and despair. She had tried so hard to live life on her terms, but she couldn't save herself. Then childhood memories of Sunday church services came to her. Standing under the stars, Annie cried, "Jesus, please save me. I can't do it anymore. I just keep making it worse. Save me. I need You." Days later, a warrant was issued for Annie's arrest. She was going to prison.

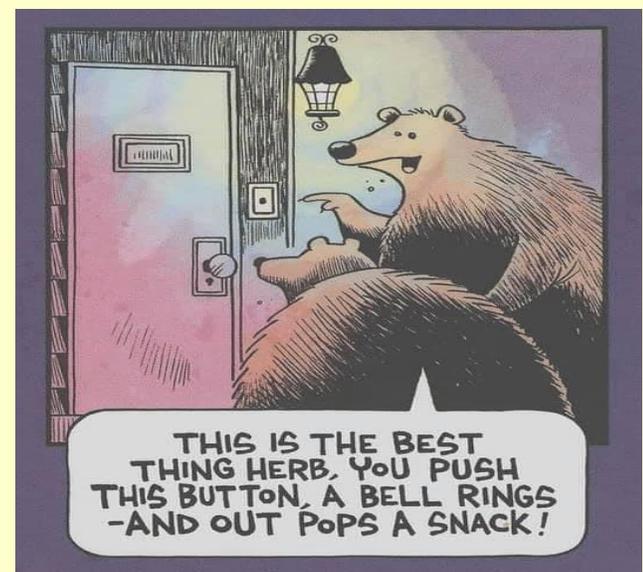
Annie discovered the freedom of walking with Jesus in prison. After being granted early release, she ran straight to a church where wise Christian women surrounded her with love and support. Annie soon discovered her passion for teaching and earned a degree in education, while striving to raise her children in a godly home. For more than a decade, she has worked to bring hope and healing to incarcerated women. Today she serves on staff at Prison Fellowship, organizing programs designed to meet the spiritual needs of women behind bars.

Sayings Of Bible Mothers

10. Samson! Get your hand out of that lion. You don't know where it's been! (Judges 14:5-8)
9. David! I told you not to play in the house with that sling! Go practice your harp. We pay good money for those lessons!
8. Abraham! Stop wandering around the countryside and get home for supper!
7. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! I told you never to play with fire!
6. Cain! Get off your brother! You're going to kill him some day!
5. Noah! No, you can't keep them! I told you, don't bring home any more strays!
4. Gideon! Have you been hiding in that wine press again? Look at your clothes! (Judges 6:11)
3. James and John! No more burping contests at the dinner table, please. People are going to call you the sons of thunder! (Mark 3:17)
2. Judas! Have you been in my purse again?!

And the number one biblical saying of mothers is:

1. Jesus! Stop working on that old wood and come in and eat! You'd spend your life on that wood if your father asked ya to!





Each One Reach One

Did you know that as a born again believer in Jesus Christ you have a responsibility to usher someone else into the Kingdom of God? Yep, even though you may not be a preacher, teacher, evangelist, pastor, apostle, or anyone in a religious position, you have been called to reach the lost.

Matthew 28:19-20 is where Jesus tells his disciples, **“¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”** This was the very last thing Jesus told them before being taken up to heaven after His resurrection. It had to be important if He made sure it was the last thing He told them.

He tells them to go out and **“teach what He taught them”**. Keep in mind the last thing He taught them was to go ***out and make disciples of others***. So they had to teach others that also. Thus, every person that gets taught has to go and teach someone else. That kept happening until it got to you. Yes, you got saved because the disciples obeyed Jesus back then and it got passed on and on until it made its way to us. Now that someone passed it on to you, you have to find someone else that does not know the Lord and pass the good news on to them. Whew! That was a mouthful, but I think you got the point.

It does not end with you. You cannot be content with just being saved. You have to be concerned about those that have not made it to where you are yet.

Here are some ways you can get started fulfilling your duty just by opening the door:

