

Growing Deeper
Burnt

Week One: Fighting Hopelessness
John 20:11-18

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Read John 20:1-11. As you read, jot down a list of things Mary discovered when she arrived at the tomb.
2. The evidence before Mary's eyes could not have been bleaker. No one in his right mind could reach a conclusion other than the one to which Mary came: someone had taken Jesus' body. Describe a time when you were faced with overwhelming evidence that a hoped-for result was not going to happen. How willing were you to assume the best in that situation?
3. What other feelings are invoked when you feel hopeless?
4. Look again at verse 2. What was the first thing Mary did when she realized Jesus' body was missing?
5. We see Mary doing something that many of us do in hopeless situations. What do you think Mary hoped would be the result of her action?
6. Perhaps Mary was looking for comfort from people who would feel the same way she did. Or maybe she wanted someone to tell her she was mistaken, that she would wake up from the nightmare she was facing. While we can't know what was in Mary's mind, we've all experienced the feeling of hopelessness at least once in our lifetime. What would you have said to Mary if she'd come to you? In other words, what would you say to someone who expressed feeling hopeless?
7. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to help you be the kind of person to whom others would feel safe turning if they were overwhelmed with hopelessness.

Spent FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read John 20:11-13. Often when we feel hopeless, tears are inevitable. In Mary's case, do you think her tears were more tears of anger or sadness? Explain your response. (There's no right or wrong answer.)
9. Mary's tears may have simply been fueled by helplessness. Jesus was gone and there was nothing she could do about it. Think about a time in your life when you believed you had no options, at least none you liked. How did it feel to be in that situation?
10. Like Mary, our most frustrating moments can come when we can't see a good solution to our problems. How do you typically respond in those situations? Do you typically accept the options you have or fight to make better ones?

11. Read John 20:14-15. What happened when Mary turned around?

12. Why do you suppose Mary did not recognize Jesus?

13. Maybe Mary's eyes were blinded by tears. Or Mary was so deep in her despair and hopelessness, she didn't even see the best possible outcome standing right before her eyes. Read Hebrews 12:2. How does the Bible say we are to keep our focus so that we are able to persevere?

14. Maybe Mary didn't see Jesus because she simply didn't believe she could. How many options may be before us if we are open to seeing them? As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask Jesus to help you keep your eyes fixed on Him in order to trust that He is there for you, too.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Read John 20:11-13. As Mary peered into the empty tomb Easter morning and saw Jesus was gone, what did she ask the two angels?

16. Read the account in Luke 24:1-8. What question did the angels ask Mary?

17. Mary wasn't looking for a living Jesus, because, in her mind, it just wasn't possible. Mary's biggest hope in this moment is that she could recover Jesus' body. Do you blame her? In other words, is Mary guilty of small thinking or is she just realistic?

18. Are you the type of person that dreams big or tends to think small? Why do suppose you are oriented that way?

19. The evidence suggests Mary was not really an optimist. She'd seen Jesus perform miracles; she'd heard Him speak about His death and resurrection, but she did not come to the tomb expecting to find a miracle. (In her defense, neither did the men.) Look again at Luke 24:1. Why had she come to the tomb?

20. Mary had not come to find Jesus because she was an optimist; she came in an act of love, to care for His body and to make sure He had a proper burial. How can love change how we deal with hopeless situations?

21. Read 1 Peter 4:7-9 and write in your own words the guidance this passage gives.

22. If we are not blessed with natural optimism, maybe love is enough to help us find courage and hope in any hopeless situation, especially when we've been disappointed by the actions of others. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray that God would help you love those who've disappointed you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

23. There are so many fresh starts in life that buoy our optimism for the future. Maybe it's a new semester of school with its chance to start over with a clean slate or a new job opportunity promising a new kind of future. Have you ever looked forward to the start of something new? How did that give you hope for a fresh start?

24. Read Luke 8:1-3. From what affliction had Mary Magdalene been rescued?

25. Mary wasn't looking for a fresh start; she'd already had one. I am not sure if any of us can relate specifically to her experience, but most of us have struggled with something in our lives. What has been one of your biggest struggles? How has that struggle affected your life?

