

# the ninth step

*Maintain a God-centred lifestyle, bearing witness to his grace by our behaviour inside and outside the church*

## amazing grace?

Is the grace of God “amazing”, as the old hymn tells us? Well, let’s see. Grace can be defined as the ‘undeserved and unearned favour’ of God, and is perhaps most obviously seen at work *on the cross*...where Christ’s perfect sacrifice was made on behalf of helpless (and undeserving) humanity. But it is also through grace that we are given *faith* - the power to believe - which makes that sacrifice effective for each of us.

Just as graciously, the Holy Spirit is freely given to each of us - guaranteeing our future, but also transforming our lives in the present. One way and another, we are absolutely dependent on the grace of God for our eternal relationship with him - yet the divine forgiveness we experience in our daily lives is equally undeserved, equally *gracious*. Put simply, it is through grace that we become God’s children, and through grace that we are maintained in harmony with him. It is a breath-taking manifestation of our Heavenly Father’s love, but until we come up with a better word, ‘amazing’ will have to do !

The relationship between grace, faith and salvation is fascinating, and they’re all part of God’s wonderful provision. Here, though, we are only going to consider that aspect of grace which will be helpful in achieving our immediate goal. As that goal is a joyous, powerful and productive relationship with God, it is our *response* to grace on which we need to focus. But how *do* we respond to the extravagant gifts of God? How *should* we react to our Heavenly Father, who withholds no good thing from those who trust him...even *eternal life*?

Eternal life is the gracious gift of our Heavenly Father. It is beyond price - and it would be beyond the wildest dreams of humanity, if not for the cross. The gift of life - though free to us - was dearly bought by Christ...but what a gift it is! It is the everlasting relationship with our creator that we are *designed* to have. It is real, fulfilled and meaningful life *now*, followed by an infinity of something infinitely better. For us, that relationship has already begun. *We have accepted the gift*. We have surrendered our lives to God unconditionally and gratefully, and we have - by our words and actions - asked him to transform our lives. We could say then, that our response to grace is already well underway!

We have continued to respond to God’s grace by pursuing a deepening relationship with him. Our commitment to the principles of this programme *will* produce dynamic Christianity - though not because we ‘earn’ it through applying ourselves to prayer, service or whatever, but because these things are a heartfelt response to our Heavenly Father...*and God delights in people who respond to his grace*.

To sum up, we could perhaps say that our love and faithfulness *keeps us eligible* for God’s best, our application *invites* God’s best, but it is by his sovereign and gracious will that we shall be brought to our full potential. *People can never qualify themselves for God’s grace, they can only disqualify themselves by rejecting the Christian life*...but the grace of God is freely offered - without limit - to all who will accept it.

## the light of the world...us!

Our Heavenly Father delights in honouring his children with privilege and responsibility - he actually calls us to be partners in the flow of his grace! But we’re not called to be ‘sleeping partners’ - we’re the PR team. *He chooses us to advertise the grace he freely offers to all!*

Part of our response to grace, is to make sure other people know about it. Consider this:

*“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:14-16)

Those verses from Matthew could be easily overlooked. They immediately follow the Beatitudes, in which Jesus gives an unprecedented insight into the divine viewpoint. Yet their proximity to such revelation should emphasise their importance, rather than detract from it - and a moment's consideration of what is really being said here should put things in perspective: Jesus is giving us an awesome responsibility. He commissions us as representatives of the Almighty God, and charges us with nothing less than bringing *his* light to a world in darkness! In entrusting us with such a vital task, he takes our lives to a much higher level of significance - because as his 'light', what we do as Christians can have eternal implications for others, as well as for ourselves.

We might not see ourselves as 'the light of the world' but it really doesn't matter - it's not our opinion that counts! This is how Jesus describes his followers - his first disciples, you and me - and so this is what we are. But what does it mean in practice? *How* do we act as 'the light of the world'? Well, one way we do it is to bear witness to the work of Christ through our lifestyle!

Being the light of the world can (and often does) mean sharing the gospel, it can mean the 'good deeds' mentioned in our bible passage...but so many times, the light of Christ is first recognised in the general behaviour and lifestyle of someone who is *responding to grace*.

