



# STL 31-DAY DEVOS

## INTRO

**What could be more satisfying** than finding what you were meant to do—and doing it with passion and excellence? There is nothing more fulfilling. But this kind of life doesn't just happen by accident. It means finding your purpose and pursuing it. That's the hard part, because a lot of teens are lost and often distracted by the wrong things.

But God has given you an opportunity right now to make a serious impact on the world and have a great time with other students while you're at it. The opportunity exists through **Speed the Light**. This global student initiative provides missionaries around the world with the vehicles, equipment, and resources they need to reach the lost. Partnering with these faithful individuals, you can help spread the good news of God's love, forgiveness, and new life through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Over the next several weeks, these devotionals will help you journey through the Gospels, the books of the Bible that tell us about Jesus' life. In doing so, you'll get a good look at what He was able to do with His life. He promised that you, as a follower of Jesus, would be able to do the same things, and even greater ones. This month-long journey will be brief, but intense, just like Jesus' life on earth. But you'll see that His life was full of purpose and adventure because He took His mission seriously.

Your commitment to this devotional challenge demonstrates that you are committed to fulfilling Christ's mission for you. It's likely that you've already set a financial goal for world missions through **Speed the Light**. By setting a goal that exceeds your own expectations and by trusting God to help you fulfill it, you could do more for missions in the next month than you might have done all year long!

Spending time daily in God's Word and in prayer will remind you of the seriousness of the mission. Applying the truth will enable you, by the power of His Spirit, to complete your portion of that task. At times, you might feel like you can't do it. You could face some serious obstacles and opposition while reaching your goal, and be tempted to quit. But God never quits. He won't give up on you. He will help you finish what He inspired you to start.



### Speed the Light

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*title: serious condition.*

**Read: Matthew 1:18–23; John 1:1–5,10–14; 3:16,17**

**God took our helpless condition seriously.** When the Adam and Eve first defied God and went their own way, sin entered the world and brought spiritual destruction on humanity. The situation was hopeless—until God’s love shattered the barrier between Him and us. He sent His only Son, Jesus, to show us the way back to God and to pay the price for sin with His own life. Those who accept Christ’s sacrifice, trusting Him as the Forgiver of their sins and the Leader of their lives, find peace and purpose through a personal relationship with God.

**“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, NIV).**

**Response:** Will you take the lost condition of your friends and neighbors seriously? Will you share God’s love and message of hope so they can find forgiveness and a personal relationship with Him? Your willingness to talk about Jesus and help meet people’s needs when you have the ability to do so can make all the difference in the world. Your Speed the Light (STL) giving will also make it possible for missionaries to reach out and communicate God’s message to people all over the world who haven’t heard about Jesus. Take your commitment to give as your personal commitment to doing whatever it takes to sacrifice and reach the lost with the message of the love of Jesus.

**Carmen**, from Wichita Falls, Texas, took her vision for missions very seriously. She had won a car in a citywide drawing for students with good grades and perfect attendance. After dreaming about her car being used in Africa, she sold it and gave half of the money to STL and the rest to a missionary who works with poverty-stricken children in a rehabilitation center on the streets of Nairobi, Kenya, in Africa.

**Request:** Pray for the creativity, determination, and discipline necessary to fulfill your highest STL goal ever.



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*title: something to talk about.*

**Read: Luke 2:8–20**

**The shepherds took God’s message with joy and excitement—**probably more so than anyone else would have. Think about it. Why would God choose to announce the most important news in the history of the cosmos to lowly shepherds? Certainly He could have told more influential people first. But it’s likely they would have missed it. And if rulers or royalty would have received the initial word, they might have had “more important” things to do. But the shepherds were common people. To them, there was nothing in the world more important than responding to the good news, and they shamelessly spread the word of their encounter with Christ.

**“When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them” (Luke 2:17,18, NIV).**

**Respond:** How important is the message of Jesus to you? Is your encounter with Christ evident to others? Do you consider it a privilege and a priority to spread the news? Or is your life consumed with things that detract your zeal for Christ? God will reveal himself in powerful ways to those who take His message seriously—not hesitating to share what they have seen and heard of Christ. It doesn’t take fancy words or famous actions to communicate Christ’s love. Simply let your life show what you know. Don’t be too busy or too proud to let people see your excitement about Jesus. Take advantage of opportunities, like STL, which enable you to spread the Word to people you will never get to meet in this lifetime.

**Missionaries in Africa,** with the help of a missions team, built a church in just 15 days. Using a STL pickup truck, they were able to transport workers, haul bricks, bags of cement, windows, door frames, water, and all kinds of material needed to build the church.

**Request:** There is a constant flow of projects waiting for adequate funding through STL. It can take 12 to 24 months from the date a project is approved until the STL funds are available. Pray that teens like you will be able to provide the nearly \$20 million dollars needed to cover all current vehicle and equipment needs of our missionaries.



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*title: youth in ministry.*

**Read: Luke 2:41-52**

**Jesus committed His entire life to ministry.** Even as a kid, He was focused on His purpose. By the age of 12, Jesus had developed maturity beyond His years, with spiritual insight that captivated the attention of even the religious leaders. But He also asked questions and listened. Think about it—the Son of God put aside His divine prerogatives, became human, and was willing to learn. Years later, His wisdom would be tested as He confronted the religious leaders' hypocrisy. He was able to challenge them truthfully and effectively because He had taken time to understand. Notice that the only passage describing Jesus' youth highlights His maturity, teachability, humility, and obedience. Building on these simple disciplines, His entire young adulthood is summed up by well-balanced mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth.

**“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52, NIV).**

**Respond:** You're never too young to begin pursuing your life's ministry. At this point, you obviously cannot know what all that will include. But that's no reason to wait until you are older to pursue God's plan for your life. Spend time daily getting to know God through His Word and prayer so you can learn to recognize His voice. Be humble and teachable, willing to listen to God and others, so you can understand how to pursue righteousness, confront evil, and discover opportunities you might otherwise have missed. For now, you can demonstrate your commitment to God's plan by faithfully pursuing your STL goal. In the process, you'll develop spiritual maturity and affect others' lives for eternity.

**Tammie**, from Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, made an extraordinary commitment to give every other paycheck from her waitressing job to STL. By year's end, she gave \$1,527.

**Request:** Pray for the more than 2,000 Assemblies of God missionaries serving in over 200 countries as they evangelize, plant churches, and disciple nationals to become ministry leaders. Did you know that STL is the only ministry designated to provide vehicles for our missionaries around the world?