26. For three days, Mary and all of the disciples believed the worst. Their friend was dead; would they be next? What other things might have been on their minds?

27. It's hard to imagine what Mary was feeling on Easter morning. Mary hadn't just lost a good friend. Because of Jesus her life was different; she was different. How might she have felt about her future now that He was gone?

28. Jesus had once turned Mary's life from hopelessness to pure optimism and now that hope seemed to end with His death. It's easy to imagine that she wished she'd never been hopeful... that life might have been easier if she'd just accepted her fate and not gotten her hopes up. Have you ever experienced this feeling? How did you react? With Anger, sadness, or something else?

29. It takes a lot of faith to simply trust God when life seems hopeless, yet that's exactly what God calls us to do... trust Him. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Confess those times when your faith has failed you and you doubted His good intentions for your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

30. Read John 20:11-18. What question did Jesus ask Mary in verse 15?

31. How did she answer Him in verse 16?

32. There is something powerful about names. We often see this as a theme in books. When someone uses a person's name it gives him power over that person. Have you ever noticed the difference between someone saying, "I love you", and saying it using your name? It somehow adds a layer of intimacy for us. What happened when Jesus said Mary's name?

33. Mary had been talking to Jesus, yet she did not recognize Him. But when He said her name, instantly, she recognized Him and she cried out a term of endearment she used for Him. How might their reunion have been different if He had

said something like, “Hey. It’s me. I am alive!”?

34. Even after all Jesus had just experienced, He still approached Mary in the most gentle and loving way possible. He acknowledged her pain and He called her by name. Read John 10:27-28. According to this verse, how do Jesus’ followers (His sheep) know Him?

35. Just like Mary, Jesus calls each of us by name. He calls us gently and lovingly to offer hope and a life that is full. Conclude your final FIFTEEN this week by answering His call. Spend the rest of your time giving Him thanks and praise for giving His life for yours.

Week Two: Overwhelming Reason

John 20:24-29

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Growing up, did you have (or do you still have) a nickname? If so, what was it and how did it come to stick?
2. Are nicknames mostly flattering or intended to humble a person?
3. Read John 14:5 and John 20:24-25. Why has the name “Doubting Thomas” become synonymous with his name?
4. Have you ever known anyone like Thomas? Do you think he is actually that different from the rest of the disciples or just more willing to be public with his doubts?
5. It’s interesting that Thomas wasn’t with the other disciples at the beginning. What does John 20:19 lead you to believe was the mindset of the disciples after the crucifixion of Jesus? What is there about Thomas that might explain his absence from the rest?
6. Why is this mindset important when you realize that most of the apostles died martyrs’ deaths rather than deny their faith in Jesus as the crucified and risen Messiah?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Take a moment and give God thanks for the courage of those who suffered much, even death, to pass the gospel to a new generation of believers.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. The prophecies about Jesus were often complicated, specific and impossible to fake. Read Luke 7:18-23. Compare this reference to Isaiah 35:4-10. How does prophecy and fulfillment support the case for Christ?
9. What do you know about Josephus? Google “Josephus on Jesus” and share what you discover. How do historic references to Jesus outside the Bible support the case for Christ?
10. The book of Mormon refers to cities, rivers and geographic information that do not and have never existed in America. How does the historic narrative of the Bible about cities, peoples, bodies of water and cities in the Old and New Testament support the case for Christ?
11. Google provides archeological support for the historic facts of the Bible. How does the archeological record support the truth and Scripture and the case for Christ?

12. It is often said that you have to be a fool or in complete denial to accept the Biblical story about God, His people and the Messiah Jesus. Do you believe it is best to check your brains at the door if want to be a faithful Christian? Why or why not?

13. Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. According to this passage, what is the only basis for true faith? How do you explain the fact that some people actually saw the miracles of Jesus, even His death and resurrection, and still refused to believe in God and accept Jesus as their Savior?

14. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a calm and non-defensive spirit when sharing your faith in the veracity of Scripture and Jesus as your Savior.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Read Romans 10:11-21. How does God feel toward those who denied the faith despite the witness of others?

