

TO HELP YOU NAIL DOWN TRUTHS IN THE BIBLE

One of our goals at Bethlehem is for you to spend time with God daily - this **HAMMERTIME** Card can help. It is designed to help you spend 15 minutes (or more) with God, 4 days a week. Here is an example of how to use this card. Study notebooks are available in the Bethlehem lobby.

Read the Bible verses (4 min)

- Read through one time, then re-read and underline any key points.

Read the card/think about it/write in your notebook (6 min)

- Write down some of the main ideas from the passage.
- Write down a “key for me” that is your main point that day.

Pray (5 min)

- Write down some of the things you are praying about that day.

“The Transformed Life”

A study about the Apostle Paul

You have **several options for tools to use during this study** (approx. 12 weeks):

- ◆ **HAMMERTIME Cards** - available Sundays at Bethlehem Church or online at www.bethlehemtoolbox.com.
- ◆ **Study Notebooks** - available at ‘Above the Grind’ Bookstore or the Information Center, \$5.00
- ◆ **“Paul: Living for the Call of Christ”**, by Gene Getz. Available at ‘Above the Grind’ Bookstore or you can purchase at Lifeway/Amazon/etc.
- ◆ Contact Matt Vanderbilt, Pastor of Connections at mvanderbilt@bethlehembc.com or 704.823.5050 x104 for additional information.

Day 1: Sharing with Family Members

Read: Acts 9:15-16; 1 Peter 3:15-16

Think about: When Paul accepted Christ as his Savior, he knew his life would totally change, and may include experiencing persecution. Like Paul, sometimes the most difficult persecution we face is when we try to share Christ with family members or close friends. The verses in 1 Peter talk about being prepared to tell people about Jesus and the difference He has made in your life. While persecution is possible, Jesus directs us to continue in an attitude of readiness to share our faith with the people we love the most.

It is important that you have the right perspective when sharing about Christ. There must be gentleness and respect - never a prideful or condescending attitude. And if you struggle with what to share about Christ, talk about that ‘hope’ (verse 15), the literal change you have seen God make in you, which gives you hope for this life and for eternity.

Act: Think through who in your family (or close friends) does not know Christ. Start praying for them, if you have not already done so - and look for opportunities to lovingly share with them about the difference Jesus has made in your life. Even if you are “persecuted”, be faithful in showing God’s love.

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Day 2: Suffer for Christ **Read:** 2 Corinthians 11:24-28; Philippians 3:10-11

Think about: You can read about the sufferings of Paul and other early apostles in some of today's passages. They experienced some awful things for the sake of Jesus. Yet, from the start of their walk with Christ, they knew that challenges would come, even alongside the blessing of knowing Christ. They willingly accepted this pain (see Acts 5:41)!

How do you feel about the verses in Philippians? Do you really want to know Christ? It is important to know Him in good ways: His love, His peace, His protection and His mighty power. But with this relationship also comes knowing Him in His suffering. This means you will accept the cost of standing up for Him, of living a life of integrity and of identifying sin in your life and removing it.

Act: In your notebook, write down some of the 'good ways' of knowing Christ. What might 'sufferings' for Christ look like in your life?

Day 3: Thorn in Your Flesh **Read:** 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; 1 Peter 1:6-7

Think about: Read carefully through the passage in Corinthians, especially focusing on the phrase "to keep me from becoming conceited." God was working on Paul's character through this "thorn" that bothered him regularly. Look at verse 9 - what was Jesus trying to teach Paul? What is sufficient enough for Paul? ...and for you? When is God's power most visibly shown?

Look at the passage in 1 Peter to see what these thorns or trials can produce in your life. Trials can refine, improve, and strengthen your faith. Your faith can grow in tough times in order to build your faith and to honor Christ. It is important to have the right perspective about trials and pain in your life.

Act: Take some time to talk with God about any trials, pain or 'thorns' in your life now. Ask Him what He wants you to learn and how He wants you to grow during that difficult situation.

Day 4: Prayer in Suffering **Read:** 2 Corinthians 1:10-11; 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Think about: Your Christian brothers and sisters need your prayers! Many Christ-followers around the world are suffering severely for the cause of Christ. In your life, there will be trials and suffering that fellow believers also experience - they need your prayers. It is part of your calling to "help with your prayers" (2 Corinthians 1:11), which will help deliver (verse 10) the people you pray for.

In the Timothy verses, God expands that command to include not just people we personally know but also to leaders whether close to us or not. Those in authority over us need our faithful prayers - for wisdom, safety, to lead with integrity, to persevere in the midst of their own suffering.

Act: In your notebook, take some time to write down 2 categories of people. First, list people who are close to you that you will commit to pray for regularly. Despite the number, write down their names and pray for them every day this week. Second, think of some leaders (local, national, etc.) that you will commit to pray for regularly. You will bless them and honor God through your faithful prayers for them.

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