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*title: make way.*

**Read: Luke 3:3-16,21-23; John 3:22-36**

**John the Baptist was committed to preparing the way for Jesus and pointing people to Him.** He was confident in his call and passionate about his purpose. Without regard for his own reputation, John bucked the trends, defying complacency and mediocrity. He boldly challenged people to get ready for Jesus. John was certainly different, but not simply for the sake of being different. He didn't revel in drawing attention to himself. Instead, he directed others to Jesus, then humbly stepped aside so Jesus received all the glory.

**“He must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30, NIV).**

**Respond:** John's ministry was unique. But you share a common call with this radical prophet: to prepare others to receive Jesus. While God may not be calling you to be confrontational, it's likely that taking a stand for Christ will bring you both positive and negative attention. Are you willing to lose yourself for the sake of Christ—to forget your own reputation and live in such a way that your words and actions point others to Jesus? In doing so, you can prepare the way for His love to come on the scene and transform their lives in an extraordinary way. In fact, you can make a way for Christ's message of hope to reach people all over the world through STL.

**Missionaries in South Africa** are using STL equipment to provide leadership training for local pastors. They have three levels of study using three instructional delivery methods. A STL video data projector facilitates visual presentations, a STL overhead projector enhances instruction, and a STL sound system projects a radio drama. A STL copier is also used to prepare study materials for the sessions.

**Request:** Pray for your peers across the country who have also set STL goals. Many of them will use this devotional guide. Ask God to help them grow spiritually and to fulfill—even exceed—their giving goal before the year is over.



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*title: the resistance.*

**Read: Matthew 4:1-10**

**Like Jesus, we all must face temptation.** Although Satan approached Jesus at a potentially weak moment—at the end of a 40-day fast—Jesus was prepared. Focused on His mission, Jesus was ready to counterattack with God’s Word. His attention wasn’t diverted by His physical needs or a desire to prove himself. He wasn’t looking for a shortcut to glory. Jesus wasn’t fooled by an appeal to pride, nor was He swayed by Satan’s half-truths and distortion of God’s Word. And because of what Jesus endured, He can personally relate to something all of His followers face: the temptation to pursue spiritual goals through unspiritual methods that don’t mesh with God’s plan.

**Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4, NIV).**

**Respond:** God’s plan for you will likely include tough times—even suffering, humiliation, and difficult circumstances. Yet it is still the plan you need to follow if you want God’s best. By following Jesus’ example and relying on God’s Word, you can learn to make right decisions and handle temptation when it comes. Develop the discipline to read and pray daily. Your commitment over the course of this month will put you well on your way to building the spiritual strength and resistance necessary to meet the challenges ahead.

**One of the most** effective missions support ministries in the world, Speed the Light, has relied on the faithfulness of students like you to raise more than \$225 million since it began in 1944. Last year alone, students helped raise over \$9.5 million to “Speed the Light” of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

**Request:** Last year, the Assemblies of God World Missions approved a large group of new missionaries. Pray for them as they raise funds and prepare to take the field. Pray that STL is able to provide vehicles for new missionaries as soon as they are ready for their assignments.



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*title: inside out.*

**Read: Matthew 5:1-30,38-48**

**Jesus takes our thoughts and attitudes seriously.** He knows that what we do stems from how we think and feel. That's why Jesus calls His followers to be humble, merciful, peaceful, and pure—so that the change He has made in their lives will be obvious to others. But He starts with what's on the inside. He wants us to deal with anger before it comes out in hurtful words and actions. He wants us to avoid lustful thoughts because it affects our spirits as much as sexual sin affects the body. And He asks us to demonstrate love for those who mistreat us because it shows people what God is really like.

**“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden....In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14,16, NIV).**

**Respond:** What kinds of attitudes and actions are evident in your life? You can hide what's on the inside for a while, but eventually it will come out. That's why Jesus wants you to focus on your thoughts and attitudes—so they become more like His. But thinking like Jesus doesn't come easily or make sense to your natural mind, especially when it comes to our attitudes toward others. Turn the other cheek. Give to those who have taken from you. Do good to those who hurt you. Love your enemies. In all of these, Christ isn't asking His followers to be passive or foolish, but to be faithful examples of how God's standards are seriously different from the norm.

**A missionary in Latin America** used his 4-wheel drive STL vehicle to haul equipment to a remote jungle village. It took six one-hour round trips! On the first trip, a young mother stopped the missionary because her eight-month-old baby was seriously ill and needed immediate medical attention. The missionary was able to drive the child to the hospital and share Christ with the woman along the way.

**Request:** Pray for STL's sister ministries: Light for the Lost (Men's Ministry) and BGMC (Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge). Their efforts raise several million dollars to provide Bibles, literature, and ministry equipment to missionaries around the world.



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*title: cross-culture.*

**Read: John 4:4-42**

**Jesus wants us to reach beyond ourselves and relate His extraordinary message of hope to those who are different from us.** In this passage, Jesus talked about satisfying spiritual thirst, sincere worship, doing God's will, and saving souls. All of these things had to do with people finding and honoring God. And honoring God usually involves forgetting about what people think. Nearly all of Jesus' actions in this situation defied cultural stereotypes and prejudices of the day. He was Jewish man talking with a Samaritan woman. He claimed to have something better than tradition. He said it didn't matter where you worshipped the one true God. All of these things bucked the trends of the time. But as a result, many came to Christ.

**“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35, NIV).**

**Respond:** Do you recognize and respond to opportunities to communicate God's love and truth? Or are you distracted by what's popular or acceptable? Perhaps you've heard the term *divine appointments*. They are potentially life-changing encounters. If you seriously look for these God-given opportunities and are prepared to act on them, Jesus will enable you to communicate across social, cultural, and spiritual barriers. That doesn't mean you have to become just like someone else to reach him or her for Christ. But consider the types of people you alienate from the gospel by the negative way you feel or act toward them. Ask God to forgive you and give you compassion for people you've had difficulty accepting. Then prepare for God to open a door of opportunity with them.

**Zach**, from Bloomington, Michigan, put some serious muscle to his STL efforts. He set a goal to increase his bench press weight by 30 pounds. For every pound he added, he asked for a \$1 donation from supporters. By the time he reached his lifting goal, he raised \$1,300 for STL.

**Request:** Pray that STL will be able to provide all necessary vehicles and equipment for Convoy of Hope, Latin America Childcare, Asia's Little Ones, Eurasia Kids, Africa's Children, and other regional children's ministries.



