

A person wearing a red hat and a large backpack is seen from behind, standing on a vast, flat, white landscape. The person is holding a red rope. In the background, a large, translucent blue figure of a person is visible, appearing to be walking or standing. The sky is a deep blue with some clouds. The overall scene is surreal and evocative.

Trekking Deeper

RETURNING AND ADVANCING



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First published 2007

This edition published online October 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Coming back home from your Trek assignment may be harder than you imagine. The time ahead may be filled with a range of different emotions that see you flying high one moment and crashing to the ground the next. In addition, you may be wondering about the future with your overseas experiences having raised questions or queries over what you could or should do next.

While this booklet is selective in its topics, and therefore is no way definitive, I pray that the Lord will lead you forward in love and devotion for Him, in understanding your present situation and in considering your future options. Please make these studies your own and ask the Lord to guide you as you work through these pages.

This booklet has twenty-four studies. The course is designed to take one month but you can do it at whatever speed you choose. There is one free day each week, and I would encourage you to use this day to pray and to look more deeply at any particular topic the Lord has been speaking to you about.

Most days I have given a relatively long Bible reading. There are two reasons for this. First, every verse must be seen and read in its context. Secondly, the Bible is the only perfect and pure word of God. Therefore, the Scriptures are far better for teaching about these matters than these or any other notes could ever be! It is better to take far more time over the Bible readings than my imperfect notes. Don't rush the Bible readings but allow the Lord to speak to you through them. Please note all Scripture references are from the New International Version.

Hopefully, during your time away, you have been keeping a journal. I would encourage you to continue recording your thoughts and experiences. Simply writing things down, and mulling over your emotions, can help enormously as you come back and go on.

Phil Grasham
November 2007



DAY ONE: ARE YOU SPARKLING OR FLAT?

READING – PSALM 91

Verse 2 “I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”

Welcome back! Wherever you have been and whatever you have been doing: well done! You may be able to instantly remember a dozen things which you were able to achieve while you were overseas. On the other hand, you may struggle to remember anything in particular and wonder what the point of your Trek actually was. Or you may be somewhere in the middle. Be encouraged, whether you can recall your achievements or not, you will never know how many lives you have touched, how many people were affected as they watched your faith in action and simply how much good you did.

Now you are back home you may have one of two responses. Perhaps you are feeling on top of the world and bursting with enthusiasm or perhaps you are feeling perplexed and unsettled. If it's the former, fantastic! Go for it! Shout from the rooftops what you have experienced. If it's the latter, you have just proved to everyone that you are human! Yes, may be there were suggestions that you were from another planet – because some people thought you were super-spiritual or because other people thought you were weird – but you have shown that you are from planet Earth and have the same questions and concerns as everybody else! Seriously, the one thing not to do at this time is to believe that you are alone or that you are in any way extraordinary. It is far more likely that you are feeling flat rather than sparkling. In the greatest adventures of life we need to take time to recognise and accept what is happening to us, and to understand that in everything God is our refuge and our fortress.

As we begin this series of studies, take time now to pray. The Lord knows everything you went through – all the highs and all the lows, so commit these studies to Him and pray that He will use them to help you to ponder the past and to face the future.



DAY TWO: PHASE 1 – EXCITEMENT

READING – 1 THESSALONIANS 3

Verse 6 “... you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.”

Over the next few days, we are going to cover various aspects of being back home, including re-adapting to your old situation and settling back into life at home.

There are said to be four stages of re-entry culture shock. Let's deal with them one by one. As you read through these four descriptions, consider which point closest resembles how you are feeling right now.

The first phase is **Excitement**. You missed your family and you have been looking forward to coming home. You have been longing to catch up with news from your friends. You have been eagerly waiting to tell your church about your experiences. You have been craving your auntie's homemade apple pie! Maybe there was a welcome team waiting for you at the airport or a reunion party when you got back to your house. In brief, you are pleased to be home and everyone is glad to see you.

All of this is perfectly normal. It would be a sad job if you were not looking forward to seeing your relatives and friends again and equally miserable if they were not looking forward to seeing you! The person who actually leaves can sometimes fail to notice just how hard it is for family members and close personal friends to let us go and see us fly away to some remote location. Maybe there was some animosity about your leaving but, now you are back, it's smiles and hugs all round!