The light of Christ shines in the lives of those who follow him - and when people see that light in us, they will usually want to know more. A life submitted to Jesus is a powerful advertisement for God's grace, and we can see just why by reminding ourselves of what Galatians 5:22 says... *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* Personal characteristics don't come any more attractive than the fruit of the Spirit. They are magnetic, compelling attributes, and people are drawn towards those whose lifestyle reflects them. The reason they are so attractive, is that they come from our Heavenly Father himself - they are *his* characteristics, *his* nature...and he develops them in *us*.

God wants us to experience *real* love and *real* joy, and to exhibit all the other characteristics of the 'fruit'...*he wants us to become like Jesus*. Part of the reason is so that others will be drawn to him, but we shouldn't forget that it's also about us enjoying our relationship with him to the full. Being the 'light of the world' and being fulfilled in Christ are closely related: They are both God's plan for our lives; if we are one of these things, we will automatically be the other, and (most relevant here) we become both by the same process. In broad terms, we could sum up that process as deepening our relationship with God. The steps we are taking - and the commitments we make - are all geared to that, and this session is no different. Though the ninth step talks about 'bearing witness to God's grace by our behaviour', the ability to enjoy doing this effectively is entirely a relationship issue.

We should be aware, however, that Christians can experience times when they *don't* feel that joy, when 'bearing witness' seems difficult. Often, such times are just opportunities to rely even more on Father God - to develop maturity of faith. There can be tremendous spiritual growth in these periods, as we learn to trust fully - not in what we feel - but in Who we know. Occasionally, though, there may be another explanation: Sometimes, the difference between a joyful Christian who displays the light of Christ, and one who isn't and

doesn't, can be a matter of a few small details. These details are *lifestyle issues* - and the problem in *that* case is likely to be... *compromise*.

### **know your enemy!**

Compromise takes many forms. For those who don't know Jesus, it may just be part of everyday life. Typical examples might include having a few drinks too many, taking office supplies home, watching a risqué movie or being a little imaginative with a tax form. In truth, these things are unlikely to bother the consciences of most people who do them - after all, they seem harmless enough. Yet even apparently trivial activities such as these can cause problems...when it is a Christian who does them. These problems can be quite serious (even if the 'offence' seems minor) and may include some or all of the following: A feeling of being distant from God; a vague sense of guilt or perhaps fear; insecurity, lack of joy and lack of peace. Christians who habitually compromise may become moody and withdrawn, even losing their desire for fellowship and prayer. They are neither the 'light of the world', nor fulfilled Christians.

Why does compromise affect Christians in this way? *Because compromise is sin!* The examples given - and many others like them - may be the world's standards, but they are not God's standards. Explicitly, they are all manifestations of *self*, and they are all things Jesus certainly wouldn't do.

Compromise is sin - and those who compromise *will* feel distant from God, and they will naturally lack the joy and peace of his presence. That's bad enough, but the problems don't stop there: Compromise is often the beginning of a downward spiral. We can see this principle at work throughout the Old Testament - most notably, in the fall of the nation of Israel. Israel was overrun, the temple destroyed and the people enslaved because they broke their agreement with God. They were in open rebellion against him - but that's not how the problems started. Their downfall *began* with compromise - little more than cutting a few corners, giving God second best...that sort of thing. Compromise leads to a feeling of alienation from God, and this sense of abandonment - being 'on one's own' - greatly reduces the defence against further temptation. With compromise, one thing always leads to another. The truth is, though, that God was calling Israel back to himself from the very moment the people chose the 'slippery slope' - they just didn't want to listen.

We have already had an in-depth look at temptation and sin in the sixth step. The reason we are considering compromise in detail at this point, is that it can have a profound effect on both people's ability to 'bear witness to God's grace', and on the quality of their relationship with him. Its consequences can be very damaging (as we have seen) however harmless it might appear.

It is never God's intention that we should ever feel distant from him, or any of the other things that go with a compromised lifestyle. Our Heavenly Father wants something much better for his children...he wants us to *know* the joy of being completely abandoned to him, he wants us to experience freedom from guilt, from fear, from insecurity. He also wants us to be the light of the world, to shine with all the glory of Christ himself - sharing *his* nature, his love and his concern for others. He *doesn't* want us to trade his perfect plan for our lives for some momentary pleasure, or perhaps some fleeting advantage to be gained by taking the line of least resistance'.

As we understand compromise (and the temptation to sin in general) we will have a measure of protection against falling victim to it. Much more important, though, is the guidance of the Holy Spirit and our deepening relationship with God. Knowing right from wrong didn't save those Israelites we considered earlier, but staying close to God would have done!