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*title: did you hear that?*

**Read: Matthew 7:15-28; Mark 4:1-20**

**Jesus expects us to be as serious about living God's Word as listening to it.** It doesn't matter how much you know about God or the Bible if you don't apply the Word to your life. God is looking for more than good intentions; He's looking for people of serious actions, but not just any actions. Some people appear to be doing the right things with their lives, even big things for God. But they aren't truly following Jesus, and the things they do won't last. On the other hand, those who take their relationship with Jesus seriously enough to do what He tells them in His Word aren't swayed by Satan's lies. They aren't shallow in their devotion. Tough times will not rob their enthusiasm, and other concerns won't choke their commitment. They will patiently and persistently put God's principles into practice. And they will eventually produce lasting spiritual results.

**“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24, NIV).**

**Respond:** Do you want to hear from God? Would you like to learn and experience more of Him? Have you ever asked Jesus to show you more spiritually? He's more than willing to do so. But what are you doing with what He's already shown you? God isn't looking to reveal himself in greater ways to those who aren't doing something with what they have. The next time you hear a good gospel message or read the Bible for yourself, even today, commit to do something about it. Find a way to apply the truth to your situation today. If you're really listening to Jesus, you'll live like it.

**In the Philippines,** 20 district superintendents are making serious use of their STL vehicles by pursuing a goal to plant 5,000 new churches by 2010.

**Request:** Pray for “Momentum,” the leadership development arm of **national youth ministries**, which creates resources and networks to inspire and equip youth leaders across the nation. Pray for continued growth in Fine Arts, as student discover, develop, and deploy their gifts for God's glory. Pray also for increased participation in Bible Quiz, as students become hungry to learn and retain God's Word.



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*title: extreme measures.*

**Read: Mark 2:1-12**

**The four men were determined to get their friend to Jesus.** And nothing was going to stand in their way. They knew how to find Jesus. They were convinced of His healing power. Sure, there was the crowd, and they could have easily turned back and said, “Well, we tried. Maybe next time.” However, they worked past the inconveniences. They didn’t hesitate to get a little messy, or to stir things up. It’s not that they were trying to get attention or cause a scene. But their compassion for a friend and their faith in Jesus drove them to drastic measures. And Jesus responded by proving His power and changing their friend’s life completely.

**“Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven’” (Mark 2:4,5, NIV).**

**Respond:** No doubt you and your Christian friends have friends who don’t know Jesus. Why not get serious about working together to reach them for Christ? That doesn’t mean ganging up on people and trying to pressure them into a relationship with Jesus. Instead, build relationships with each other’s friends. Pray and strategize with your Christian friends about ways to communicate Christ’s love. Be ready to do something different. Forget about what others think. And remember that those who are most ready to receive Christ are often the ones who appear the least likely. Perhaps if you are willing to simply bring someone to a place where they can encounter Jesus, He will do a miracle in his or her life.

**Tyler**, from Arkansas, took his own initiative for STL, personally raising more than \$5,000. Then, during a Fine Arts showcase, he took time before his short sermon to talk about Speed the Light. He then took an impromptu STL offering where students gave more than \$4,500.

**Request:** Pray for the hundreds of Chi Alpha campus ministries endeavoring to bring the gospel to students in colleges and universities across the country. Many of those leading these ministries are U.S. missionaries who must raise support and wait for STL assistance like any other world missionary.



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*title: just say the word.*

**Read: Matthew 8:1-13,23-27**

**Jesus is impressed by faith and is dissatisfied with a lack of faith.**

Having faith doesn't mean that you can claim whatever you want or that you always know what will happen. It simply means that you give your needs and situations to Jesus and trust Him to do what only He can do. After all, He has your best interests at heart, and He is certainly able to do whatever He chooses. The man with leprosy understood that. So did the Roman military leader who acknowledged the ultimate power of a simple word from Jesus. On the other hand, Jesus' own followers were seriously shaken in the middle of the storm. Sure, it was treacherous, but Jesus was right there with them. And they had witnessed His power before. Still, they were amazed at His authority. Jesus, however, was amazed by their uncertainty. It was quite a contrast to the centurion's bold faith.

**“The centurion replied, ‘Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed’” (Matthew 8:8, NIV).**

**Respond:** Is there a situation in your life that seems desperate or uncertain? Do you, or someone close to you, have a serious problem or need that only God can handle? Bring it to Jesus today and leave it in His care. Ask what you desire, but then depend on Him to do what's best. There is no need to worry about anything (including your STL goal) if you've entrusted it to Jesus. You might even be amazed at what He does when you demonstrate complete confidence in Him.

**Convoy of Hope** has made significant use of a STL grant to purchase 10 new semi-trucks, which are now based in port cities and strategic locations across the U.S. These trucks have been used to haul millions of pounds of food and aid to families in need, including relief efforts after hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, Ike, and other natural disasters here in the U.S. and around the world.

**Request:** Pray for the 850 million people worldwide suffering from hunger and malnutrition. Pray that STL will continue to be able to help compassion ministries like Convoy of Hope to receive the vehicles they need to deliver supplies and food to these hurting people.



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*title: here's your chance.*

**Read: Luke 10:1-7,16-24; Matthew 10:16-20**

**Jesus commanded us to go out and minister for Him**—whether we feel ready or not. That's because the world is more than ready. It might not seem that way; people are defying God in every way imaginable. Yet, they are searching. Youth today are more spiritually curious and open than ever. That doesn't necessarily mean they are ready to accept the claims of Christianity, but they are looking for something that is real to fill the void in their lives. And God is calling you to deliver the message of hope and healing they need.

**“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2, NIV).**

**Respond:** Perhaps you've had moments of inspiration when you've felt more than ready to do great things for God. But when it came down to hitting the streets with His message, you were overwhelmed with a sense of inadequacy. Remember, God has saved you in order to send you. As long as you follow His instructions, stay alert, and depend on Him, you'll be equipped with His power and backed by His authority. So don't hesitate to speak out for Christ or to pray for someone who needs a miracle. And don't take people's responses personally. It's Jesus' mission, His power, and His reputation. He deserves the glory and He will defend himself. When you face opposition, don't worry about what to say; the Holy Spirit will give you the right words at the right time.

**Becky** took others' needs seriously. She was saving to buy a car, but during a STL service, felt impressed to give her saving to missions. With no knowledge of her sacrifice, a newly-appointed missionary couple (who were former youth pastors at Becky's church) felt impressed to give her their car before they left for the mission field.

**Request:** There are approximately 30 million students in 62,000 middle, junior high, and senior high schools across America. It's estimated that over 75% of those teens lack a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Pray for Youth Alive as it mobilizes teens to communicate Christ's message of hope to their peers. And pray for the growth and success of YA clubs and for more students to take up the challenge of becoming campus missionaries.