Let's be honest, our pride rather enjoys being the centre of attention, too. People want to see us, the phone doesn't stop ringing and everyone makes a real fuss over us. All of this makes us feel good, doesn't it?

Is this how you are feeling at the moment? Praise God for your family and friends who have missed you and who love you so much.



DAY THREE: PHASE 2 – IRRITABILITY

READING – PROVERBS 29:17-27

Verse 22 “An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.”

Phase 1 can take differing amounts of time depending on the individual. However, phase 2 – **Irritability** – nearly always follows. After the initial exhilaration of being home, you may become short-tempered with others for all sorts of reasons. You may feel that your family expects you to slot back in as if you’d never left. You have been transformed by your overseas experiences and you don’t want simply to revert to what went on before. You may make snappy comments or harsh criticisms. Or maybe you and your friends don’t seem as close as before you went away. Perhaps you will feel isolated or frustrated, particularly as you attempt to communicate what you went through and are now going through.

In these first weeks, you will probably wonder where ‘home’ actually is. You are missing the friends you made overseas and perhaps you are feeling that you have changed so much that you no longer fit at home. This can lead to a critical attitude towards your home, your town, and/or your church.

Is this where you are at the moment? If so, it is good to recognise that no one can expect to go overseas, where they may learn a great deal about God, about themselves and about others, and not go through some re-entry friction, even stress. It is also worth realising that your family and friends will want to understand what is going on but it is hard for them because they haven’t shared your experiences or undergone changes in their perspectives. Finally, you may be comparing your home culture against that of your overseas culture. You may have a biased view and be wrongly kicking out against your home environment.

How about taking some time to pray about how you are feeling? Be totally honest and ask God to soften your heart to your family, friends and community.

**DAY FOUR: PHASE 3 – ADJUSTMENT**

READING – ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

Verses 1 & 4 “There is a time for everything ... a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”

After what can be a difficult phase 2, we come to phase 3 – **Adjustment**. In reality, phases 2 and 3 sit together. You will begin to adjust even in the midst of your irritability. Readjusting to life at home takes time. You need to be patient with yourself and with those around you. Expect both progress and setbacks. It can be a perplexing time as you may experience both friendship and loneliness, contentment and depression. It is a good idea to set realistic goals to reduce the triggers to your tensions. You may feel you have fully adapted and then something happens which knocks you sideways. It is often the unexpected things that catch us out!

For me, as a trivial example, I remember going to the supermarket to buy some toothpaste. I had recently returned from East Africa where if you wanted toothpaste there was one choice. Back in the UK, I stood looking at rows and rows of different toothpastes – tubes or pumps offering to clean, refresh, whiten and a dozen other things, and all from several dozen different manufacturers. The range seemed literally overwhelming and I couldn't choose between the rainbow of different colours and advertising promises. I ended up leaving without buying anything!

During this time don't be too hard on yourself. Allow yourself plenty of rest and relaxation and seek to cultivate a sense of humour! Laughter can be an amazing tonic and helps to keep everything in perspective. Remember that there is a time for everything – both to weep and to laugh, a time to search and a time to give up. In addition, find people you can share with; people who will sit and listen as you offload your antagonism and struggles. Finally, remember to commit everything to the Lord. He was there with you while you were away and He is here with you now that you are home.



DAY FIVE: PHASE 4 – ADAPTATION

READING – PSALM 33

Verse 21 “We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.”

Phase 4 is **Adaptation**. Two things that can really help are *rejoicing* and *reflecting*. The two can be developed alongside each other. It is worth taking time over this; not simply a few minutes but going back to it over several days.

- 1 **Rejoice** – the likelihood is that during your time overseas you had some amazing experiences. You have probably encountered a range of different cultures, customs, and conduct. You have made friends with people who have a different way of looking at life. You have met all kinds of challenges: physically, relationally or spiritually. All of this is praise material! Why not reflect on where you’ve been, who you’ve met and what you’ve experienced? Then, praise God for all of it! Remember to thank God for all the hard incidents too. You are more likely to have grown through the tough bits than through the cushy stuff! As our key verse says – it’s good for your heart to rejoice!
- 2 **Reflect** – commit your cogitations to the Lord and ask Him to help you remember your Trek in its entirety. What have you learnt while you have been away? What have you experienced God doing in your life? What have you seen God do in other people’s lives? Consider your experiences and ask the Lord to teach you from them. Try to evaluate both the high points and the low points. Think of the positive cultural elements or godly lessons you saw overseas that you’d like to build into your life now that you are at home. Ask the Lord to help you to apply these principles or practices to your daily life. Once again, as our key verse says – trust in His holy name!

