**Upside Down Influence: Serving Our City**

January 5, 2020

Week 1 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Jeremiah 29:1-3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+19%3A1-3&version=ESV)

REFLECT: In our reading today we found out that the people of Judah had been captured by Nebuchadnezzar and taken away to Babylon. Consider the natural feelings the exiles would have had toward their captures. It would be like a foreign country invading our city, destroying it and taken us to a foreign land. How would you naturally respond to the people of Babylon if you were one of the exiles? How would God want you to respond?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Ask the Lord to develop love in you so that you do good to those who do harm to you intentionally or unintentionally.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: [Matthew 5:13-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A13-16&version=NIV)

REFLECT: Identify a person in your life that has made you want to have a deeper relationship with Jesus. What was it about them that gave you that desire?

PRACTICE: Thank the person who impacted your life.

Day 2-

READ: [Jeremiah 29:4-6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+19%3A4-6&version=ESV)

REFLECT: Do you see your city as a place God put you in to serve it? Do you see your see as God’s mission field for you? How are you making your city part of your home? What part of your life are you giving to your community?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Look for a way during your day, today, to serve someone you usually wouldn’t even think about.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: [1 Peter 2:11-17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A11-17&version=NIV)

REFLECT: We can all admit that at times we see our local officials make decisions that we don’t agree with. What should be different about Christ followers is how we respond with submission and respect. How are you doing in this area? Let the Spirit speak to you about this part of your life.

PRACTICE: Write a note of thanks or call a **city** official that you normally wouldn’t have thought of like someone from a different political party or perspective. Be careful not to thank them and criticize them in the same note.

Day 3-

READ: [Jeremiah 29:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+19%3A7&version=ESV)

REFLECT: Is your city prospering, joyful and hopeful? What part of your city bothers you the most? Have you prayed that God would use you to bring a blessing to your city?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: If you identified an area of your city that has a real need then pray that God would make it prosper in some way through **YOU**.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: [Philppians 2:14-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A14-16&version=NIV)

REFLECT: What would it look like for you and your family to “shine among your city like stars in the sky?

PRACTICE: Praise God for what he revealed to you while your reflected.

Day 4-

READ: [Jeremiah 29:8-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+19%3A8-10&version=ESV)

REFLECT: Identify a source in your life that fills you with a negative attitude toward your city? It might be a person, organization or media outlet. Who do you listen to more, God or those outside influences?

PRAY: Let the Lord know that you plan to listen to His plans for your city and not the negative voices in your life.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: [1 Thessalonians 4:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+4%3A9-12&version=NIV)

REFLECT: How is your life leading to respect from those outside the faith?

PRACTICE: Thank God for how he is working in your life to bring him glory.

Day 5-

READ: [Jeremiah 29:11-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+19%3A8-10&version=ESV)

REFLECT: Identify areas of your life where you are seeking God with all your heart? Is your city one of those areas?

PRAY: Ask the Lord to reveal to you how your heart can be more in line with His when it comes to your city.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [Whiteboard Leadership # 4 // Community Impact Through Your Church](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASmu3SCtUuQ).

REFLECT: What is your ministry doing to impact our city? If you moved away from your city what would be the impact?

PRACTICE: Write down and post in a prominent place one way in which your life can impact your city for Jesus Christ.

**UPSIDE-DOWN INFLUENCE: Serving Our Church**

January 12, 2020

Week 2 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [1 Corinthians 12:1-31](https://biblehub.com/esv/1_corinthians/12.htm)

REFLECT: What is the big idea of this chapter? Paul is writing to the church in Corinth. Put yourself in their shoes- what concerns or questions do you think the church had?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Sketch a body (if you’re not super artistic, just draw a stick figure or a face). The image of the body is the image of the church. Pray and ask God to give you wisdom and discernment about which part of the body you are.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: Get an overview of the book of [1 Corinthians](https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/182896) from the Bible Project’s Read Scripture series on RightNow Media. (Need a RNM account? You can register for FREE at [www.whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia](http://www.whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia))

Day 2-

READ: [1 Corinthians 12:1-11](https://biblehub.com/esv/1_corinthians/12.htm), 28; [Romans 12:6-8;](https://biblehub.com/esv/romans/12.htm) [Ephesians 4:11-16](https://biblehub.com/esv/ephesians/4.htm)

REFLECT: The Holy Spirit empowers each Christian with spiritual gifts. Is it hard for you to accept any part of that statement? Do you have a sense of how God has gifted you? What does it mean that “each is given the manifestation of the Spirit *for the common good*.” How have others’ gifts brought good to your life?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Make a list of the gifts listed in these three passages. (\*Note: the differences indicate the lists are representative the of the many gifts, not exhaustive lists.) Label the body you drew yesterday with the different gifts. Praise God for His wisdom in building His church and for His work in your life. Ask for Him to fill you and give you clarity on your place in His body.