## the cure for compromise

There is one major concept that links everything we have considered so far. It is directly relevant to our response to grace, our call to be the 'light of the world' and bearing witness by our lifestyle. *It couldn't be more relevant* to freedom from compromise, our relationship with God and his wonderful plans for our lives. The programme has always been leading us towards it - in fact, to the extent we have embraced the programme, we have already embraced the concept. It is the concept of what the bible describes as...*holiness*.

Holiness may sound terribly religious, but all it really means is 'putting God first' - being dedicated to him, being *pure*, and set apart for his purposes. It is in holiness that we become the light of the world, and it is in holiness that life reaches its fullest potential. Holiness is both something God gives to his children - *and something we do!* We could spend a lot of time looking at the theological perspective of it, but this programme is concerned with the practicalities of Christian life.... so we're going to concentrate on the bit that *we do* - which we can think of as our '*God centred lifestyle*'.

What we really need to know about it (at this time) is summed up in 1 Peter 1:14-15..."*As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

"Be holy in all you do..." A God-centred lifestyle requires *consistency*. When Christians are living below God's best, it is often because they are inconsistent. They can seem 'spiritual' in church, but if there is compromise elsewhere in their lives, they may be ineffective and unfulfilled. In a sense, they have split personalities - *sometimes* they try to follow God, and sometimes they are following their 'evil desires'. It never works. As the bible says "No-one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). People who live that way tend to find little pleasure in sin and, more importantly, even less in their relationship with God. Where there should be joy, there may be only guilt and frustration. Perhaps the saddest thing is that it can sometimes be easy to identify, and such a relief when it is put right...

## the question...

The question that Christians should ask themselves - regularly - is simply this: "Am I *consistently* living out my faith?" It's sometimes easy enough to answer that. If their standard of behaviour is lower outside the church than it is inside; if they relate to their colleagues, friends and family in any way that doesn't honour God...then the answer is no. If they do or think things *when alone* that are unworthy of Jesus, the answer is the same. They are not holy in *all* they do, and so they are not the light of *their* world - at least to the extent they could be.

The good news for us is that our programme naturally leads in the direction of a God-centred lifestyle and - even if we're not already there - we shouldn't have too much adjusting to do. But we, too, can benefit by asking ourselves that question - because we will be either encouraged or challenged by the answer. As people who are pursuing closeness with God, we will recognise that consistently living out our faith - being holy - puts us right where we want to be. Holiness should characterise *everything* we do - it is a lifestyle choice, not an optional extra!

*Holiness is just the natural result of embracing God and rejecting sin.* Where people sometimes go wrong, though, is that they pursue God, turn away from obvious sin - but still compromise in the 'little things'. Often, such things are habits that go back a long way -

patterns of behaviour at work or in the home, which are almost ingrained. It can be especially difficult to change how we relate to people we've known a long time: A new Christian might, for example, find it easier to desist from adultery than, say, stop sharing the latest dirty jokes with their boss - especially if that has been the nature of the relationship for many years. But actually, changing that kind of situation is vital for both of them.....because the boss needs to see the light of Christ, and the Christian needs to display it.

Attention to those little details can often be a powerful witness. People are comfortable around compromised Christianity, because it's non-threatening. It's also non-effective, but when things change - when Christians consistently live out their faith - others are obliged to take notice. There's a good 'rule of thumb' here...*If people are indifferent, they're probably not seeing the light of Christ.* The light of Christ may repel a few, it may draw others like moths to a candle, but it isn't easily ignored.

Consistently living out our faith means rejecting compromise, and sometimes compromise can be very subtle. Yet it is never so subtle that we can't avoid it, if we are willing. We have the Holy Spirit to guide us, but we need to be ready to listen - and to act upon the guidance we receive.

Holiness - our God-centred lifestyle - requires our input, our willingness and application. Time after time, the bible tells us to be holy, and to rid ourselves of sinful thoughts and actions. It is by God's grace that our efforts become productive, though, and it is in our relationship with him that we gain both the ability and desire to really live out our faith. Just as in 'being the light of the world', holiness is a partnership between creator and created. The Spirit of God *will* guide us, if we want his help in identifying and avoiding compromise - but he won't force us to listen or to follow....because that wouldn't be relationship. Yet, if we *invite* and *welcome* his direction, we can be sure we will receive it.