All of this can be deeply cleansing, as well as helping to put things in perspective, but try to enjoy it as well!

**DAY SIX: FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT!**

READING – EPHESIANS 6: 10-19

Verse 12 “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers ... authorities ... powers of this dark world ...”

You are engaged in spiritual warfare. As a soldier of Christ it is important to realise that the battles we fight can be just as real at home as abroad. There is the misconception that spiritual warfare is more intense in darkest Africa – with its witchdoctors and folk magic – than in western nations. In my experience, that is not true. What we encounter are different satanic strategies – in developing nations it can be open and obvious, and people often overestimate the devil’s abilities. In developed nations it can be hidden and undetected, and people often underestimate the devil’s workings.

I wonder if you have considered that now you are home the temptations and spiritual struggles may be just as intense as when you were on your Trek. Make no mistake: the devil will want you to focus on the negatives of your assignment – what went wrong and what was difficult – and on the misunderstandings and the uncertainties of your current situation. He will also exercise every wicked tactic he has so that you are distracted from considering mission work in the future.

Our passage reminds us of three important things: first, we must stand firm, clothed in the full armour of God. In Christ, we have protection from the devil’s schemes. Secondly, we must remember that in the problems of life, our combating efforts should not be directed at people – flesh and blood – but against the prince of this dark world. Thirdly, we must attack as well as defend. Our Warrior King has provided us with weapons as well as protection. We need to pray and we need to wield the sword of the Spirit – the word of God to scupper the devil’s plans.

Take time now to reflect on the spiritual battle that is happening all around you and pray to your Commander-in-chief who dominates both the physical world and the spiritual realm.



DAY SEVEN: **DAY FOR REFLECTION**

Space below for notes or questions.

As you reflect on your Trek, can you think of one person in the Scriptures who you can most closely identify with? Do you feel like Abraham, Timothy, Mark or maybe Jonah?

If you can think of someone, use the Bible to do some biographical reading on how they faced their trials and what you can learn as you face your challenges.

**DAY EIGHT: THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

READING – COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

Verse 13 “... forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

I wonder if you have uncovered a critical attitude towards the mission workers you stayed with or the nationals you encountered? You may recall people who angered, irritated, frustrated or upset you. You might have found the mission workers to be uncaring towards you or unhelpful in your cultural struggles. You might have found them to behave in ways that surprised or even shocked you. Or it might be that the whole WEC Trek assignment was not what you had expected. It is worth considering a few points:

- 1 Mission workers are normal human beings who might be tired, unwell, lonely or stressed out! Whatever they did, it is unlikely that it was personal. The mission field can be physically, mentally and emotionally draining, demanding and difficult.
- 2 It is possible that the mission workers have lived so long in their ministry setting that they have forgotten how hard it can be for newcomers.
- 3 It is possible that the behaviour you found to be so alarming was culturally appropriate.
- 4 While you may be disappointed that your WEC Trek did not live up to your expectations, it was in no way a wasted experience. If you recall all the prayer that went into placing you where you ended up, you probably need to conclude that God took you where He did for a reason. This may be something that remains hidden until a later date.
- 5 It is entirely possible that, in some situations, people did wrong you. The mission workers and nationals are imperfect people and do need your forgiveness.

It is absolutely imperative that we forgive anyone and everyone who has hurt us in any way. I'm not suggesting this will be easy, but forgiveness is about healing and moving on; unforgiveness will gnaw away at your soul and disrupt your future spirituality. Why not pray? Right now, choose to forgive!



DAY NINE: INFORMED PRAYING

READING – PHILIPPIANS 1

Verses 3-4 “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.”

Are you still praying for the people you met on your WEC Trek, whether the mission workers, national believers or local non-believers? It’s a good idea to continue to have a positive influence on the people and the work even though you are now thousands of miles away. Are events coming up which you could surround with prayer? Are there specific needs or problems which you could pray into?

Stop and think if there are certain people or projects you could commit yourself to pray for. This might be over the next few weeks or even the next few months. Never underestimate what an impact your prayers can have. Your prayers flow before the throne of grace and mercy, and as God answers your prayers – in His timing and by His will – you can affect, help and change both situations and souls.

