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CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Looking Ahead - Chosen

May 3, 2026

Being chosen by God isn't something that ends with us. When we acknowledge that we were chosen for love, it marks the beginning of a new way of living that is shaped by both receiving and reflecting his love. Because his love was never meant to be personal or to be kept private. It is given to us freely, and if we allow it to, it can overflow into how we see others, respond to injustice, and show up for the unseen or unheard.

## **Proverbs 31:8-9**

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.*

These verses are a direct call to action: Step in when you encounter silence and suffering. Advocate for the vulnerable, and use your voice and resources to create practical change. Act courageously and compassionately.

Living this out begins when we let God shape how we see others. It's easy to keep distance, scroll past need, or assume someone else will act. But God calls us to come close enough to care, and to care enough to act.

In this way, justice and compassion are not separate from our faith; they are expressions of it.

Even as we live out this calling, we do not do it from our own strength. We return to Jesus, who first came close to us in our brokenness. He is our source of compassion and the reason we move toward others without fear.

As you look ahead, commit to specific action - reach out to the quiet, advocate for the vulnerable, and offer tangible help where you see need. Let your response be both practical and compassionate.

## **Discussion Questions:**

**Ice Breaker:** How has someone shown up for you in a way that you still remember?

What might it look like for you to notice and care for people you don't usually see?

**Read Luke 10:25-37:** How does Jesus redefine what it means to love others in this story?

Who might be a “neighbor” in your life that you’ve unintentionally overlooked?

**Reflect and Respond:** What might change if you viewed your time, resources, or compassion as a blessing meant to flow outward?

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, you come close to us in our brokenness. Give me eyes to truly see people, not from a distance, but with compassion that moves me toward them. Help me affirm dignity, bring hope, and walk with others toward restoration. I love you, I trust you, and I worship you. Amen*

**Series Theme Verse:**

**Ephesians 1:5**

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content at CedarCreek.*

## **The Greatest Commandment - Chosen**

**May 4, 2026**

**Bible in a Year: Job 31-32 | Matthew 18**

Have you ever tried to imagine what it would be like to hang out with Jesus?

I picture Jesus as being kind, funny, thoughtful, and loving. He drew people to himself because his love and acceptance was palpable. He looked people in the eye and showed them respect. He was fully present and valued each person for who they were. He was perfectly made in the image of God.

Jesus, the sinless Son of God, preached in a way that was very different from any teacher of his time. His teachings and behaviors stunned people. He taught his followers to forgive as often as necessary (Matthew 18:21-22). He ate with and hung around tax collectors, women, notorious sinners, and outcasts.

For a Jewish man in Jesus' time, it would have been unheard of for him to treat this group of people with such respect and kindness.

Jesus lived in a way that showed true love and grace to every person he interacted with, which leads us to another teaching that would have stunned people.

### **Luke 10:25-28 “The Most Important Commandment”**

*One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”*

*Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?”*

*The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

*“Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!”*

Jesus was teaching us an extremely important lesson: We need to love God and our neighbors. The two are inseparable.

We cannot fully love God without loving people, and this means **ALL PEOPLE**. The poor, the vulnerable, the overlooked, sinners, even those who drive us crazy or belong to a different political party!

We love others by treating them as Jesus treated us. We meet their needs by acts of service, encouragement, and pointing them to Jesus. When we truly love our neighbor, we demonstrate our deep love for God.

This love is best demonstrated when we lead with an open heart and open hands, full of gratitude for what Jesus did for us.

### **Ephesians 5:1-2**

*Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.*

### **Questions:**

How has Jesus' love and grace changed you?

How can you show Jesus' love to others?

## **Next Steps:**

Look for ways to share God's love with others this week. This could mean going through GrowthTrack and joining the DreamTeam, or signing up to sponsor a child in Honduras, volunteering to go on an upcoming mission trip, or serving people in the community at our next Second Saturday opportunity.