*How* do we invite his direction? We ask...though the progressive nature of our relationship with God should mean there will be fewer times when we need to do that. 'Stepping out with Jesus' means we will eventually be able to recognise even the subtlest temptations as they occur...but as we need to avoid them *right now* (wherever we are on that walk) we should ask God whenever there is uncertainty about what we are doing.

### **...and the other question!**

Some Christians ask *themselves* a question... 'What Would Jesus Do?' They simply ask themselves what Jesus would do, if he was in their situation - and then act in accordance with how they think *he* would act. This can be a very helpful tool, both for avoiding getting things wrong *and* for identifying opportunities to do what is right. There are many situations (good and bad) that can occur in our lives, and not all of them are mentioned in the bible. People who practice this method rely on their understanding of Christ's nature (from scripture and personal experience) to guide them.

As one of our definitions of sin is 'anything Jesus *wouldn't* do', it can be a very useful to look at things from this perspective. Aside from helping to identify pitfalls (and opportunities), 'What would Jesus do?' can really encourage us to seek a deeper understanding of how God relates to people. It can remind us to consider the Christian response *first*, instead of acting on instinct and then trying to adjust afterwards. 'WWJD' can also provide confirmation that the Holy Spirit is leading in a particular direction, which may be especially beneficial for the new Christian.

'What would Jesus do?' is great, but it has a limitation - it is only effective to the extent that the person using it can actually tell *what* Jesus would do. But here is a paradox...by the time Christians become *really* good at telling what Jesus would do, they have probably outgrown

that method!

### ...and the answer

The reason for that is quite straightforward: God's *best* plan for us is not to become proficient at working out what Jesus would do, nor even to act exactly as we think Jesus would in our place. No, the plan is much better than that. We are not called to guess or work out the mind of Christ...*we are called to have the mind of Christ, and to know his will!*

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2)

The 'pattern of this world' is sin - the rejection of God and his standards. Sin is a matter of principle - not degree - and the one who compromises is really just as enslaved to the pattern of the world as the career criminal. This verse from Romans tells us to free ourselves from that bondage, and to be transformed. Simply put, the 'renewing of the mind' is just the natural consequence of obedience and remaining in harmony with God - the character of Christ is developed within us, by his Holy Spirit. Philippians 2:5 tells us that "*your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus*" or, as the RSV puts it, "*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.*" As people who have given their lives to Christ, nothing can prevent us from experiencing this transformation...providing we continue to choose *holiness*, which is our rejection of the 'pattern of this world'.

Our verse from Romans doesn't mention the *eternal* benefits of transformation, but it does tell us about what happens now - it tells us we 'will be able to test and approve' God's 'good, pleasing and perfect will'. It's simple logic: When we can truly say, with the Apostle Paul, "*But we have the mind of Christ*" ( 1 Corinthians 2:16), **of course** we'll know God's will! We'll know his best plans for us, and we'll be ready to enjoy them. We'll have *his* perspective of life, his love and his power. We will share in his character and draw people to him - genuinely acting as the 'light of the world'. We'll *know* what Jesus would do. Neither compromise nor any kind of temptation will catch us unawares, because we will see it just as *he* sees it...and we will *joyfully* maintain a God-centred lifestyle, bearing witness to his grace by our behaviour inside and outside the church.

### Putting it all together

1. **The grace of God** - the undeserved kindness he shows us - is most clearly demonstrated by the cross. It is also through grace that we receive the faith which makes Christ's sacrifice effective for each of us. The in-dwelling Spirit, **and** the on-going forgiveness that we each need, are likewise gracious gifts. They are gifts, though, that God wants **everyone** to enjoy...
2. **We are the 'light of the world'**. Christ has given us the awesome privilege and responsibility of representing him, to those who are yet to know his grace. He wants his love and power - his character - to shine in our lives, so that others will be drawn to him. People need to see the 'fruit of the Spirit' in our lives - the personality and attitudes of God himself, faithfully reproduced in his servants. They will clearly see that powerful, attractive light of Christ in us, provided that their view is not obscured by...compromise.
3. **Compromise - and why we need to avoid it.** Compromise is sin. It always involves doing something that Jesus wouldn't do, and it's always, ultimately, a manifestation of the selfish nature. Because it is sin, it damages Christians' relationships with God,

takes away their peace and joy, and renders them ineffective as the 'light of the world'. As so much compromise is neither **obviously** sinful, nor often, obviously harmful, it is much more likely to ensnare the unwary than, say, sins that are mentioned in the Ten Commandments. However, compromise can cause just as many problems for Christians as any other wrongdoing and, in any event, it is often the 'slippery slope' which leads to open rebellion against God.