16. Someone once said, “Anyone convinced against her will remains unconvinced.” What did he mean by that? Do you agree?

17. Is it freeing or frustrating for you to know that all you can do is share what you believe and allow the Holy Spirit to do the rest?

18. “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” What does this statement mean?

19. Read 1 Corinthians 3:4-9. Explain the metaphor that some plant and others harvest. What does that metaphor mean when it comes to bringing others to faith in God and our Savior, Jesus?

20. Since bringing people to faith is ultimately God’s work, does that imply that we have no obligation to be winsome, prepared to discuss the reasons we believe or address others’ doubts in a knowledgeable way? Explain. Read 1 Peter 3:15. What are the key words in that passage?

21. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray for the opportunity to be a witness for Christ. Pray for a patient and kind heart as you encounter the doubts of others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. Read John 20:26-29. How would you explain Jesus’ attitude toward Thomas?

23. Explain Jesus’ greeting in verse 26.

24. Why did Jesus allow Peter to touch His wounds?
25. How much do you think personality affects the willingness of a person to accept or reject another person's point of view?
26. What suggestions would you propose to those who witness to doubters? How can a person disagree with someone else and not be disagreeable?
27. Have you ever prayed for God to show you a sign or provide some proof of His presence or concern for you? Explain. Do you think it is wrong to ask God to make Himself known?
28. End your FIFTEEN by praying for a gracious spirit toward believers and non-believers who disagree with you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. Have you read, The Case for Christ, Evidence That Demands a Verdict, or any other book that defends the Christian faith on the basis of facts and an objective examination of the record? If so, explain the impact it had on you.
30. How do you handle situations where people question the Christian faith? Do you become quiet, defensive, or try to spend more time listening to their reasons for doubt?
31. Are there other things in the world, besides faith, that seem nearly impossible to believe...the migration of monarch butterflies, salmon returning to their exact place of hatching to spawn, the planetary system, the unique nature of a fingerprint or the pattern of a snowflake? How can people accept some miracles and not others?
32. Who do you know that gives you (or gave you) the greatest reassurance of your Christian faith? Why did they come to mind?
33. Who is most heavy on your heart or mind who has not accepted the Lord Jesus as his or her Savior? Pause and pray for that person and for a new insight to deepen your relationship.
34. What do you think you could do to be better equipped to engage in meaningful conversations with non-believers?
35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for Christian leaders to be more patient, humble and kind in their defense of the Christian faith.

Week Three - *Healing Shame*
John 21:1-19

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. Pastor Ted Haggard was a leading figure for American Christianity for many years. Then he was caught paying a male escort for sex and illegal drugs. What do you think would have been an appropriate consequence for his behavior?
2. Under what circumstances, if any, would you support Ted Haggard being allowed to be a pastor again?
3. Simon Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends and the leading apostle for the early Christian church. Read a conversation he had with Jesus in John 13:36-38. What did Jesus predict that Peter would do?
4. Now read John 18:25-27. How do you think Peter's sin compares to what Pastor Haggard did? Why?
5. John doesn't tell us how Peter reacted in this moment of betrayal, but the other gospel writers do. Go to Matthew 26:74-75. What was Peter's response to his failure?
6. What is a time of personal failure that you've experienced? How has it affected your ability to move forward in life?
7. As you conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer, confess any personal failures that you have not already turned over to God. Ask God to use your failings to shape you into a courageous champion for the gospel.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

8. What is your response when you feel overwhelmed? Do you shut down? Distract yourself? Lash out at others?
9. Read John 21:1-3. What was Peter's response to feeling overwhelmed by Jesus' death and his own feelings of shame?
10. Why do you think Peter went fishing? Some scholars think he'd given up on spreading the news of Jesus and went back to his old career. Some think he didn't know what else to do. Some think he and the disciples were simply hungry and needed some fish. Which do you think is most likely?
11. What was Peter supposed to be doing? (See John 20:19-23 for help with this question.)
12. Shame can keep us from doing the things we know we should be doing. What is an example of a time when shame prevented you from seeking help or restoring a relationship or doing the right thing?

