

Friday, June 5: Read [Acts 4](#)

The example of civil disobedience in Acts 4 may shed more light on how Christians relate to political powers and governmental leaders. A present concern for us is Hate Crimes legislation. Christians are becoming increasingly liable to commit “hate crimes” by speaking out against non-Christian lifestyles and activities, such as homosexuality. Recent examples of Christians preferring not to bake cakes or shoot photos for same sex weddings have challenged religious rights as discriminating against others. In the end, we will need to decide what we believe God wants us to do, and be open to possible persecution or even legal prosecution (verse 19).

Friday: Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Sue Saunders** (Bosnia), **Matt and Becky Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezowski** (Wycliffe), **Andrew & Sara Williams** (Ethnos360), **Brad and Christa Babjack** (University of West Virginia), **Salomon and Megan Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Central Asia), **William and Salma Garcia** (Tijuana church plant), **Brendan and Ashley Camp** (Columbia)

Week of
May 31
2020



Be the CHURCH is DISCIPLESHIP

Spiritual Disciplines Guide:

- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you're reading. Ask:*
 1. *How does this apply to me?*
 2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
 3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

Monday, June 1: Read [Romans 14](#)

As churches come out of quarantine, I see a potential stumbling stone that could divide many believers and threaten Christian unity. The present issue is over conforming to government guidelines as they relate to the corona crisis and church activities. A good example is whether churches are obligated to cease to meet under government orders. Or whether or not churches should require members to social distance and wear face masks in church for everyone's safety. Though not exact, this concern echoes tendencies seen in the church at Rome relating to believers freedom to eat or not eat meat sacrificed to idols. Read carefully Paul's directives. Notice he does not mandate behavior, but rather underlying attitudes and interpersonal dispositions. We too have opportunities to forgo judgements and accept one another in spite of strong opinions, political loyalty and personal preferences on this and other related issues. At root are personal convictions and interpersonal relationships (love). To fail here opens up opportunities for the devil to divide and conquer. Succeeding here will make us a stronger congregation and better able to serve our community.

Monday: Pray for yourself:

- My relationship with God
- My life roles and responsibilities
- My personal needs/weak areas
- My goals and objectives for 2020

Tuesday, June 2: Read [1 Corinthians 8](#)

Apparently eating meat sacrificed to idols was a divisive issue in the first century church. Jewish converts to Christianity came from the “don’t eat, don’t touch, unclean” background, where Gentile converts ate and touched everything. Again, notice how Paul deals with the issue. He sets forth love as the guiding principle and calls believers to acknowledge differences of opinions with freedom to eat or not eat, each according to his or her conscience. In both cases, they were to avoid judging or even wounding those who saw things differently. We must work to do the same as we wrestle with what Paul calls “disputable matters” ([Romans 14:1](#)).

Tuesday: Pray for Family and Friends by Name.

Wednesday June 3: Read [Romans 13:1-7](#)

Going to Romans 13, Paul addresses the concept of institutional authority and Christian obligation. We are called to submit to local government and pay tribute (taxes) as a result. Notice the sphere of government jurisdiction in verse 4. Jesus likewise affirms God’s design for the nation in [Matthew 20:19-25](#), along with the Apostle Paul in [1 Peter 2:13-17](#) and [Titus 3:1](#). Christians should be “good citizens”. Yet, we have a higher allegiance to God that may override political obligations. We’ll go there tomorrow.

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church

1. Leadership: Pray for God’s grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David’s ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC. Pray for the church council and the various ministry team leaders. Ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up more workers for the harvest ([Matthew 9:38](#))
2. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. Pray for more musicians to help lead the church in worship, including a pianist. Pray for the development of a youth praise team.
3. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers. Pray that we incorporate newcomers into our church fellowship. Pray through this past Sunday’s congregational prayer requests.
4. Discipleship: Ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries at BGCC. Ask God to bless our small group ministry, to raise up new groups, new teachers and more leaders.
5. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ. Ask God to embolden our people to intentionally reach out to others.
6. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God’s clear leading in our 2020 plan as we call our members to a greater love and commitment to the Lord and his service. Ask God to bless our finances so that we can better accomplish his purposes for our congregation.

Thursday, June 4: Read [Daniel 3.6](#)

In both chapters of Daniel, the government encroaches on religious rights while Daniel and his companions determine to ignore political mandates in favor of following God in good conscience. Have we come to that point as a culture? Does the government have any jurisdiction over the church today, or are we free under God to act according to our faith and conscience, even though it may contradict our local or national governments? And how should we communicate and defend our religious convictions when we feel they are being threatened? These are questions each of us need to consider, possibly even as church activities are being shut down for health and community concerns. Tomorrow the government could seek to shut us down for other reasons. Like in Daniel’s day, this generation may have some hard choices and consequences ahead of it.

Thursday: Pray for “My World”

(Write down names as God brings people to mind.)

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can you invite to church?
- Community -- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County, even through the Coronavirus crisis.
- Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation.
- Pray for the community parachurch ministries serving our county, including Beginnings Care for Life Center, Branch County Right to Life, Celebrate Recovery, Coach Eby Youth and Family Center, Damascus Road Ministry, Family Hope Outreach, Forgotten Man Ministries, Foster Closet of Branch County, God’s Choice Church, Jacob’s Well Ministry, Presbyterian Free Health Clinic, Shelter house, Tommy’s House, the Gideons and the Bronson Food Pantry.
- America: Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America. Pray that God would use the Coronavirus outbreak to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ.