

## “When the Going Gets Tough – Keep Going!”

Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare to experience spiritual transformation in a practical way. It is a **flexible guide** that will help you discover, own, and apply the truths of God’s Word.

### Message Summary

Paul found himself in a difficult ministry setting in the city of Corinth. This relatively young city was the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Greece. It’s location made it the major center of commerce. It’s dual ports, located only 3.5 miles apart made it a center for maritime transport. The mixture of their religious practices, centered around the Greek pantheon of gods and goddesses, and the immorality that traveled along with this particular industry made it an unlikely place of grace. Paul was quite frightened when he arrived in Corinth. While the storyline seems to indicate Paul had some success prior to his reassuring vision in the night, the vision gives us a better understanding of why Paul was able to stay so long in this difficult city.

Even though Paul was an apostle of the Lord he was also human. He struggled with fears, sin, and periodically needed to be reassured of the Lord’s presence. On the heels of Paul being labeled as a man who was causing trouble all over the world in one city and a crazy man in another, we see a frightened man in a frightening city finding reassurance from the God who loves him that he is not alone.

Living for the sake of the Gospel is a frightening adventure, especially in a day where enemies of the Cross abound and the threat of death lingers around the world for those who claim Jesus as their Lord. For most Christians in America, however, who are just struggling to make it through life, keep their job, keep their friends, and make an impact in world, the Christian life is also frightening. If you stand firm on your faith and objective to see lives transformed by the Gospel you will suffer persecution. Living the American Dream, however, encourages us to seek out happiness rather than a life of selflessness and sacrifice. Therefore, as a Christian, when things get tough, you have to make a decision. Either you will turn and follow the crowd toward an easy life or you will surrender your life to the open, comforting arms of Jesus and spend your life for Him, regardless of what may come.

The later option is the best option, especially if you learn the truth of this message. If Jesus saved you then Jesus is with you! You can take comfort in this, regardless of your circumstances. This was the encouragement Paul received from Jesus in the night. Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid, continue to speak, I am with you, you won’t be harmed, I have many people in this city.” At the center of this exhortation Jesus said, “I am with you!” Regardless of what would come his way, Paul could find comfort in the Lord’s presence. You can too!

Paul took this truth to heart and he was able to stay in this difficult city for 18 months. He continued to preach and teach in Corinth and God honored it. Yes it was difficult. Yes Paul had problems. When you look at 1 & 2 Corinthians you discover that the church at Corinth was probably the most dysfunctional church in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. But God used Paul’s presence. And God can use your life too.

As you prepare to gather with your Missional Community this week think through your circumstances in life. How are you responding? Have the difficulties of life caused you to cower under the pressure? Or do you take comfort in the presence of Jesus in your life? You will be able to face the difficulties of life and ministry as you recognize and live out your Gospel Identity. Are you trusting in what you do or who you are? This is the subject of this week’s video. As you prepare to learn from Jeff Vanderstelt on how to live from your Gospel Identity, read the questions for reflection and ask God to work in your heart so that when the going gets tough, you’ll keep going!

### Message Outline

“Jesus is with you” means...

1. Jesus goes before you. (1-4)
2. Jesus provides for you. (5)
3. Jesus works through you. (6-8)
4. Jesus dwells in you. (9-11)
5. Jesus works without you. (12-17)

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New Day Church

William Whaley

February 22, 2015

Acts 18:1-17

## Group Discussion (video application)

Watch the video titled “Living From Your Gospel Identity.” Use the Listening Guide below as you watch the video and then spend some time making application by answering the following questions as a group.

### 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

We don't \_\_\_\_\_ people by what they \_\_\_\_\_ but by what \_\_\_\_\_ has done.

4 Key Questions about our being: (Genesis 1:1, 26ff, Romans 1)

1. Who is \_\_\_\_\_?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. What has God \_\_\_\_\_?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who are \_\_\_\_\_?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do we \_\_\_\_\_?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

People were made by God to \_\_\_\_\_ the image of God to be seen through His \_\_\_\_\_.

The enemy questions God's \_\_\_\_\_ & His \_\_\_\_\_.

The enemy says, “What you \_\_\_\_\_ will make you who you \_\_\_\_\_.”

The reason why it hurts when a \_\_\_\_\_ fails us, is because you were \_\_\_\_\_ to look at a human and say, “That’s what God is \_\_\_\_\_.”

Who's \_\_\_\_\_ are you trusting in and who's \_\_\_\_\_ are you trusting in?

When you define yourself by what you \_\_\_\_\_, when you are \_\_\_\_\_ out, then you \_\_\_\_\_ others.

God calls Abram, \_\_\_\_\_ (father of many nations), before he had \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus was told by the Father who He was (My \_\_\_\_\_ Son), then Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ temptation by Satan.

If your \_\_\_\_\_ is in Jesus you are \_\_\_\_\_ with the very life and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.

### Questions for reflection:

1. Where have you been looking to your own behavior or doing to define you?
2. In what ways have you had a hard time trusting that God's word and work through Jesus Christ is sufficient enough to define you? And why?
3. How would trusting in God's better word through Jesus and better work through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection change how you live today?

### Weekly Prayer Focus

- **Church:**  
Pray that God would give us new believers.
- **Local:**  
Pray that God would burden us with the lostness in our cities.
- **Global:**  
Pray that God would give us hearts for the nations.