13. Is there anything currently in your life that's keeping you from the commission that Christ gives to all His followers in John 20:21? What is it?
14. Close your FIFTEEN by praying that God would remove anything that hinders you from fulfilling His purpose in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

15. If someone asked you what God was doing in your life right now, how easy or difficult would it be for you to answer this question?
16. Sometimes it feels like God is far away and that He's not active in our lives. But now read what Jesus did in response to Peter's aimlessness. Read John 21:4-14. What did Jesus do for His disciples in this passage?
17. Of what moment in their lives was Jesus reminding them? (Hint: see Luke 5:1-11)
18. In that moment from Luke 5, what life-changing commission did Jesus give to Simon Peter?
19. Peter might have felt abandoned in his calling to spread the good news of Jesus. How did Jesus show that He would always be there to provide for His disciples' needs?
20. Think again about the first question from this study. How is God active in your life right now? How is He providing what you need to do the work He has called you to do?
21. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer by asking GOD to help you see His work in your life every day.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

22. In our story for this week, Jesus has rescued Peter from aimlessness and reminded him that Jesus will always provide for him. Now let's see what happens next. Read John 21:15-19. What question does Jesus ask Peter after their breakfast together?
23. Why do you think Jesus asked Peter the question three times?
24. How many times did Peter deny Jesus during the night of Jesus' trial? (Hint: See John 18:15-27 for this answer.)

25. Peter had done a shameful thing in denying Jesus three times. But what was Jesus' response in this section? What important thing did He ask Peter to do?
26. Most of us wouldn't have trusted Peter with something so important after he'd failed so dismally. But Jesus picked him right back up. He reminded Peter that the mission was more important than his shame. How did Peter respond to this trust from Jesus?
27. What shortcoming is potentially holding you back from "feeding Jesus' sheep"?
28. Use the rest of your FIFTEEN to pray and ask God to give you the confidence to spread His good news and love to all the world.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

29. Do you know who Steve Bartman is? Google his name and see what comes up. Read the Wikipedia article on his "incident" if you need the details. For what moment is he infamous?
30. Simon Peter faced a similar possibility. He could have been known forever as the guy who denied Jesus. Now read John 21:15-19. What new task did Jesus give Peter?
31. It's important to note that Jesus was not interested in labeling Peter for his past actions; instead, He gave him a new task. In verse 19, Jesus summed up His goal for Peter in two words. What are they?
32. Do you believe that we have this same command from Jesus? Why or why not?
33. When we try to share Jesus' love and commands, and help others to follow him, we will always face opposition. People will try to shame us or disqualify us from our duties. What things could be said about you, to diminish your credibility when you try to share your faith in Jesus?
34. What new thing has God called you? (See 1 John 3:1.) Look at 1 John 3:18-21. If we are God's children, what effect should guilt or shame have on our calling to love others?
35. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, thanking God that He has made you His child, rescued you from shame and asked you to partner with Him for his mission on earth!

Week Four - *Crushing Potential*
Philippians 3:3-15

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. As a parent, what would be your highest aspiration for your children? If you are not a parent, what hopes did your parents communicate to you for your life?
2. What cultural values do those hopes reveal?
3. How does our culture define success?
4. Read what Jewish culture valued as important in Paul's ironic boast in Philippians 3:4-6. What kinds of things mattered in Paul's day?
5. Based on the context, how easy do you think it was to accomplish and embody everything Paul listed? What might be equivalent boasts for us in our culture today?
6. Now read the next part of Paul's letter, Philippians 3:7-9. How do these earthly accomplishments compare to Paul's accomplishment of faith in Christ?
7. How easy is it for you to keep earthly success in its proper context compared to your faith?
8. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking Christ through His Holy Spirit to help remind you of the things that truly matter - the things that will last throughout eternity.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

9. We've talked about the difference between earthly success and faith. But don't we want to be successes as Christians, too? What do you think it would look like to have successful faith?
10. Here's another way to think about this question: What do you think God's expectations are for you?
11. If the highest achievement of faith is going to heaven, then what are the requirements? (See John 3:16 and John 6:28-29.)
12. Now read Ephesians 2:4-9. What good works do we need to do in order to be saved?