## **Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, I worship and praise you. I can never fully comprehend how much you love me. Thank you for sending your Son to teach me what true love really is. Help me imitate Jesus in the way he loved and served all people. Let your great love and grace overflow from me to all others and bring glory to your holy name. Amen.*

## **Series Theme Verse:**

### **Ephesians 1:5**

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

*This post was written by Marsha Raymond, an Oregon attendee, and a regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

# **Love That Moves - Chosen**

**May 5, 2026**

## **Bible in a Year: Job 33-34 | Matthew 19**

Before Jesus tells the "Parable of the Good Samaritan," a man asks a question - not to learn, but to defend his narrow-mindedness: "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus doesn't respond with a definition. He tells a story they could feel:

A man is beaten, robbed, and left for dead. A priest and a temple assistant see him and pass by. But then a Samaritan, someone viewed as an outsider, stops. He doesn't just *feel something*; he *does something*. He tends the man's wounds, gives up his ride, spends his money, and rearranges his plans.

Then Jesus turns the question back to the man in **Luke 10:36-37**:

*“Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.*

*The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”*

*Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”*

Don't miss this! The man answers his own question. The one who came to justify himself already recognized the true meaning of *neighbor*.

And so do we.

It would have been easy for the Samaritan to keep going. He had places to be. Helping cost him time, comfort, and resources. But he let compassion interrupt his plans.

If we're honest, we often look more like those who passed by the injured man. Not because we don't care, but because we're busy, distracted, and overwhelmed. We tell ourselves someone else will step in, as we quietly justify why we don't.

But Jesus calls us to a love that doesn't look away.

It notices.

It stops.

It moves toward action.

When we've truly experienced the freedom of Christ's mercy, kindness, and grace, it changes how we see people. We stop seeing interruptions and start seeing opportunities.

Opportunities to be his hands and feet. Opportunities to live out the mercy we've already received. We stop asking, “Do I have to?” and start living like, “I get to serve.”

That's what freedom does. It loosens our grip on time, comfort, and control and opens our hearts to others. We don't have to solve everything, but that shouldn't stop us from doing something. Those moments of compassion become more than feelings. They become movements - actions of love - that reflect Jesus.

So, today, pay attention. Who is on the side of your road?

## Questions:

Where might I be choosing convenience over compassion right now?

What is one small way I can “stop and see” someone today?.

## Next Steps:

Ask God to interrupt your day, and when he does, say yes. Act on the first opportunity you see to serve, even if it feels inconvenient.

## Prayer:

*Jesus, thank you for the mercy you've shown me. Thank you for the times you stopped for me, cared for me, and didn't pass me by. Help me not to live with closed eyes or a hurried heart. Give me compassion that moves me to action. Teach me to love like you. Help me love freely, sacrificially, and without hesitation. Interrupt my plans today, Lord, and give me the courage to say “yes.” Amen.*

## Series Theme Verse:

### Ephesians 1:5

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

*This post was written by Monique Myers, a Perrysburg attendee and regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

# What You're Holding Has a Purpose Beyond You

May 6, 2026

## Bible in a Year: Job 35-36 | Matthew 20

From the very beginning, God's blessings were never meant to stop with us. The love you receive is meant to be shared. The encouragement that kept you going can help support another. The wisdom you gained is meant to guide others. In fact, in **Genesis 12:2-3**, Scripture states:

*“I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless*

*you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”*

This wasn't just a promise, it was on purpose. It's easy to look at the blessings in our lives, such as our provision, relationships, opportunities, and growth, as private possessions. Something we've prayed for, waited on, or worked toward. However, while God absolutely cares for us individually, his heart has always been bigger than just us.

A major blessing in my own life has been the gift of Christian counseling. I started weekly therapy with a Christian counselor in 2017, and it has changed my life for the absolute better over the last nine years. Every single session, God works through my therapist, allowing me to heal from past hurts.

Before therapy, I carried wounds I didn't even have words for. I struggled with trust and often felt stuck in negative patterns. But through this process, God has gently revealed, healed, and restored parts of me I thought would always be broken.