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*title: worries and wealth.*

**Read: Luke 12:13-34**

**Jesus wants our most important concerns to be about eternal things,** not temporary things. People tend to measure success by what they possess, but Jesus wants His followers to realize that the most important things in life can't be bought or stored. Just take a look at many of the most "successful" people by worldly standards and you'll see that wealth will never bring true satisfaction, peace, and fulfillment. Thankfully, God doesn't ask us to concern ourselves with all the things we need; He's got that covered. We're free to concentrate on more important things, like fulfilling His plans for our lives. The bottom line: no matter how much we accumulate, we will eventually leave it behind. The only things that go with us into eternity are the souls we've had a part in reaching for Christ

**"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God....For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:21,34, NIV).**

**Respond:** Evaluate your priorities, considering that whatever interests and excites you most will tend to influence you most. It's okay to have nice clothes, good food, great music, or unique collections. But these things must not take priority over God and His purposes for your life. So, why not take the opportunity this week to do something that could affect eternity? Take part of what you'd spend on something else (e.g., clothes, CDs, movies, eating out, etc.) and add it to your STL goal. See if God doesn't honor your faith in an extraordinary way.

**Missionaries in Afghanistan** are making great use of several large, rugged STL vehicles in carrying on their relief work throughout the country following the war and collapse of the oppressive Taliban.

**Request:** Pray for the Christians and missionaries in 39 countries where they are persecuted for their beliefs. It is difficult for us to truly understand the immeasurable sacrifices these men and women make every day. Pray that while serving the people in these areas, they are able to develop trust and personal relationships through which they can communicate God's message of love and life person to person.



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*title: full house.*

**Read: Luke 14:15-24**

**Jesus wants us to be focused on getting people into His kingdom.**

The invitation goes out to everyone, calling them to the greatest celebration that ever has been or ever will be. But most turn it down for the flimsiest excuses imaginable. God even calls those who have already committed to His plans—including you—to go out and extend the invitation to others, just in case some have missed it. But people still refuse to come. Still our Host doesn't give up. He even puts the celebration on hold, sending His servants to the most unlikely people in some of the most out-of-the way places.

**“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full’” (Luke 14:23, NIV).**

**Respond:** Have you accepted your invitation to God's kingdom celebration? If so, are you working to get others to join you? Perhaps you've tried but feel you haven't had much success. While you shouldn't take rejection personally, consider this: are you looking in the right places? When you're challenged to reach your peers or “win your school” for Christ, you probably think of influential students who could attract more attention to Jesus and turn your school upside down. While you don't want to neglect those whom others tend to follow, teens who seem to have everything going for them don't always see a need to change. On the other hand, students who lack attention from others are often more receptive. Take time to befriend such a person. Invite him or her to join you for something. You might find that they're ready to accept the invitation.

**Sarah**, from Ellendale, Minnesota, made a significant sacrifice in giving 90% of her income to STL. Serving as a church janitor for the year and also babysitting on weekends enabled her to give \$2,619 to Speed the Light so missionaries can reach the lost for Christ.

**Request:** Pray for the ministry of Global University as it provides resources and correspondence education to disciple, train, and equip prospective ministers and national pastors around the world. Global has more than 600,000 students in 180 countries. Pray that STL can provide Global with the media and audio equipment necessary to fully accomplish its mission.



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*title: no denying it.*

**Read: Mark 8:34-38; Luke 14:28-34; John 12:24,25**

**Jesus is serious about the cost of discipleship.** Anyone can wear a cross, but few people are prepared to carry one. A lot of people talk about God, but few have the discipline to walk like Jesus in daily life. Being called a “Christian” doesn’t make someone a true follower of Christ. Being His disciple costs something—time, energy, comfort, and popularity. It’s not a matter of surrendering what little you have in order to gain everything He has. Christ paid the ultimate price by giving His life for you. If you’ll pay the small price of giving your life back to Him, you’ll not only make a lasting impression in others’ lives, but you’ll also become all He created you to be.

**“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it” (Mark 8:34,35, NIV).**

**Respond:** What are you known for? What’s your mark of identity? What do people think of when they think of you? When your reputation gets so wrapped up in Jesus that when people think of you they think of Him, that’s when your commitment is extraordinary. While you can’t control how other people perceive you, you can live with a zeal and compassion that makes your commitment to Christ difficult to deny. And when you’re willing to stake your identity on Jesus, there’s no denying how He can use you to impact others’ lives.

**Missionaries in Japan** put their STL van to good use as they minister to the homeless, transport people to ministry events, and assist in starting churches. When traveling, they even sleep in their van in order to save on hotel expenses.

**Request:** Pray for the steady stream of young adults entering the nearly 150 Teen Challenge residential centers around the world. Ask God to enable these individuals to break free from cycles of rebellion, substance abuse, and other life-controlling problems and addictions. Pray for those who have completed their time in these centers that God would provide a place of Christian fellowship where they can grow in their relationship with Him.



### Speed the Light

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*title: it's your serve.*

**Read: Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45; Luke 14:7-14**

**Jesus is serious about servanthood.** His kingdom doesn't work the way that most things in this world do. As far as God is concerned, people don't get ahead by outdoing or taking advantage of others or by looking out only for themselves. Life with Jesus is often a paradox, a contradiction of the norm. His followers win by losing, live by dying, and lead by following His example of servanthood. They don't expect others to constantly meet their needs. Instead, Jesus' people look for ways to meet others' needs, to serve without recognition, to give without expecting anything in return.

**“Whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:44,45, NIV).**

**Respond:** Are you constantly looking for ways to serve, or are you always waiting for people to serve you? Think about it this way: when it comes to church or youth group, do you have a “what's in it for me, what will I get out of this” attitude? Or are you trying to make sure that other students, those you know well and those you don't, are finding what they need? If you are maturing spiritually, your focus will start to turn from what you get out of ministry to what you can contribute. Think of several ways you could serve the needs of others at home, church, school, or work. Put some of these ideas into practice this week.

**Rebecca**, from Arkansas, came home from an AIM trip to Russia inspired to give \$1,000 to STL. With no job, she began letting people know that she was available to work. Many people began giving her jobs such as babysitting, cleaning houses, and mowing lawns. The money came in slowly, but Rebecca ultimately met her goal.

**Request:** Pray that STL will be able to purchase all of the video projectors needed by the Center for Muslim Ministry as their missionaries travel overseas and face many dangers in order to train pastors and national leaders in Muslim countries.