13. What does it take for us to be seen as righteous in God's sight? Go to 2 Corinthians 5:21 for help with this answer.
14. How are these truths comforting or discouraging in your own faith journey?
15. Finish your FIFTEEN by giving thanks for the wonderful truth that there is nothing more for you to achieve in your saving relationship with Him.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

16. We learned yesterday that when it comes to achieving our potential before God, Jesus Christ has accomplished everything on our behalf. Does this let us off the hook for trying to achieve full potential in our faith? Why or why not?
17. If our good works don't get us into heaven, what might be the point of good works?
18. When it comes to reaching our potential in faith, we don't do it for the goal of our own benefit, but for the benefit of others around us: our children; friends; coworkers and those who don't know the love Jesus has for them. So, what would a faith that achieves this potential look like?
19. Martin Luther describes a journey for reaching our spiritual potential. It has three steps: prayer, meditation and temptation. Here is his description of the first step: "But kneel down in your little room [Matt. 6:6] and pray to God with real humility and earnestness, that he through his dear Son may give you his Holy Spirit, who will enlighten you, lead you, and give you understanding." What does Matthew 6:6 say that we should do?
20. Why do you think this is the first step for achieving spiritual potential?
21. Who is the one whose power we rely on for this first step?
22. Use your FIFTEEN to start toward achieving your spiritual potential right now by praying for God to send you His Holy Spirit and ask boldly for the gifts that the Spirit brings.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

23. When you hear the word "meditation," what images or ideas come to your mind?
24. The second step on our spiritual journey is meditation. Hear what Martin Luther has to say about it: "You should meditate, that is, not only in your heart, but also externally, by repeating the written words externally and rubbing them like an herb for its flavor, reading and rereading them with diligent attention and reflection, so that you may see

what the Holy Spirit means by them.... Thus you see in [Psalm 119] how David constantly boasts that he will talk, meditate, speak, sing, hear, read, by day and night and always, about nothing except God's Word and commandments." Look at those verbs. Which ones do you regularly practice in your own engagement with Scripture?

25. Why do you think Luther makes a point that we need to say the words out loud - "externally" - instead of just reading them silently to ourselves? (If you struggle with this answer, go to Romans 10:17. What is the means by which faith comes?)
26. Now turn to Psalm 119:9-16. What examples does this passage give for meditating on God's Word? How do they match what Luther recommends?
27. Pick one of the verses from Psalm 119:9-16 that strikes you. Repeat it aloud a few times. If you're in an isolated place, maybe try yelling it at the top of your lungs. Or whisper it several times. How does this change how you hear the verse from when you simply read it the first time?
28. Write down this verse and put it somewhere where you will see it several times a day: on your bathroom mirror, on your car dashboard, at your work station. Commit to saying it out loud several times per day—every time you see it.
29. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer by asking, with real humility and earnestness, for God's Holy Spirit to come to you and guide you as you meditate on his Word!

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

30. Do you think temptation affects Christians more when they are new believers or when they are more mature in the faith? What made you go with that answer?
31. Martin Luther has a surprising third step in maximizing a believer's potential: temptation. He meant this in the sense of "being attacked or assaulted." Why would that be the final step of spiritual growth?
32. This is what Luther said about temptation: A maturing believer will be the victim of "all kinds of enemies, arrogant princes or tyrants, false spirits and factions, whom he must tolerate because he meditates, that is, because he is occupied with God's Word (as has been said) in all manner of ways. For as soon as God's Word takes root and grows in you, the devil will harry you, and will make a real [theologian] of you, and by his assaults will teach you to seek and love God's Word." How would assaults make you love God's Word more?
33. Read Psalm 119:145-152. How does this passage match Luther's three steps of prayer, meditation, and temptation"?
34. Unfortunately, the sign of a believer who is achieving her potential is not necessarily earthly success and blessing, but being attacked. Why do you think attack follows an attempt to meditate on God's Word?

35. How have you responded to attacks in your own life? How can you change your understanding and reception of those in the future?

36. Conclude your FIFTEEN by praying that God's Holy Spirit would fill you with His presence and prepare you for the assaults that are sure to come as you attempt to achieve your faith potential.