It is good to keep in touch with people you met, so that you have up-to-date news and reports. The Lord may answer simple ‘God, help him/her’ prayers, but informed and intelligent prayers are much more powerful and effective. When you hear of prayer answers, don’t forget to thank God – the prayer answerer!

If you have photographs of various people from your mission trip you could create a photo/prayer board. As you see the faces it will remind you to pray for them. You may be able to recruit others to pray as well.

So, how about praying right now? One thing about prayer is that we can be very good at talking about it and not so good at doing it. As someone has written, “Prayer is not what we do when we don’t know what else to do. Prayer is what we do...Prayer is not what we do when we don’t have a clue on how to begin. Prayer is how we begin.” Why not take some time to praise and intercede?

**DAY TEN: STICKING WITH YOUR FRIENDS**

READING – ECCLESIASTES 4:1-12

Verse 12 “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

I have mentioned previously that your friends can struggle to comprehend even a fraction of your experiences. However, this doesn't mean that you don't try to help them understand or that you don't still look to them for support.

When you first return it is easy to feel lonely, even disconnected from what is going on around you. There may have been births or deaths in your close circle since you went away. New close personal relationships may have been formed that make you feel isolated or even rejected. But the worst thing you can do is cut yourself off from other people. Sometimes it can be hard, but you may need to force yourself to get out and mix with others and find out what is happening. Remember, it is important not to talk about your overseas adventures every time you meet with your friends! While it has been a profound experience for you, your friends may become rather frustrated with your single-mindedness.

What is valuable is finding people you can pray with. Once again, though, there should be equal time and attention given to your friends' needs and concerns as to your own. You may feel that their requests are somewhat trivial but you still need to give yourself to praying for those things. There is very little in the Christian life where we should attempt to go it alone. But there is a lot in the Christian life where we should care for others, pray with them, share with them and enjoy their company. We are part of one holy family and we need each other. When you return, it is even more important that you bond with your Christian peers, to support them and be supported by them.

How are you doing in your relationships with your friends? Do you need to give more time to people or to pray more with people? Think about it for a while and then make it so!



DAY ELEVEN: HONEST COMMUNICATION

READING – JOHN 15:1-17

Verse 5 “If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

It is likely that your church will ask you to speak publicly about your time overseas. You may be interviewed at the front of church or go round to various groups within your church to share about your overseas experiences.

What is needed is honesty. I am not suggesting that you will intentionally deceive, but it is very easy to emphasise certain things while ignoring others. It is also easy to focus on what you did rather than describing the big picture. This is understandable when it is your church, but remember there is an order of acclaim.

First, the centre of attention needs to be on the Lord. He was central to every aspect of your Trek and all the glory belongs to Him. Our passage reminds us that we can do nothing – of immediate value or lasting worth – without Jesus. Whatever your mission successes or achievements, it is because God was at work *in* you and *through* you.

Secondly, it is good to draw attention to the long-term mission workers who have been faithfully serving in your overseas location, possibly for many years and, of course, are still there! In addition, there may have been national church leaders, local evangelists or Christian friends. What was their part in your assignment?

Finally, do talk about yourself, but again be honest. Did you struggle with culture shock? Did you get frustrated with not being able to speak the local language? Did you enjoy the local foods? If so, tell people! Tell your story – how did the Lord help you? What can you share with others that will encourage them in their life of faith? This is a ministry opportunity that could help and motivate many people.

If you are invited to speak – in whatever context – commit the meeting to the Lord. Ask Him to remind you of people and events and to help you explain your mission to the assembled group.

**DAY TWELVE: MISSION WORKERS – GOD’S PREMIER ELITE?**

READING – 2 CORINTHIANS 11:16-33

Verses 29-30 “Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? ... If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.”

Let’s build on yesterday’s study – it is important to be frank and straightforward when talking about your time overseas because for many people mission workers are a special, unusually spiritual bunch. Some people believe that overseas mission is only for the best of the best – God’s premier elite! Unless you have a hotline to heaven and a black belt in evangelism you cannot go abroad. You know this is far from the truth but everyone else needs to know it!

This Christian myth partly comes from mission biographies. There was a time when it was thought disrespectful to write about a missionary’s flaws, especially when they had sacrificed a great deal and even suffered for the gospel. Nonetheless, these unbalanced portraits gave a false impression. Consider our passage: Paul was truthful, sometimes bluntly honest, about his faults and weaknesses. Yet, to Paul, his limitations were important as they showed the glory and grace of God. We should always remember that mission workers are not extraordinary people but that an extraordinary God works in the lives of faithful, yet ordinary, men and women.