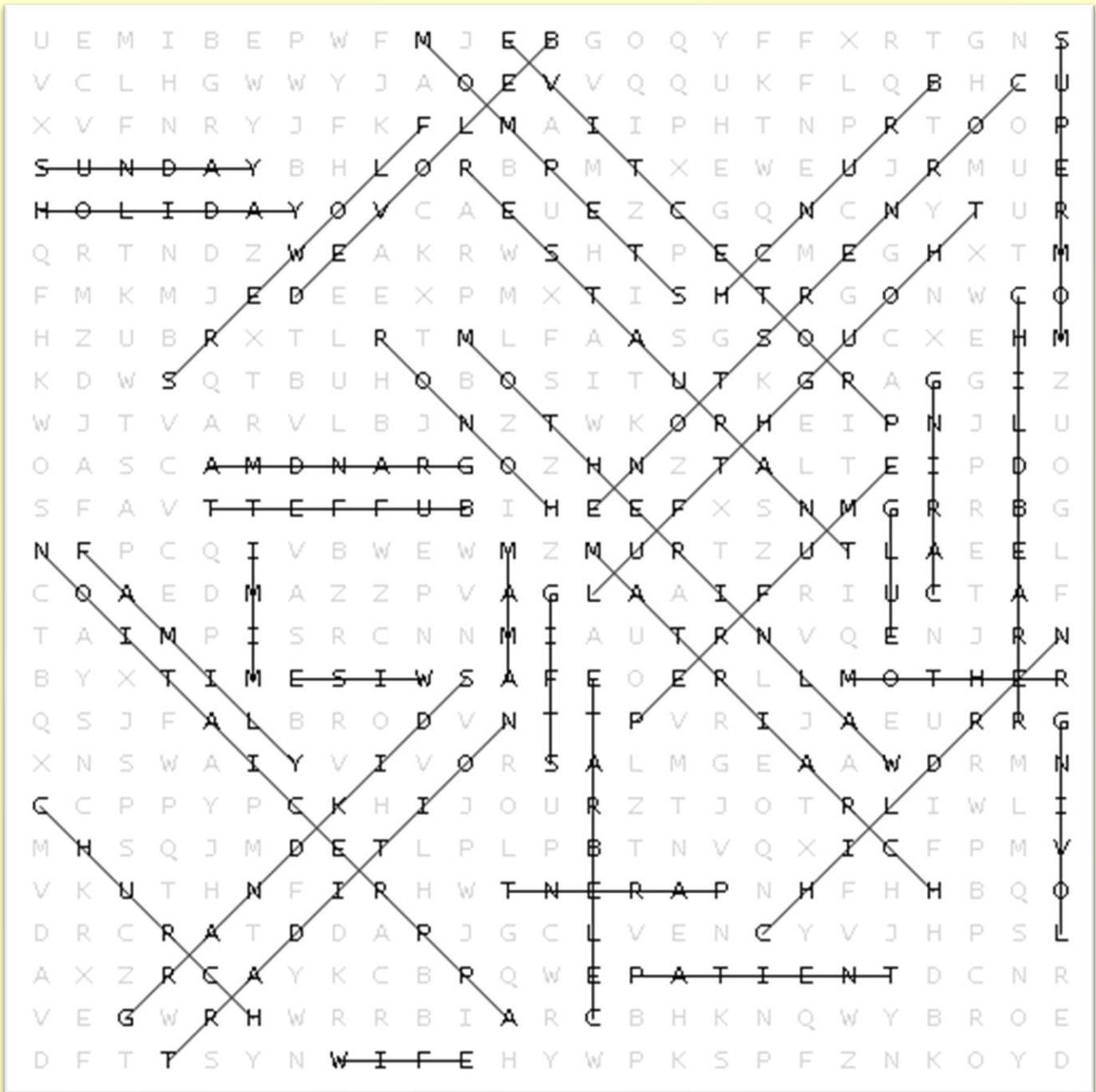
- Invite someone to church or a bible study
- Share with someone something God has done for you lately
- Give someone a bible scripture or some literature to read, then ask them later what they thought about it
- Live your life in a way that always exemplifies a holy life



Once you get your foot in the door, the Lord will do the rest. Don't try to sound over spiritual. Don't try to tell them what's all wrong with them and give them a long prescription for getting their life together. Learn to be a good listener and pray in the spirit while talking to people. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you what to say when it's time. You will be surprised at what will come out of your mouth.

If each of us tries to reach **one** person, we can make a major shift in our environment and set Satan's plan back significantly. Be fruitful and multiply.

Answers to Word Search



What must I do to be saved?



If you've never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you've turned away from Him for a life of unrighteousness, then take a moment and say this prayer:

“Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and ask your forgiveness. I believe that your son Jesus died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected with all power. I invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life and your Holy Spirit to come into my heart to guide me for the rest of my days. Amen.”

Romans 10:9 says that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

If this is you, please write Growth Ministries and we will gladly help you start your new life in Christ.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 4375, Olathe, KS 66063

Write Us



We would love to hear from you. If you have a testimony, a prayer request, or a question about your walk with the Lord, send us a letter. We would love to pray or rejoice with you. Maybe you are a writer and you have a spiritual word of encouragement for the readers of our newsletter. We would love to review your article to see if we can use it in our newsletter. We also like to share poems from you more artistic sisters and brothers.

We also ask that you be mindful of what you send to us as there are some things that are prohibited for print:

Inappropriate Verbiage/Profanity

Sexually Explicit Verbiage/Images

Political opinions

Opinions regarding social/systemic injustices