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*title: who needs this?*

**Read: Mark 2:13-17; Luke 15:1-32; 19:10**

**Jesus is committed to reaching the lost and healing the hurting.** That is His purpose. It's why He came to earth. And that's the mission to which He calls His followers. But it's easy to lose sight of that mission when so many youth ministry efforts are aimed at serving and satisfying students who are already a part of the church. It's not that faithful church kids don't have issues or need encouragement, but sometimes Christian teens can get so wrapped up in their own concerns that they forget the needs of others—especially those outside of the church—who are alone and hurting. These lost people need to know God is looking out for them and that He hasn't given up on them just because they've gone their own way.

**“On hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners’” (Mark 2:17, NIV).**

**Respond:** Many people you know and encounter daily have spent much of their lives looking for satisfaction in the wrong places. Their lives have become aimless and they probably wonder if anyone really cares, although some never act or appear as if they need anything. Keep in mind that some of the people who seem the most resistant or give you the hardest time are actually the most serious about finding something meaningful. So they might put you to the test to see if what you have is real. Think of one or two people you know who seem to be lost or hurting. Befriend these individuals and do something specific and practical to show them you care. Share with them the hope that is found in Christ.

**A missionary family in Venezuela** used their STL utility vehicle to travel into the jungle where they used a STL 4-wheel ATV to transport a STL boat motor from storage to their STL boat. By boat, they were able to reach the country's interior where they planted a new church and built their home.

**Request:** Pray for Assemblies of God Intercultural Ministries and their new national Office for Jewish Ministries. Many missionaries are also involved in ministry to Muslims. Some risk their lives daily, reaching out to people who have been trained to hate Christians and violently defend their faith against Christian influence.



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*title: persistence pays.*

**Read: Luke 18:1-8**

**We must be determined and committed to persistent prayer.** It's not that God doesn't hear us the first time or that He needs to be reminded of our needs. He is well aware of them before we even ask. And we don't have to beg God for anything. After all, it's not as if we are trying to get God to do things He really doesn't want to do. He is more than willing to give us whatever we need to more effectively serve Him and others. While some people might say that asking for something over and over demonstrates a lack of faith, Jesus says quite the opposite here. Repeatedly looking to God can actually build our faith as we constantly acknowledge that we need Him and that He is the only One who can effectively provide for us.

**“The Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up....‘However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?’” (Luke 18:1,8, NIV).**

**Respond:** Have you been praying a long time for something? Perhaps you've even given up, feeling that God hasn't heard or simply isn't inclined to answer your request. But unless you know for sure that God is telling you to let it go, keep bringing your petition to Him. After all, that makes more sense than worrying about it or just giving up. And each time you bring the need to God, be reminded of your dependence on Him and the fact that He will do what's best. It's likely He won't answer exactly as you expect, but He will take care of the situation in His way and time. And you'll be in touch with Him all along the way.

**Josh**, from Bushnell, Florida, takes missions seriously. Although he suffers from cerebral palsy, he gave \$50 out of his trust fund to STL. Within 30 days, he unexpectedly received \$1,300 of interest from an account that had been previously closed.

**Request:** Pray for our chaplains, providing pastoral care and counseling in prisons, hospitals, police and fire departments, and the military. Pray for families who are separated, suffering, or strained in these situations, including families of soldiers who are returning from active duty or who died in conflict. Pray also for the nearly 670,000 prison inmates released each year. Almost 80% of those who accept Christ while in prison have trouble finding a church home once released.



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## *title: what's keeping you?*

**Read: Mark 10:17-31**

**Jesus will expose anything that keeps a person from following Him.** The person described in this passage is often referred to as the rich young ruler, a guy who was “livin’ large and in charge.” He had the means to make a mark on the world, not with his possessions but with his sacrifice. It wasn’t that God needed his money, but wealth was what distracted this young man. While relinquishing all he had may have meant obscurity on earth, it could have yielded great honor in heaven. He’d never have a better offer. In God’s kingdom, refusing to give something up can easily take you down and keep you out of the ultimate life offered by Christ.

**“The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, ‘Who then can be saved?’ Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God’” (Mark 10:26,27, NIV).**

**Respond:** The issue with you may not be wealth. But have you been reluctant to deal with something that could be holding you back spiritually and getting in the way of your devotion to Christ? Decide once and for all to resolve this issue with God. If it means changing your priorities, lifestyle, or giving up something, remember that God’s reward will always surpass your sacrifice.

**Missionaries in Cambodia** used their STL vehicle to transport a dying boy to the hospital in a torrential downpour. They regularly transport medical supplies and personnel to remote areas and take children to church. The truck frequently travels through treacherous conditions, including flash floods and pot holes the size of semi-trucks.

**Request:** Pray for Assemblies of God Health Care Ministries and its Global AIDS Partnership Team. Pray for their regional AIDS conferences and volunteer HIV testing and counseling programs. Pray that people will be effectively equipped to meet the needs of those dying with AIDS, and that those who stand on the brink of eternity without Christ would receive Him as their Lord and Savior.



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*title: cleaning house.*

**Read: Mark 11:15-18; John 2:13-17**

**Jesus wants everyone to have access to worship Him.** In fact, He was so serious about this that it made Him mad when people hindered or prevented others from doing what they needed to do in the place of worship. And He had a right to be upset. The merchants crowded the temple courts so that people were barely able to pass through. In addition, the money-changers made it difficult for people of all nationalities to worship by forcing them to exchange currency and only buy sacrificial animals from the temple merchants. These corrupt individuals took advantage of the out-of-towners just to make a profit. And all of this unauthorized activity distracted from the purpose of the temple as a place of worship to God.

**As he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of robbers’” (Mark 11:17, NIV).**

**Respond:** Is there something in your life that distracts you from worshipping God, perhaps something that keeps you from worshipping freely at church? Even more important, are you—your attitudes or actions—distracting someone else’s praise or spiritual progress? If this is the case, you can be certain that Jesus isn’t happy about it. And while He is patient with people, He will eventually turn the tables on anyone who keeps others from growing or who drives others away from God. If this describes you in any way, repent and open the way for God to work in your life and in others’.

**Alexie**, from Wheaton, Illinois, was so committed to missions that she went door to door in the middle of winter raising funds for STL. At one point she felt like giving up, but later said, “The Lord showed me the faces of people who really needed to know Jesus.” Then her dad’s dentist heard about Alexie’s efforts and contributed \$300 to her fund. In one month, Alexie raised more than \$1,000 for STL.

**Request:** Pray for missionary assistance and support ministries which serve missionaries and their children at home and abroad.