Of course, not everyone can or should go abroad. However, one vital part of your feedback is encouraging other people to think, “Wow, what a wonderful experience. I would love to do that!” rather than “Wow, isn’t this person wonderful, I could never do that!” Just think – you could be instrumental in a number of other people going overseas and getting involved in worldwide evangelisation. They may go to the same place you went to or to somewhere completely different. Nevertheless, wouldn’t it be fantastic that another consequence of your Trek is lives motivated to mission? Before you share ask the Lord to touch minds and hearts to inspire people towards missions overseas!



DAY THIRTEEN: **CULTURE SHOCK WITH ATTITUDE**

READING – EPHESIANS 4

Verses 23-24 “... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God ...”

Before we draw this first main section to a close, let's be clear about one thing – if you have read the last few studies and thought, “Hey, this is not where I'm at” then praise God and keep smiling! The experiences of short-term mission trips and so-called re-entry culture-shock affect different people in different ways. If you went out on a high, had a wonderful experience and have come back on a high, don't feel guilty! As you will have realised, some people really struggle, but if you are not one of them then that's great. Try to remain as positive as you can about your exploits but remember to praise and thank God for such an exciting and fulfilling adventure.

For those who have wrestled a little more with coming home remember, once again, that you need to give yourself time. There are no quick fixes. Returning home is part of your Trek; it is not the bit that happens afterwards but is included in the whole placement. It may be that God teaches you more about yourself as you adjust to your home culture than He did while you were serving Him abroad. If so, don't reject what He is saying and how He is using your disorientation to help you to mature in Christ. Sometimes it is when we are at our most vulnerable that we hear God the most. He is always speaking, but when we are feeling ill at ease we are more inclined to listen!

A lot of this is concerned with attitude. Ask yourself: what is my attitude to myself and to my routine and standard of living? What is my attitude to my family and friends and to their behaviour and habits? What is my attitude to my church and to its traditions and functions? What is my attitude to my mission trip colleagues and national friends and to their customs and lifestyles? All of this can be crucial. Why not pray for strong, pure and healthy attitudes towards everyone?



DAY FOURTEEN: **PRAY FOR THE WORLD AGAIN**

It is crucial we pray for world evangelisation. Wherever you are, why not spend some time in intercession?

- The two most unevangelised countries in the world are **India** and **China**. Over 600,000,000 men, women and children remain unevangelised in these two nations alone.
- This figure can seem insurmountable. But, remember, nothing is impossible for our God and Saviour.
- What the figure does represent is an incredible amount of work that still needs to be done. Out of a total of 2,332 people groups in **India**, 2,082 remain unevangelised. And out of a total of 499 people groups in **China**, 406 remain unevangelised.

Pray for

- more workers – both foreign and national – to strategically target these unreached peoples.
 - more resources – money, literature, technology, equipment, etc – to be given to reach the unreached.
 - more prayer – concentrated and focussed intercession – to open the minds and hearts of people from darkness to light.
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DAY FIFTEEN: **BUILDING ON THE ROCK**

READING – LUKE 6:27-49

Verse 48 “He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.”

Okay, let’s change track. Your cultural reconstruction and spiritual renovation will continue. However, it’s time for us to switch from issues concerning the past and the present to matters relating to the future. This is because part of your adaptation may be deciding in which direction to head. It can be unsteady to be unsure of what comes next. If you pray and think about this, it can help restore balance in other areas.

What is vital is that whether you had a fabulous Trek experience and are still bouncing, or a rather less exciting time and are feeling somewhat subdued, you need to hold onto the basics of the Christian life: Bible reading, praying, going to church, sharing with others about the Lord, seeking God in all the situations you face and living in His presence. I doubt any of these things are new to you but it is vital that you don’t simply know about them or even know that you should do them but that you are actively engaged in cultivating your spiritual life. You may not feel like doing some of these things but faith and obedience are not based on personal feelings. This is the foundation on which to construct a solid platform for your future.

In today’s passage, Jesus is clear – we are to both hear His words and put them into practice. When we stand on God’s unshakeable truth nothing can collapse our certainty in God’s goodness, grace and guidance. In the parallel passage in Matthew 7:24-27 the on-the-rock-builder is described as wise as opposed to the on-the-sand-builder who is described as foolish. Wise or foolish – which would you rather be?