- 4. Holiness - The God-centred lifestyle.** We are called to be holy - and with good reason! In being pure, dedicated and 'set apart' for God's purposes, we experience both the fullness of our relationship with him, and the fullest extent of his purposes in our lives. In choosing holiness, we are turning our backs on compromise and the evil desires of this world, and entering in to God's perfect plans. Holiness is rejecting sin and embracing God. It is **consistently** living out our faith, to the great benefit of ourselves and others. As with everything else, our willingness and application are involved - but of course, there is a great deal more of **God's** willingness and application involved in the process of us becoming holy! It is he that takes our desire for holiness and makes it effective, and it is he that nurtures and encourages us, bringing us into dynamic Christian maturity. This session (and our programme in general) has been leading us to a position where we can receive God's best: We should be well placed now to recognise (and deal with) any compromise which would threaten that.
- 5. Maintaining our God-centred lifestyle.** In reality, maintaining holiness and maintaining a close walk with God amount to the same thing. However, it is also true that Christians can sometimes fall into (or continue in) ways that hinder them in achieving their full potential. They may not be sure what the problem area is, but feel distant from God, or perhaps unfulfilled. If their hearts are set on God, they need only ask for the leading of his Spirit and be willing to put the matter right. Often, God's response will come through another Christian, and so its important that they maintain good fellowship with others - and that they are 'accountable' to someone else. Accountability, in this sense, is really just about benefiting from another Christian's maturity and wisdom - enlisting their help with difficulties and decisions, and being encouraged by them. Of course, there may be no 'unholiness' at all: They may just be having a 'desert experience' - a time when people learn to rely more deeply on their faith in the nature and love of God, rather than on a sense of his presence... But if it is a holiness issue, our Heavenly Father will **want** his children to know about it.

The 'what would Jesus do?' method also has much to offer, as it encourages people to learn more of the nature of Christ, and to judge their actions by his standards. It can help confirm what we believe we are hearing from the Spirit, and highlight opportunities to do good as much help us avoid the bad.

Ultimately, it is having 'the mind of Christ' which makes all the difference. With the mind of Christ we will not be ensnare by sin - we won't conform to the pattern of this world. We will be transformed - his character will become our character...and we will know precisely what Jesus would do, because he will be doing it through us!

We may or may not be there yet, but that is God's plan, and that is our destiny. If we are there, we have already embraced holiness as a lifestyle and we will want to maintain it. If we are not in that place, we can do something about it today. We can reject any known compromise in our lives - seeking God's forgiveness. We can asking for his strength to overcome future temptations and for the wisdom to discern compromise - even in its subtlest forms. We will then be ready to commit ourselves to enjoying the quality of life that consistent holiness brings.

### **A prayer of commitment**

Heavenly Father,

I thank you that you have set me free from the burden and consequences of sin. I thank you that your perfect plan for my life includes peace and joy, and all the fruit of your Spirit. I want to enjoy your best, Lord - to be a light in this world, to be transformed, to be someone who has the mind of my saviour.

This day, I commit myself to being the kind of person who can receive all that from you. I undertake to be set apart for you, and dedicated to you - to be holy. I ask that through the power of your Holy Spirit, and through our deepening relationship, that you enable me to consistently live as a child of God, even as I have pledged to do so.

In Jesus' name... Amen

The ninth step says we should:

**Maintain a God-centred lifestyle, bearing witness to his grace by our behaviour inside and outside the church**

Our commitment to consistent holiness means we will be doing just that!

### **comments and questions for the group meeting**

**Morning Prayer**

Before doing anything else, a short time of prayer containing the following elements: Thanks to God for who He is, what Jesus has done, and for His love and provision (including the new day). Commit the day to Him, asking for His protection and presence.

**Through the day**

Involve God in your daily life, seeking His guidance in situations as they arise, and endeavour to respond to people as you believe Jesus would.

**In the evening**

Set aside a little time, every evening, to pray, complete your journal and consider the readings. Prayer should include thanksgiving, repentance, prayer for others and for yourself - particularly that God's perfect will should be completely fulfilled in your life. Pray for each member of your group (by name). Matters arising through the day, personal situations or difficulties should also be brought before God. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you in your prayers, and be open to His leading.