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*title: the laws of love.*

**Read: Mark 12:28-31**

**Jesus' followers must be serious about loving God completely and loving others selflessly.** In fact, that pretty much sums up what God expects of us. A lot of people seem to think that living for God means missing out on the “fun stuff.” But the Bible contains more positive things to “do” than negative things to avoid. According to Jesus, all of God’s moral laws can be summed up by two simple, positive rules for living: love God with your whole being and love others as yourself. By combining these commands, Jesus shows that selfless love for others naturally flows out of true love for God. At the core, these commands are inseparably linked, because if you love others as yourself, you’ll do your best to point them to Christ so they, too, can love Him.

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength’...‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30,31, NIV).**

**Respond:** Does God have your whole heart? Is He the object of your affections? Have you put your soul—the core of your will and emotions—into serving God? Do God’s plans occupy your thoughts? And are your strengths and efforts aimed at seriously advancing God’s kingdom? If so, you will inevitably influence people for Christ. When you give God the love He deserves and treat others how you’d like to be treated, they’ll see the difference that Christ’s love makes and perhaps choose to experience it for themselves. Consider two or three decisions you need to make. Popular advice says, “Do what’s best for you.” But that’s not God’s way. Find a course of action that best demonstrates love for God and love for others, and choose that way.

**Missionaries in Iceland** use a STL-funded radio station which reaches the entire island and is the only Christian radio station in the country.

**Request:** Pray that the uncertainty in today’s world doesn’t prevent young people from answering God’s call to deliver the gospel through the ministry of Ambassadors in Mission (AIM). Pray for the thousands of students and leaders who will participate in district or nationally-sponsored short-term AIM trips in the coming year.



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*title: look out!*

**Read: Matthew 24:37 through 25:13**

**We must prepare for Christ's return.** No one likes to get caught unprepared. You probably know the feeling of frustration, panic, or regret that comes from realizing that you've missed something important. Perhaps you forgot about it, were never aware of it, or simply weren't ready in time. Yet as awkward as such situations may seem, they are not the end of the world. However, the time is coming when being unprepared will signal the end. When Jesus returns, only those who have accepted Him as Savior and are faithfully serving Him will go with Him to heaven. There will be no exceptions, no late entries. It's ironic how many teens seem to live for the next party, and yet most are on the verge of missing the greatest celebration of all time. Some are caught up in their own problems or pursuits; others simply disregard the warnings. There are some, waiting for Christ's return, who have become spiritually careless. Regardless of the reason, for those who are not ready, Christ's return will be anything but a celebration.

**“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come” (Matthew 24:42, NIV).**

**Respond:** Think for a moment about those who are close to you who aren't prepared for Christ's return. One day it will be too late and the door will be shut for many people who God has given you the opportunity to reach now. Pray for them daily and take time, when appropriate, to gently remind them that they have a decision to make about Jesus. Help keep your Christian friends awake spiritually by challenging and encouraging them to stay active in ministry and seriously committed to their daily time with Jesus.

**Nick**, from Delaware, did some extraordinary work to raise money for STL. He ran his own small business cutting grass, clearing snow, and caring for pets in his neighborhood. Following a STL goal-setting event, he decided to put the proceeds from his work toward missions. In just over a month, Nick raised \$1,050 for STL.

**Request:** Pray for workers in Africa, the hardest hit area in the world from the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as they try to establish the best strategies for an effective response to the disease and treatment of the lives it ravages.



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*title: use it or lose it.*

**Read: Matthew 25:14-30**

**Jesus expects us to make use of our opportunities and abilities for His purposes.** Maybe you're one of the many teens who aren't content with their capabilities or perhaps you've wondered to yourself, *What could God do with my life?* Then again, you may be hiding your talents so you don't have to make the effort or risk failure. But God gave you your abilities, and He wants to use them. With His help, God expects you to make the most with what He has given you. In the end, God will reward you according to how you invest your time, talents, resources, and opportunities to serve His purposes.

**“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”  
(Matthew 25:23, NIV).**

**Respond:** Consider for a moment how seriously you regard your time, talents, and opportunities. Are you using these valuable resources effectively? Do you have an interest or ability you've never put to use? Perhaps no one even knows about it. Don't bury it—it's not yours to keep. God has gifted you with unique abilities and expects a return on His investment. No matter how irrelevant your talent may seem, ask a leader how you can use it to serve others. Some of the most effective ministries involve talents that few people would have thought to use in a creative way.

**Missionaries in Costa Rica** use their STL vehicle often since it takes four hours to travel 80 miles into remote mountain regions. There, they plant churches, haul building materials, help with medical needs, and conduct children's outreaches. Some of the people live so far out that many of the children and teens have only recently seen "white-skinned people." Hundreds have received Christ after hearing the gospel through video using a STL projector.

**Request:** Pray for the Assemblies of God Home Missions Mobilization and Placement Service (MAPS), which needs workers to serve as missionary associates for extended periods of time. People are also needed in the MAPS RV ministry to help build new churches here in the U.S.



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*title: the least you could do.*

**Read: Matthew 25:31-46**

**Jesus is serious about active compassion.** In fact, one of the true measures of a person's regard for Jesus can be found in how he or she responds to people in need. Many Christians claim to care about people's spiritual needs, but they often neglect people's physical and social needs. As a result, churches lose a connection to those who need them most. But many people will never realize their deeper spiritual needs until their more obvious needs are met. In other words, you must sometimes help feed and clothe the body before you can help feed and clothe the spirit. While a lot of people in the world talk about justice and compassion, people in the church should be leading the way in demonstrating these traits. The bottom line: if you want to see Jesus, look for Him in the eyes of people who are hurting; if you want to touch Jesus, reach Him through people in need. If you look for Jesus in them, they, in turn, will see Jesus in you.

**“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me’” (Matthew 25:40, NIV).**

**Respond:** Living for Jesus isn't just about what He can do for you, but what you can do for Him. How naturally does serving and meeting others' needs come to you? An indicator might be in how you treat those closest to you. Take opportunities this week to serve as many people as possible—students, teachers, supervisors, siblings, parents, youth leaders, etc.—in specific, practical ways. Be especially attentive to those who are shunned by others. Serve them like you're serving Jesus directly.

**Amanda**, from Florida, set a STL goal of \$1,000. After giving her first \$100 to the church building fund, then raising money for a missions trip to Mexico, Amanda wasn't able to start saving much toward her STL goal until September. Over the next three months, she saved money from baby-sitting and several unexpected sources. When she found herself still \$100 short, a family member helped make up the difference.