What God is doing in me is no longer just for me, it's reaching into the lives of so many others around me. The encouragement I longed for, I now find myself giving freely. I am able to bless others by sharing what I've learned on my journey.

Nothing God pours into your life is wasted when you allow it to overflow. Sometimes we hesitate because we feel like we don't have enough time, energy, money, or influence to give. But God has never required abundance, he simply asks for obedience.

Obedience might look like sharing your story when it feels vulnerable or offering your time when it feels inconvenient. Even small acts, when surrendered to him, can become powerful expressions of his love.

God didn't bless you just to fill you. He blessed you so others wouldn't leave feeling empty.

### **Questions:**

Have I been viewing the blessings in my life as private possessions or as something meant to be shared?

What fears are keeping me from pouring into others?

Who in my life right now might need what God has already placed in me?

### **Next Steps:**

Write down 2-3 specific blessings in your life, and ask God to show you who needs what you've been given.

Choose one simple but intentional way to bless someone this week (a simple text, time together, sharing your story, meeting a need).

Make this your daily posture, asking "God, who can I bless today?"

### **Prayer:**

*Lord, thank you for every blessing you've placed in my life, both seen and unseen. Forgive me for the times I've held tightly to what you meant for me to share. Give me a willing and obedient heart, even when it feels uncomfortable or inconvenient. Use my life as a vessel for your goodness, so that others may experience your love through me. Amen.*

### **Series Theme Verse:**

#### **Ephesians 1:5**

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

*This post was written by Heaven Nash, a Findlay attendee and a new contributor to the Daily LivingItOut devotional.*

## **To Like or to Love - Chosen**

**May 7, 2026**

### **Bible in a Year: Job 37-38 | Matthew 21**

My parents created a list of rules disguised as snappy sayings for me and my siblings. Most of them either followed a three-step format, such as "Be respectful, responsible, and safe," courtesy of my mom, or an infuriating rhyme scheme, like "It's never fair when you compare," which was created by my dad. One of these mottos was that we had to always love each other, but that we didn't have to always *like* each other.

That sounds backwards, right? Love is a far more intense sort of action than simply *liking* someone. That's a lot of pressure to put on a person, especially a kid. But this saying actually points to a very freeing definition of love.

Love doesn't mean agreeing with everything a person stands for. Love doesn't mean setting aside your own values and beliefs for a friend. Instead, love means choosing to act like Jesus in every situation, regardless of the other person's choices.

### **John 13:34-35**

*"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."*

In his many interactions with people, Jesus didn't initiate conversation by pointing out their failures, trying to convince them to see things from his perspective, or even by quoting endless passages from the Bible. Instead, he took time to stop what he was doing, listen to what they had to say, and then invite them to join his mission.

This means that if you feel like you've messed up, join the club. Jesus sees you, he loves you, and he wants you to be here no matter what's going on in your life.

Every single one of us has messed up, and we continue to do harmful things even after we join Christ's family. Sin is a prerequisite to being a Christian! The next time we see someone doing or saying something that doesn't align with what the Bible says, take a deep breath. It isn't our job to fix them.

Instead, like Jesus, we have the opportunity to approach that person with love. The time to share truth might come later, but for the moment, it's our privilege to see them, to hear them, and to graciously invite them to experience God's love through our presence.

### **Questions:**

Do you think it's harder to like or to love someone? Is there someone in your life that you struggle to like? How can you show love to them this week?

### **Next Steps:**

Think of someone you struggle to like, whether it is a family member, coworker, or neighbor. Challenge yourself to love them today, the way Jesus would. That could be something as simple as praying for God to bless them or listening to their perspective without preparing an argument in response.