So, let’s build on the foundation of Christ using gold, silver, and costly stones and not wood, hay or straw, because God’s fire will test the quality of each person’s work (1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

**DAY SIXTEEN: RECOGNISING REALITY**

READING – ROMANS 8:18-39

Verse 22 “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”

After you have been home a little while it is easy for your culture to rise up and swallow you once again! When you first returned you may have seen your home culture with different eyes. Now it is important to remember your feelings and keep your spiritual fervour.

It is very easy to become myopic and apathetic to what is happening around the world. Your culture may be ambivalent to world news so it is important to keep up with the latest mission news of where the Church is growing, where it is struggling, the persecution that is taking place and the difficulties mission workers are facing. The TV is not the greatest evil but it can sap our spiritual excitement and blur the edges between reality and fantasy. We might watch a sit-com and then the news followed by a movie. What is reality? Can we switch from one thing to the next? We are accustomed to watching such violence, pain and brutality on our screens that the news of famine, wars and oppression does not often stir our hearts to action, but to the remote to see if there is something more enjoyable to watch.

In our consumerist societies, we now munch our way through news, devouring headlines and sports reports as though it was simply part of our evening’s entertainment. We hear about shootings and earthquakes, but it all goes down with the latest drama or documentary.

I am not suggesting that you throw your TV out the window – although some people have found freedom when the small screen in the corner is removed – but that we remain aware of the world’s groanings and pains. By all means enjoy your favourite TV shows but take time to reflect on what is happening around the world. There is the good, the bad and the ugly. How do you feel about that? What are you doing about it?



DAY SEVENTEEN: IDENTITY – WHO ARE WE?

READING – JOHN 1:1-18

Verse 12 “... to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

Let's take one of these three key areas each day: **Identity**, **Reality** and **Destiny**. Or if you prefer: Who are we? Why are we here? And where are we going?

Whether you have been a Christian for many years or are relatively new on your faith journey, it is extremely important that you know who you are and whose you are. Today's passage helps us to see that our fundamental belief should be that we are children of God. To all who believed in His name, the Lord gave the right to be apostles? disciples? followers? No, sons and daughters, and this right was given to us by God Himself.

How precious we are in God's sight. Whoever we are, we are special and valued. It's vital that we understand that we belong to Jesus. If you flick through the New Testament Epistles you will read time and again that we are in Christ. Our identity is absolutely certain: sons and daughters of our *Abba* Father, co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of God and with the Holy Spirit Himself testifying that we are children of God (Romans 8:14-17).

There are many Christians who have still not sorted this out in their lives. They have not fully grasped the fullness of their position and status in Jesus. There are many insecure children of God but there are no insignificant children of God! How about you? Have you truly taken hold of what it means to be a son or daughter of the King of the Universe; a co-heir of Christ and with the Holy Spirit living inside you?

All of this leads us to worship. God has not grudgingly accepted us into His family. He was delighted to welcome us home! Praise the Lord that whatever happens, you belong to Him and that relationship is secure and solid. Praise the Lord that your relationship with God is something that you cannot break and it cannot be taken from you.

**DAY EIGHTEEN: REALITY – WHY ARE WE HERE?**

READING – ACTS 22:1-21

Verses 8 & 10 “Who are you Lord?” I asked ... “What shall I do, Lord?” I asked.”

Today, let’s look at **Reality**: Why are we here? Our key verses give us two foundational questions. If, with the Lord’s help, we can work out the answers to both of these questions and how they are tied together, we will be well on the way to understanding what our lives are all about. Someone has written, “There are two great days in a person’s life – the day we were born and the day we discover why.”

Life, the universe and everything was created for a reason. God Almighty created humanity to have a profound and fulfilling relationship with Him. It was to be a life surging with meaning and purpose. The Lord gave instructions on how to make the most of our lives and nothing has changed! Of course, there was the Fall and Christ’s awe-full death and resurrection. Jesus’ sacrifice was needed to reconcile and restore the grand scheme of things, but a profound and fulfilling relationship with the Lord is still right at the heart of who God is, who we are and what God wants us to do.