## Day One

### The Main Event

What event during the day stands out in your mind, and why?

What do you think/feel about that 'event'?

Were you able to involve God in what was happening?

How did your relationship with God affect your reaction to this event?

Did you respond as you think Jesus would have, in a similar situation?

Is there anything, on reflection, you might have done differently?

### You and God

Have you spoken to God at times through the day?

Have you been aware of His presence with you?

In what way has being a Christian made a difference to your day?

### Bible Reading - Ephesians 2:1-8

What do you think/feel when you read these words?

**Something to think about...** *Our love and faithfulness keeps us eligible for God's best, our application **invites** God's best, but it is by his sovereign and gracious will that we shall be brought to our full potential. People can never qualify themselves for God's grace, they can only **disqualify** themselves by rejecting the Christian life.*

## Day Two

### The Main Event

What event during the day stands out in your mind, and why?

What do you think/feel about that 'event'?

Were you able to involve God in what was happening?

How did your relationship with God affect your reaction to this event?

Did you respond as you think Jesus would have, in a similar situation?

Is there anything, on reflection, you might have done differently?

### You and God

Have you spoken to God at times through the day?

Have you been aware of His presence with you?

In what way has being a Christian made a difference to your day?

### Bible Reading - Matthew 5:14-16

What do you think/feel when you read these words?

**Something to think about...** *Christ has given us the awesome privilege and responsibility of representing him, to those who are yet to know his grace. He wants his love and power - his character - to shine in our lives, so that others will be drawn to him. We are 'advertisements for grace'!*

## Day Three

### The Main Event

What event during the day stands out in your mind, and why?

What do you think/feel about that 'event'?

Were you able to involve God in what was happening?

How did your relationship with God affect your reaction to this event?

Did you respond as you think Jesus would have, in a similar situation?

Is there anything, on reflection, you might have done differently?

### You and God

Have you spoken to God at times through the day?

Have you been aware of His presence with you?

In what way has being a Christian made a difference to your day?

### Bible reading - 1 Peter 1:14-15

What do you think/feel when you read these words?

**Something to think about...** *Holiness is just the natural result of **embracing** God and **rejecting** sin.*

## Day Four

### The Main Event

What event during the day stands out in your mind, and why?

What do you think/feel about that 'event'?

Were you able to involve God in what was happening?

How did your relationship with God affect your reaction to this event?

Did you respond as you think Jesus would have, in a similar situation?

Is there anything, on reflection, you might have done differently?

### You and God

Have you spoken to God at times through the day?

Have you been aware of His presence with you?

In what way has being a Christian made a difference to your day?

### Bible reading - Romans 2:6-7

What do you think/feel when you read these words?

**Something to think about....** *Consistently living out our faith means rejecting compromise, and sometimes compromise can be very subtle. Yet it is never so subtle that we can't avoid it - if we are willing!*

## Day Five

### The Main Event

What event during the day stands out in your mind, and why?

What do you think/feel about that 'event'?

Were you able to involve God in what was happening?

How did your relationship with God affect your reaction to this event?

Did you respond as you think Jesus would have, in a similar situation?

Is there anything, on reflection, you might have done differently?

### You and God

Have you spoken to God at times through the day?

Have you been aware of His presence with you?

In what way has being a Christian made a difference to your day?

### Bible reading - Romans 12:2

What do you think/feel when you read these words?

**Something to think about...** *God's best plan for us is not to become proficient at working out "what Jesus would do", nor even to act exactly as we think Jesus would in our place. No, the plan is much better than that. We are not called to guess or work out the mind of Christ...we are called to **have** the mind of Christ, and to **know** his will!*

## Day Six - The weekly review

In your relationship with God, what has been the highlight of the week?

What have you found most challenging or difficult?

Have you been aware of God's care for you this week?

Has God intervened in your life - answers to prayer etc.?

Have you been able to pray consistently throughout the week?

Can you think of any areas in your relationship with God that could be improved and, if so, how are you going to tackle them?

In times of trouble or temptation, how easy is it for you to seek the help of

a) God.

b) other Christians?

What has been the most encouraging aspect of this past week?

### PREPARATION FOR THE TENTH SESSION

Please prepare for the tenth session by *prayerfully* reading the next chapter, noting down any comments or questions that you'd like to bring up in the group.