### **Prayer:**

*Father, sometimes it's really hard to like people. You care so much about every single person. Can you equip me with that kind of love for others, even the challenging ones? Please prompt me with what to say and do when I am around them. Give me patience, grace, and a willingness to understand their perspective. I love you, and I am learning to love everyone around me. Amen.*

### **Series Theme Verse:**

#### **Ephesians 1:5**

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*This post was written by Lydia Snyder, a South attendee and regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

## **Merging Waters - Chosen**

**May 8, 2026**

### **Bible in a Year: Job 39-40 | Matthew 22**

I recently came across a picture of a place in India where two rivers merge.

When these rivers first meet, they don't fully mix together. One runs clear, the other runs a little cloudy. They move side by side for a while, looking different, until their currents eventually overlap.

It reminds me of how we sometimes live, passing people every day, side by side, going the same way. Some of us live in freedom, while others carry burdens and pain from hardship or from events beyond their control.

But unlike these rivers that eventually flow together on their own and become something new, our lives won't naturally merge without intention. We have to choose connection. We have to open our eyes to the people around us and step toward them if we want to make a difference.

### **Luke 4:18-19**

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.*

Jesus read these words at the start of his ministry. He declared his purpose and the heart of God for people who are hurting, lost, and overlooked. Just as rivers join and transform one another, Jesus came to bring transformation.

He calls us to live in his image and enter into the lives of those around us - not remaining separate or indifferent - but letting his Spirit move through us to bring change, compassion, and restoration.

It's easy to overlook those walking beside us when they act or live very differently from the way we do. But Jesus calls us to see people through his eyes and to be present in their struggles by living out his Good News.

Picturing those rivers meeting, I'm reminded that we're not meant to run our race alone, just brushing past one another. Our lives are made to mix, carry each other's burdens, and to give away what we've been given - grace, love, and hope.

If we let God's Spirit move us, we can become part of someone else's healing story. That's the kind of impact I want my life to have.

Let's not just watch the rivers meet. Let's step in, get our feet wet, and let God do something new through us.

### **Questions:**

Who in your daily life might be feeling overlooked or weighed down?

How has God used others to encourage or change you when you needed it most?

What keeps you from noticing the needs of others?

## **Next Steps:**

Pause, look around, and notice those you may be overlooking. Share the Good News with them and make an impact.

Invite God in to help you see and respond to those around you as Jesus does.

## **Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, open my eyes to see those around me who are hurting or in need. Give me your compassion to reach out and the courage to bring your Good News to them. Help me not to pass by, but to walk alongside others and share the hope and freedom you offer. Use my life to make a difference, just as you have made a difference in me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.*

## **Series Theme Verse:**

### **Ephesians 1:5**

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*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content at CedarCreek.*

# **Reflections - Chosen**

**May 9, 2026**

It's easy to postpone generosity, telling ourselves that we'll act when life is less hectic, when our finances improve, or when we feel more secure. But that kind of thinking can put generosity on hold indefinitely.

### **Proverbs 3:27-28**

*Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them. If you can help your neighbor now, don't say, "Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you."*

This Proverb pushes against the instinct to say, "I'll get to serving the needs of others as soon as <insert your blank here> happens," in a very practical way.

These words urge us not only to value generosity but to act on it immediately when opportunities arise. Real generosity is both practical and timely.

The needs of others don't usually announce themselves in advance or wait for our schedules to clear. They show up in conversations, interruptions, and moments that feel inconvenient. And yet, those are often the very places where love becomes tangible.

Proverbs 3 reminds us that obedience to God is often lived out in the immediacy of everyday moments. When we have the ability to help, encourage, or step in, that moment becomes sacred. Not because it's dramatic, but because it's real.

So maybe the question isn't whether we are generous people in general, but whether we are attentive enough to act when the opportunity is right in front of us. Today matters. The person in front of you matters. And the good you can do right now might be exactly where God is asking you to show up.

Because love isn't meant to be postponed.

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, help me notice opportunities to do good today. Give me the courage to act with kindness and love, so others may see you in me. Use my life as a meeting place where the hope you offer is fully visible and fully available to everyone I encounter. I love you, I trust you, and I worship you. Amen.*

**Series Theme Verse:**

**Ephesians 1:5**

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