Week Five: *Surrendering Control*

Acts 5:1-11

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Is there something in your life, a misstep, a life-altering decision, a career move, that you wish you could change? What's the best way to deal with regret?
2. Read Acts 5:1-11. What was the mistake (sin) that Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of committing?
3. Was it required that they bring all the proceeds from selling their land as a contribution to the Lord's work?
4. What is the accusation made against Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:3 compared to verse 4? How can lying to the Holy Spirit be equated with lying to God?
5. What should Ananias and Sapphira have done differently?
6. Do you think the judgment incurred by Ananias and Sapphira was excessive?
7. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray for the ability to always demonstrate integrity in matters of faith.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Why do you think the issue of Christian giving is so difficult for most Christians?
9. Read a few passages on the subject of giving: Malachi 3:8-12, Luke 6:38, Matthew 23:23, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. What are five truths about this Christian value that you can derive from these verses?
10. Someone has said that the tither makes a decision about an appropriate level of support only once each year, while non-tithers end up making 52 decisions. Do you agree?
11. An older Christian once said, "The tithe belongs to God. It is really not ours to give. We really only start making voluntary gifts after the tithe." What do you think?
12. It has been statistically proven that people actually contributed a higher percentage of their income to the Lord during the worst economic times, compared to the prosperous times most experience today. Why do you think that is true?

13. It is also statistically proven that poor people contribute a greater percentage of their income to the Lord's work than more affluent Christians. What is there about human nature that causes that outcome?

14. End your FIFTEEN by praying for a right spirit in making Christian offerings and for a less judgmental spirit toward others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Some contend that the struggle of Ananias and Sapphira was really not so much an issue of greed as it was a lack of trust in the Lord to provide. Do you agree or disagree with that assessment?

16. Do you have confidence in the Lord to provide for your basic daily needs? What part does your own work ethic play in the picture? Read Matthew 6:19-24 and Matthew 6:31-34.

17. What is your greatest worry when it comes to possessions and having enough to provide for your daily needs?

18. In Acts 5:9, Peter asked Sapphira why she and her husband had agreed together to put the Lord to a test? What did Peter mean by that statement?

19. What lesson do you think God is trying to teach Christians through the example of Ananias and Sapphira?

20. The closing verse says that "great fear" came upon the church when they heard of this event. What do you think that means?

21. As you conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray that all your decisions about life's priorities would be motivated by God's love and provision and not for fear of judgment.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. The Lord is not against good planning and accepting personal responsibility for your life. Read Proverbs 6:6-11 and Proverbs 30:7-9. How would you describe the balance between trusting in God and self-provision?

23. Has there been a time in your life when you were less financially secure than you are today? Did attention and concern about financial issues occupy more of your attention then or now? Explain.

24. Read Ecclesiastes 5:10-15. What life lessons is God attempting to teach in this Scripture?

25. What is your greatest fear in life? Issues of health, finances, relationships, or something else? Why do you think that is your greatest concern? Read Matthew 6:33-34. Is the answer given there too simplistic? Explain what that response means relative to your concerns?
26. Why do you think lying and deception were such a concern to Peter in the story of Ananias and Sapphira?
27. Why do you think people are so susceptible to the temptation of making a good impression and caring so much with what other people think?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a new attitude that would be more concerned with God's perception of our values and decisions than others'.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. The Bible says that it is in giving that we receive. I once heard a Christian say, "You can't do good for someone else without doing something good for yourself." Do you agree? Why do you think is God's primary purpose in urging us to do good and be generous?
30. The same person also said, "You can't do something harmful to another person without doing harm to yourself." Has that been your observation, as well, or do you think some people thrive on hurting others?
31. Read a description of the early church in Acts 2:42-47. In what ways are the values shown there still found in the church today? How is it different today?
32. What is the single most important take-away you have from the story of Ananias and Sapphira?
33. Is it possible to be misguided in a matter as basic as trusting God to provide, and still be saved? Is it possible that although Ananias and Sapphira suffered judgment for their sin, they could still have been saved and entered eternal life?
34. What does this scripture teach us about God's omniscience? If people really believed God knows everything, do you think it would influence their behavior and values? If not, why?
35. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray that your behavior in secret would be the same as your behavior in public.