Day 3-

READ: [1 Corinthians 12:12-27](https://biblehub.com/esv/1_corinthians/12.htm); [Ephesians 2:8-10](https://biblehub.com/esv/ephesians/2.htm)

REFLECT: *You* are His masterpiece! What are the core truths of this passage in 1 Corinthians 12? What do you learn about yourself? About the church? About the Christians around you?

PRAY: Use Ephesians 2:8-10 to pray to the Lord-

*God, I praise you for the gifts you so freely give. You have filled me with faith to believe that your grace is enough to save even me. Thank you, Jesus! I choose to believe that I am your workmanship, a masterpiece created to do good works. And I don’t have to figure it all out on my own, for you have a purpose already prepared for me. God, I want to walk with You. I want to do the good works you are calling me to do. Today, tomorrow, and every day of my life. Lead me, Jesus, and I will follow. Amen.*

Day 4-

READ: [1 Corinthians 12:1-30](https://biblehub.com/esv/1_corinthians/12.htm)

REFLECT: What have you learned from 1 Corinthians 12 this week? What has God revealed to you about Himself? About His Church? What part of God’s truth is quietly, or loudly, echoing in your soul today? Resolve to listen to His voice and follow His leading.

PRAY: Follow the **ACTS** Model and write your own prayer using these prompts-

**Adoration:** Praise God for who He is, for how He has blessed you with spiritual gifts, and for the opportunity to share those gifts with others.

**Confession:** Confess any sins of fear about using and sharing your gifts, knowing they are to be used for God’s glory and for the good of the Church.

**Thanksgiving:** Thank your Heavenly Father that the Holy Spirit has given you one, or more, spiritual gifts. Express your thanks through developing and using those gifts.

**Supplication:** Pray that the Holy Spirit will nurture and guide each member of His church in the use of his/her spiritual gifts, and that each may have the opportunity to express those gifts in a manner that will best bless Kingdom work, both locally, and worldwide.

TAKE IT FUTHER!

READ: For more information on the different spiritual gifts, check out this article from Cru.org: “[Our Spiritual Gifts](https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/help-others-grow/collaborative-discipleship/lessons/3b-our-spiritual-gifts.html)”

Day 5-

READ: [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](https://biblehub.com/esv/1_corinthians/13.htm)

REFLECT: 1 Corinthians 12 ends with “And I will show you a still more excellent way…” On the heels of teaching about spiritual gifts and the body, Paul writes to the church about love. Chapter 13 is often used at weddings, but it is best read together with chapter 12. Imagine Paul standing before the church speaking these words. How does his message about love apply to the church as a body?

PRAY: Discovering, developing and using spiritual gifts is a lifelong journey for Christians. Every day of that journey, we can choose to walk in Christ’s love. Today, ask God to fill you with His love and lead you to show His love to other Christians and to those outside the church. Now, go and show someone love!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

PRACTICE: If you have not yet taken the CORE class at Grace church, consider signing up when it launches again in March. A portion of the class is a discussion about spiritual gifts and finding your place in the local body of the church. Find more information [HERE](https://whoisgrace.com/core/).

**Upside Down Influence: Serving Our World**

January 19, 2020

Week 3 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Luke 19: 1-10](https://biblehub.com/esv/luke/19.htm)

REFLECT: What does this story tell us about Jesus’ primary purpose during his time on earth?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Ask God to increase your love for the lost. Seek out an opportunity today to engage in a conversation with someone who does not know Jesus - and share that love.

Day 2-

READ: [Matthew 28: 18-20](https://biblehub.com/esv/matthew/28.htm)

REFLECT: Jesus equipped and instructed his followers to make disciples of all nations. This means sharing the good news with people groups beyond our communities of origin. Why do you think this was important to him? Is it important to you?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Ask God to align your heart with His in regards to reaching the nations with the good news. Pray for specific revelation on your role in His plans.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ/ WATCH/ LISTEN: Learn more about unreached people groups by visiting [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)

REFLECT: There are currently about 17,298 people groups in the world. Of that number, 7,368 are considered unreached. That means 42.6% of the world’s people groups have not yet received the good news of Jesus.

PRACTICE: Select an unreached people group, print out a prayer card and pray for them each day this week.