**Request:** There are 250,000 towns and cities in Europe without a full gospel church. In 11 countries, less than one person in 500 is an evangelical Christian. Please pray for missions efforts in Europe!



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*title: one way.*

**Read: John 14:1-7**

**Jesus is the only way to the Father.** That's an extremely unpopular view these days. Although people today are curious about supernatural things and are very open to spiritual matters, most have adopted a "religion of tolerance." Even young people in the Church are beginning to accept the false notion that there are many equally valid expressions of faith and several legitimate roads to God. But just because someone "believes" something doesn't make it true, any more than failing to accept the truth makes it false. If you trust and follow Jesus, you'll have to take His Word that there is no other way to the Father than the one He provided. Only by accepting Jesus' forgiveness and following His example can a person have a personal relationship with God and receive eternal life with Him.

**"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6, NIV).**

**Respond:** It's tough to take a definite stand for truth in a world that has no moral or spiritual absolutes. You'll most certainly be labeled as intolerant, bigoted, and judgmental. The days are coming when your trust in Christ might bring serious persecution. While you need to speak up for truth, be gracious and humble as you do, realizing that your words are not likely to be what convinces people of the truth. People today are looking for authentic experience. The way you live and the example you set will often convey Christ more than what you say. If you allow others to see an uncommon peace and contentment in your life, they will be more likely to take your convictions seriously and consider Christ's claims for themselves.

**Missionaries in Bucharest** are making good use of a STL Land Cruiser at the City of Hope, which rescues street kids and provides them a place to live. They also use a STL van as an ambulance to transport sick children.

**Request:** There are nearly one billion children on the continent of Asia. Pray that God would raise up leadership and provide training to accomplish the seemingly impossible task of reaching and discipling these young people for Christ.



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*title: get connected.*

**Read: John 15:1-17**

**Jesus is serious about our dependence on Him.** We'll never be all we can be without Jesus. When it comes to the latest technologies, wireless networks represent new levels of power and freedom. But when it comes to your spiritual life, true power and freedom come only when we get connected (and stay connected) to Christ. Those who try to make it on their own, relying on their own strength, intelligence, or creativity will eventually short circuit. Those who rely on something, or someone, other than God will one day crash beyond repair. However, those who depend completely on Jesus to direct, and sometimes correct, their lives, will be ultimately productive. By connecting with Christ, we connect with our destiny. And by connecting with our destiny, we can help connect others to Jesus and to their God-given purpose as well.

**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NIV).**

**Respond:** As you approach the end of this month-long commitment to seriously pursue a missions giving goal, don't disconnect from your higher purpose. It would be easy to take a break from daily time in God's Word and prayer. And it might seem convenient to let up in your giving for a while. Determine now to build on your progress. Keep growing by expanding your personal time with God. Keep giving by setting a new STL goal. And keep going by reaching out in actively compassionate ways to those around you who don't know Jesus.

**Paul**, from Austin, Minnesota, worked weekends as a cook in a truck stop so that he could reach the \$3,000 goal he set on the STL tour. His girlfriend also worked and was able to give \$2,000.

**Request:** Pray for Radiant Life Youth Resources, which provides cutting-edge Christian education and discipleship materials to thousands of leaders and students in churches throughout the country. These resources are also translated into Spanish and several other languages for use by churches and missionaries around the world.



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*title: get it together.*

**Read: John 17:1-26**

**Jesus wants unity in His Church.** In the final hours before His death, as He approached the culmination of His mission on earth, unity among His followers was foremost on Jesus' mind. He knew they couldn't accomplish His purpose without it. Division would not only defeat their mission and drive others away, it would rob them of God's blessing. But a unified effort would strengthen and confirm their cause. When Christians work together, putting aside petty differences, pursuing a common purpose, and presenting a clear message, people will take notice. And in the process, they will get a more accurate impression of Christ and the fact that there is a place for everyone who desires to be part of His kingdom.

**“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20,21, NIV).**

**Respond:** Are you doing your part to build unity in the body of Christ, His Church? If you aren't filling a role in ministry, find a place to contribute. Take time to encourage those who are already serving as well as those who could use a kind word. Be a peacemaker in situations where people struggle with tensions and disagreements. And if you have anything against anyone, or know of someone who has something against you, go to him or her and seek or offer forgiveness, always striving to resolve the conflict and mend the relationship.

**Missionaries in Ecuador** are constantly using their STL utility vehicle as they plant churches along the Pan American Highway.

**Request:** Pray for the school assembly initiative, The Seven Project, which assists school leadership by tailoring presentations to address their specific campus needs. Pray for the speakers and facilitators as well as those who organize local events, which include the daytime assemblies, evening rallies (called 7@Night), outreaches, and follow-up initiatives. Pray that many of the students affected by this ministry will also find ongoing support and resources through the Web site [www.thesevenproject.com](http://www.thesevenproject.com).



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*title: suffering in silence.*

**Read: Matthew 26:36-54,59-68; 27:11-31**

**Jesus suffered greatly for our sins.** While most people tend to avoid pain at all costs, Jesus embraced a painful purpose and paid the ultimate cost. He never backed down or shied away from His mission. He never wavered in His desire to do what only He could do. He was unjustly condemned. He was brutally beaten. He was publicly humiliated. He was taking our place, receiving the punishment that our sins deserved. Through all of it, Jesus never retaliated. In fact, when given the opportunity to defend himself and escape death, He remained silent and willingly took the torture He didn't deserve. Then again, He didn't need any human authority to release Him; He could have easily freed himself from the agony of the Cross. But instead, He endured the agony alone. And because He did, we don't have to.

**“When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, ‘Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?’ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor” (Matthew 27:12-14, NIV).**

**Respond:** Jesus paid the highest price, suffered the most severe death, not only for you, but for all, including those who want nothing to do with Him. But are you willing to show kindness, and even favor, to those who reject and mistreat you? The next time you are treated unjustly, mocked, or alienated for doing what's right or identifying with Jesus, don't retaliate or seek revenge. Instead, find a way to show sincere kindness and grace toward those who have taken advantage of you.

**Holly**, from Macodoches, Texas, used her creativity to make various arts, crafts, and framed paintings. She set up a display at church to sell her items and raised more than \$500 for STL.

**Request:** Pray for your own school campus. Ask God to guide the teachers and administrators as they serve students and families. Pray for wisdom in working to solve campus issues, asking God to allow you to be part of the solution. Pray that He would also unite Christian students from different churches and raise up student leadership for effective campus ministry.



