

### iii) Thanks be to God!

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 7:24,25

'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.' Gal 2:20

Many times we know that we're not good enough in our own strength; we come to faith in Jesus and we know the joy of starting our own journey with God.

But then we begin to grow in faith and we think we need to try to do something for God. So we start trying to live out our faith in our everyday life.

We try, often find ourselves struggling and then it can all seem like hard work!

This point of trying and really struggling is where we cry out to God for help.

It's the place each of us must come to (often!) - God starts when we stop.

St Paul found this place in the passage above and so must we.

This is where we need the truth of the Cross in our own experience; 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.' Gal 2:20.

We'll be exploring this more in the next sessions. It becomes most real for those who have come to the end of themselves and still want to follow Jesus.

It makes following Jesus possible for ordinary people like you and me.

#### Pause for Personal Prayer



Are you trying to do what you know is right but struggling? Take time to pray.

#### Discuss



St Paul came to a place where he knew he couldn't please God in his own strength and he cried for help. Have you experienced that? Discuss.

#### Taking it Further

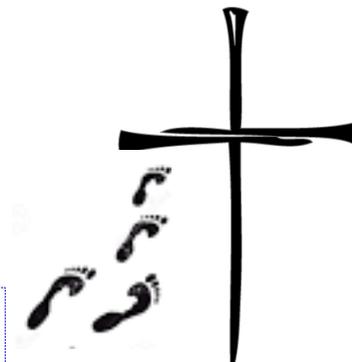
Take time to reflect on the times when you've struggled to do what you know is right. Could it be that you were trying in your own strength?

If God has a better way to work will you try it?

# Following Jesus Christ

## Monday to Saturday

### 2: Am I good enough?



Jesus said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me", Luke 9:23.

But are you good enough?

The simple answer is 'No!' - you are definitely not good enough!

That's the glory of the Gospel, as St Paul says;

*'Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise ...' 1 Corinthians 1:26, 27*

That's really good news for those of us who don't feel good enough to follow Jesus Christ, but if it's true how does it work?

How did God first use ordinary fishermen to turn the world upside down?

How can God use ordinary people like us in his extraordinary Kingdom work?

That's the secret which we're going to begin to explore.

#### A suggested outline for the session

Open with worship and prayer

Divide your time between the 3 sections

In each of the 3 sections ...

. Ask someone to read the scripture & reflection

. Pause for a few minutes of personal prayer

. Then discuss the questions given

. At the end allow 10mins for personal prayer

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## i) Am I good enough?

'It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose.' Philippians 2:13

'Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again."' John 3:6,7

'Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.' Rom 8:8



The amazing truth is that God doesn't want you to be good enough to work for him, he only wants you to let him do his own work in you.

*'It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose.'* Philippians 2:13.

So what stops that happening? What's the problem?

The Bible calls the life which we were all born with the 'flesh'(or human nature, sinful nature in different Bible translations).

God is very clear that *'the flesh cannot please God'*.

This was a surprise for Nicodemus who'd tried to serve God, fasted and prayed but Jesus said *'flesh gives birth to flesh ... You must be born again'*.

The simple truth is that the life we were born with cannot please God.

Some of us have tried and struggled for years to please God, we've even tried to change ourselves but failed, could this be why?

Have we been trying to serve him with our own strength rather than his?

### Pause for Personal Prayer



Have you ever tried & struggled in your own strength to serve God?

### Discuss



- Read Romans 8:8 from the different Bible versions you have available.
- Does it make sense that our old life cannot please God?
- Read John 3:16 again, why must we 'be born again'? – discuss.

## ii) A painful reality



'For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing.' Rom 7:18

'For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.' Galatians 5: 17

The passages above are a bit of a tongue twister but they make sense!

A lot of us have tried and failed to get it right, to please God.

Sometimes we just keep trying harder and get worn out.

Or sometimes we drop the standards – 'we're all human aren't we?'

Or sometimes we think God only uses super Christians - the clergy (!) or ...

But the Bible says that the life you were born with and his Spirit *'are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.'* Galatians 5: 17

If the problem lies in us, then the answer must lie with God.

St Paul found the answer and cried out *'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!'* Romans 7:24,25

Sometimes there's one particular thing we're struggling with which shows us that we really can't do it by ourselves, that we need help.

That's where by his grace we give up and cry to God for help.

That's where being a disciple of Jesus can truly start!

### Pause for Personal Prayer



Read Romans 7:18 above again – does that sound like you?

### Discuss



- Read Romans 7:18 again. What has your own experience been?
- Do you sometimes drop the standard & make excuses? – discuss.
- How could Paul struggle & then go on to be so used by God? - discuss