Day 3-

READ: [Matthew 9: 35-38](https://biblehub.com/esv/matthew/9.htm)

REFLECT: Jesus did not wait for people to seek him out; he traveled throughout the region sharing His message. What role did compassion have in this approach to ministry?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Ask God where He wants you to take His message and then go! Start moving in faith. Maybe He’ll lead you to your neighbor’s house or around the corner to start. Maybe He’ll lead you to join a short term mission trip. Challenge yourself to be responsive to His leading. Pray for open eyes and a soft heart toward the people He brings you to.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

PRACTICE: Visit the [Global Missions](https://whoisgrace.com/missions/) page of the Grace Church website to find out more about global partners, missionaries, and more!

Day 4-

READ: [John 17: 13-19](https://biblehub.com/esv/john/17.htm) and [John 20: 21](https://biblehub.com/esv/john/20.htm)

REFLECT: Who is Jesus praying for in John 17? What is He praying for? What is He NOT praying for? Why is this significant?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Look up the definition of the word ‘sanctify’. Ask God to help you fully live in His joy and truth. Spend some time reflecting on what it means to be ‘sent into the world’ and pray for courage to go forth in peace.

Day 5-

READ: [Mark 10: 17-31](https://biblehub.com/context/mark/10-17.htm)

REFLECT: Why did the rich young ruler go away sorrowful? If he kept all of the commandments, why was he not free to enter the kingdom of God? It’s interesting to note that we know very little about the ruler other than he was rich. This seems to be the thing that defines him as a person and his unwillingness to surrender it became his bondage.

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Spend some time thinking about the things that you allow to define you. Ask God to show you any area of your life that you would be unwilling to leave behind for His sake and for the gospel. Pray for freedom from the things that bind you.

**UPSIDE-DOWN INFLUENCE: Story Sunday**

January 26, 2020

Week 4 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [John 1:16-17](https://biblehub.com/esv/john/1.htm); [Ephesians 2:1-10](https://biblehub.com/esv/ephesians/2.htm)

WATCH: [World’s Definition of Grace vs God’s](https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/120690) from RightNow media. [Need a RNM account? Sign up for *free* at www.whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia.]

REFLECT: What is grace? How have you been changed by God’s grace? How has Grace church impacted your life?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Practice a humble posture of prayer- bow your head; kneel; open your hands with palms up. Thank God for the grace upon grace He has lavished on you as His child.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

PRACTICE: Want to share how you have been Changed by Grace? Visit <https://whoisgrace.com/changed/> to submit your story.

Day 2-

READ: [Acts 18: 1-3, 18-21, 24-28](https://biblehub.com/esv/acts/18.htm); [Romans 16:3-5](https://biblehub.com/esv/romans/16.htm); [1 Corinthians 1:12](https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/1-12.htm), [3:4-6](https://biblehub.com/esv/1_corinthians/3.htm), [16:19](https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/16-19.htm); [2 Timothy 4:19](https://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-19.htm)

REFLECT: How would you describe Aquila and Priscila? What was the impact of their lives on others? Where do you see God’s grace in their story?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Tell someone the story of Aquila and Priscilla today.

Day 3-

READ: [Philemon 1:1-26](https://biblehub.com/esv/philemon/1.htm)

REFLECT: Who are Philemon and Onesimus? What is their story? How does Paul use his influence to challenge and encourage Philemon? Where do you see God’s grace in their story? Why do you think God inspired Paul to write this letter?

PRACTICE: How will you use your influence to impact someone’s story today?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: “[How to Read Philemon](https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/226899)” from the Read Scriptures series on RightNow Media. [Need a RNM account? Sign up for *free* at www.whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia.]

Day 4-

READ: [Ruth 1-4](https://biblehub.com/esv/ruth/1.htm)

REFLECT: Who was Ruth? Naomi? Boaz? What jumps out to you about their story? Where do you see God’s grace in their story? Why do you think their story is included in the Bible?

PRAY: Praise God for using ordinary people to do extraordinary, eternally-impacting, things. Ask Him to give you eyes to see Him at work in your life and in others’.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: “[How to Read Ruth](https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/182906)” from the Read Scripture series on RightNow Media. [Need a RNM account? Sign up for *free* at www.whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia.]

Day 5-

READ: [Jonah 1-4](https://biblehub.com/esv/jonah/1.htm)

REFLECT: How would you describe Jonah? Where do you see God’s grace in his story? Why do you think God went to such great lengths to gain Jonah’s cooperation with His plan?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: The story God writes for our lives is not always *fun* or full of adventure, but to live for Him means to walk where He leads. Are you holding back an area of your life? Are reluctant to do the next right thing? Be honest with God. Confess your struggles. Thank Him for His patience, His grace, His forgiveness. Ask Him to give you the desire and the wisdom to let Him write your best life story.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: “[How to Read Jonah](https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/204158)” from the Read Scripture series on RightNow Media. [Need a RNM account? Sign up for *free* at www.whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia.]