

# GROWTHguide

FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 12, 2016  
"Dead Man Walking"



## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Luke 7:11-17, Lamentations 3:21-24, Exodus 34:6-7, Acts 2:41-47, Psalm 118:24, Leviticus 19:18

## REFLECTION AND STUDY

### DAY 1

**READ Luke 7:11-17.** This Sunday we learned about a widow whose only son passed away. As his body was being carried to his burial place, Jesus stepped in. But what if He hadn't? With the death of her son, this widow, who had already lost her identity as a wife, was now losing her identity as a mother. She has no way to care for herself and no one to care for her. She is poor and most likely soon to be forgotten. Jesus sees her, and he sympathizes. He takes action to relieve her pain.

- Have you ever lost anyone or anything and felt like you lost your identity along with it?
- Can you think of a group of people that have no identity in society?

**Thank God for seeing our hearts when we seemingly have nothing. Pray for people who are alone and struggling with their identity in this world. Ask God to help you find ways to reach out to someone who may be lonely.**

### DAY 2

**Read Exodus 34:6-7.** Perhaps the miracle of the widow's son was one of compassion. Compassion means taking the time to go the extra mile, shower another with your love and help them in their time of need. It is true that God doesn't intervene every time we are hurting. Sometimes we are angry with God for not giving us the answer to prayer, sometimes we blame him for not delivering a miracle when our loved ones are sick or die, but if God doesn't intervene it's not because He lacks compassion. We know the Father through Jesus, and Jesus is full of compassion.

- Have you personally experienced God's compassion in your life?
- Is there anyone you know who is suffering or needs your compassion? What can you do to offer your compassion.

**Thank God that His grace is never failing. Pray for specific people that are in need of compassion.**

### DAY 3

As we contemplate God's compassion we remember that death is not the end for those that know Him. This is why we must share the compassion of Jesus Christ with those around us. The early church was filled with excitement to do life together and show compassion. Being part of a church community is an opportunity of tremendous power to change not only your life but the lives of those around you through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Read Acts 2:41-47.**

- What are the similarities and difference between the church described in the scripture from Acts 2 and St. Paul?

**Thank God for the opportunity to come and worship. Thank him that death has lost its sting and pray that you would be excited to share God's love with those around you.**

## DAY 4

We often feel that the task of dealing with the pain in the world is so great we don't know where to begin or how to respond. This type of thinking becomes an excuse for inaction. If the church doesn't step up to help this broken world, who will? There are many ways that we at St. Paul are showing the kind of compassion that Jesus expressed to the widow, reaching out to the poor and others in need. Are you taking part in these ministries? Do you see needs in our community that aren't being met by St. Paul or by anyone else? What can you do to meet those needs?

- Thank about what you're doing with your time, make an inventory and really ask yourself, "What am I doing that will last forever?"

**Pray and ask God to help you see others in need and guide you toward the ways you can help to lessen the pain in the world.**

## DAY 5

Something we can do together as a church is love each other. It is true that there is a lot of pain around us. Many in the church are struggling emotionally, physically, financially or spiritually. Although we can't remove all the pain from the world, we do have the power to make a difference. The worst thing we can do is turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the needs before us all. Leviticus 19:18 says, *"...love your neighbor as yourself."* William Barclay's comments on the scripture that we have three choices when it comes to providing recovery or care to one who is in need:

- 1) We must help even those we believe have brought trouble upon themselves.
  - 2) Our help must be as wide as the love of God.
  - 3) In order for compassion to be real there must be deeds.
- Are you making these three choices?
  - Are you comfortable loving your neighbors as yourself? If not, why?

**Pray and ask God to soften your heart if you are uncomfortable loving your neighbors. Ask God to open your eyes and ears to the needs around you and present opportunities for you to help.**

## DAY 6

Today is your "Sabbath" and a time for reflection. How has God been speaking to you over the week? Use what the Lord has said to you to remold and reshape your life. If you are having trouble hearing God's voice, slow down or even stop what you are doing so that the busyness of life's demands do not squelch the whispers of God's language of love upon your heart.