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*title: a forgiving finish.*

**Read: Luke 23:32-49; John 19:16-30**

**Jesus is serious about offering forgiveness.** Unjustly condemned and stripped of all human dignity, Jesus hung naked and bleeding for all to see. As if enduring excruciating pain weren't enough, people passing by added bitter insults to His injuries. What had Jesus done to deserve such sarcastic and spiteful treatment? What kind of people would mock a dying man who had done nothing but offer His accusers truth and life? They were people much like us; they were the very people for whom Jesus was dying. And Jesus continued to offer them what they didn't deserve. Instead of refuting the insults, He defended His accusers, asking His Father to forgive them—something they didn't ask for, something they didn't even know they needed.

**“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’” (Luke 23:34, NIV).**

**Respond:** Does pain from your past still grip your life? Bitterness can't change bad people or bygone circumstances, but it will keep you from true satisfaction and success. What's more, it could seriously sabotage your relationship with Christ. If you're holding on to pain or unforgiveness, you're allowing someone or something in your past to obstruct your future. Give the situation to God and, if possible, settle the issue with those involved. If someone has made life difficult for you, don't look to retaliate. Instead, think of a way to show compassion. If Jesus willingly forgave an undeserving thief and an ungrateful mob, you can also be merciful to those who have hurt you.

**Missionaries in South Africa** use their STL truck and trailer as they go into high schools to teach AIDS awareness and present the *Book of Hope*. Missionaries in Kazakhstan use their STL utility vehicle to transport medical teams, who then have the opportunity to present the gospel as they bring healing to rural tribes.

**Request:** Ask God to raise up leaders around the world to reach the youth of their countries and communities. (Nearly 97% of the world's professionally trained youth leaders are in North America ministering to 3% of the world's teen population.) Pray God would send out more workers.



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*title: it's not over.*

**Read: Mark 14:29-31,66-71; 16:1-7; John 21:1,15-19**

**Jesus believes in second chances.** At one time or another, we all need another chance...and another...and another. Jesus knows that no matter how determined or committed we are, like Peter, we'll inevitably falter. We'll let ourselves down, disappoint others, and fall short of God's standard. But thankfully, Jesus doesn't give up on us when we fail, just as He didn't give up on Peter. In other words, regret and humiliation never need to get the last word. If we are willing to start over, try again, and depend more on God, there is always hope to fulfill our destinies. Don't let past failure keep you from making your "mark" on this world.

**"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you'" (Mark 16:6,7, NIV).**

**Respond:** Think of someone who needs a second chance. Extend grace toward that person by offering encouragement or giving him or her an opportunity to redeem a past failure. If you need a second chance, ask God to help you start fresh. Go to individuals you've let down. If you haven't done so, apologize for any past irresponsibility. Learn from your past experience and look for new opportunities to serve, following through with excellence.

**Jared**, from Helena, Alabama, committed to do whatever it took to give \$1,000 to STL. Among other things, he cut grass and refereed kids' games. After meeting this goal, Jared started saving for a car. He didn't care what kind, just something small and black. A few days later, his next door neighbor told Jared's dad that he was moving and wanted to give his car to Jared's family so that Jared could have it when he was old enough to drive. The car was a black Toyota Tercel.

**Request:** Pray for students across the nation and around the world who are answering God's call into ministry. Pray that they receive clear direction in choosing where to train for service. Pray for Assemblies of God colleges and universities as they raise money to complete projects aimed at better equipping students for ministry.



**Speed the Light**

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*title: get going.*

**Read: Matthew 28:16-20**

**Jesus expects us to take His Great Commission seriously.** After all, He's not giving us a suggestion or a recommendation. For a dedicated disciple, reaching out to others and delivering His message to those who don't know Him are not options to be considered—they are commands to be obeyed. God doesn't call you to be brash and obnoxious with your faith, nor does He necessarily reward you on earth according to how much you do for Him. Still, Jesus tells you to be active and intentional about showing others what it means to be His follower. Sharing your faith can often be difficult and uncomfortable, and many people will pass up the offer. It's not your job to convert them, but to show love and tell them the truth so they will at least have the chance to come to Christ. One thing is for sure, most people will never come unless we go.

**“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19,20, NIV).**

**Respond:** Is there anyone who tends to follow you—a friend, a teammate, a little brother or sister? Seriously consider how and where you are leading them. Ask God to help you set the right kind of example, to point people in the right direction—toward Christ. If you feel that no one looks to you in this way, you're probably mistaken. Your life will influence someone somehow. But if people don't seem to follow you, that's all the more reason to not worry about what they think. Determine to be uncompromising in your commitment to Christ; continue to give what you can, to go when you can, to serve however you can, and to pray always.

**Missionaries in Bolivia** use their STL pickup and camper to minister in areas where no housing is available. Missionaries in Peru were able to use their STL vehicle for more than 20 years before selling it for \$1,800.

**Request:** Take time to express gratitude to God for the opportunity to participate in world missions through STL. Ask Him to enable you to continue to give sacrificially and to bless your gifts as they are applied to ministry, training, and outreach efforts around the world.



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*title: empowered.*

**Read: Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-4**

**Jesus provides us with power to accomplish His purpose.** Jesus does more than call you to a mission; He equips and empowers you to fulfill it. In addition to the privilege of representing Christ, you're backed by His authority, power, and presence. You're never alone. In fact, God's presence is more real than anyone or anything around you because He's capable of providing everything you'll ever need to fulfill your mission. Human ingenuity isn't a requirement; God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. As you pursue God's presence and purpose, your life will be characterized by His passion and power. As you serve Christ, trust Him to provide the strategy and strength to do the supernatural.

**“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV).**

**Respond:** Are you relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to help you fulfill your mission? Are you continually being filled with the Spirit, letting Him flow through you to worship and witness? If you haven't been baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, ask God to fill you now. Don't seek simply the gift, but the Giver—more of Jesus. And don't hesitate to speak out in your new prayer language, being assured that God will give you what you ask for (Luke 11:9-13). If you've previously been baptized in the Spirit but have neglected this empowering gift, ask God for a fresh filling. Then keep exercising your prayer language in private worship and relying on your power Source for public witness.

**Joy and Erica**, from Concord, California, took their STL opportunities seriously. They planned and prepared a STL barbeque which they sponsored following two Sunday services. Through freewill donations, they raised more than \$950 for STL.

**Request:** You've worked hard to provide resources and equipment for missionaries around the world. Now ask God what more you can do to support world missions. Perhaps He will lead you to participate in a short-term missions trip. If so, trust Him to provide. Also, keep your mind and heart open to the exciting and rewarding possibilities of life in full-time missions service, and always be willing to support those who do go.



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