A rewarding and significant life is connected to sharing with Jesus, learning from Him, living with Him and jumping into the greatest adventure anyone could imagine. It’s all about Jesus! He is both the One worth living for and the One worth dying for. Jesus Himself said in John 10:10, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” He also said, in Matthew 16:24-25, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”

What is your experience? Are you involved in life’s grandest adventure? Are your motives, hopes, and dreams centred on Jesus Christ? Why not spend some time talking with your Lord, Saviour, and Travelling Companion.



DAY NINETEEN: **DESTINY – WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

READING – 2 PETER 3

Verses 11-12 “You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.”

Our final key area is **Destiny**: Where are we going? We live in a world of sin, shame and suffering. There is hate, hostility and humiliation. How depressing it would be to think that this is it; the peoples of this world will continue like this until they probably destroy each other and everything else. The writer of Ecclesiastes was right – everything is meaningless. At least everything is meaningless without the knowledge that this is not as good as it gets! There really is more – a whole lot more – and when the time is right, God will slam His heavenly hand down on His divine desk and say, “Enough!”

This is our hope; this is our future – a new heaven and a new earth. Lives lived in love on a planet with no more death, distress or the devil. It’s hard to imagine, isn’t it? Yet, this is what Jesus has promised and all God’s promises will be fulfilled. His promises are so sure that we can have more confidence in the return of Christ, and the establishing of a new world order, than we can have in seeing tomorrow morning.

With this mind it is important that we do all we can to speed up the time of when our destiny becomes our new reality. We need to live and move and have our being with the eternal future as our point of reference. We can pray that God’s Kingdom will come; we can get involved in sharing the gospel with the nations (see Matthew 24:14); and we can do all we can to shape our lives in the recognition of what is to come. CS Lewis said, “It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.”

Praise God that this is not it! We can look forward to, even yearn for, our new world when we will be with Jesus for ever. Let’s live in the light of our future and strive to point as many men, women and children to the new Promised Land.

**DAYS TWENTY: SACRIFICE FOR MISSION**

READING – ROMANS 12:1-21

Verse 1 “... I urge you ... to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Let's turn our attention to mission. If you are in a church which has an emphasis on mission then praise God because not every church has a commitment to local evangelism or worldwide mission or either! If you are in a church which does not have much of an interest in missions then it is even more important that you regularly turn your attention to mission-related stuff – praying for global mission activities, giving to worldwide mission endeavours and frequently considering your own personal role in reaching the nations for the Lord Jesus.

We will consider these things more closely next week. But for now, has your WEC Trek time given you a passion for more? Are you working towards praying more earnestly for missions? Have you ever considered that the Lord might want you involved in mission work long term?

Why not spend a few moments doing something radical – lay yourself on the altar of sacrifice and ask the Lord what He wants you to do with your gifts, abilities, training and experience. This can seem like a scary thing to do, especially when the Lord will take you at your word; but wouldn't you rather be involved in making a difference for eternity than sticking with the temporal status quo?

I am not suggesting that everyone should pack up and go overseas, but I am suggesting that every single Christian should be involved in worldwide evangelisation. I believe this is entirely biblical as we have a God who is concerned with every tribe, people and nation. Wherever you live you can pray, keep informed of mission news, encourage others to become enthusiastic about mission, give some of your resources towards mission, and a 101 more creative ways that will promote mission and motivate people to think about mission. Over to you ...!



DAY TWENTY-ONE: **PRAY FOR THE WORLD 2**

As the saying goes, let's cut to the chase:

Our world has over one billion people without safe drinking water, almost two million people who die of hunger every year, over one billion people who live on less than US \$1 a day, and well over two and a half billion people who remain unreached by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What are *we* going to do about it?

What are *you* going to do about it?

**DAY TWENTY-TWO: OFFENSIVE INTERCESSION**

READING – MARK 11:12-33

Verse 17 “And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?” ’ ”

Intercession can do so much towards world mission that it’s remarkable that we, our friends and our churches don’t pray so much more! Intercession can commit any one or any number of people to the Lord wherever they are – maybe even in a nation that forbids or restricts Christianity! Karl Barth wrote, “To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of this world.”

When we consider prayer we often come at it from a position of defence. We look to see where the problems are, we listen to reports of spiritual battles and we intercede for known troubles. This is not wrong; it is important to respond to what is going on and remember our brothers and sisters in their struggles. However, it is important to realise that, as in the realm of medicine, prevention is better than cure. When it comes to praying for the nations and the evangelization of the world we need to come at it from a position of offence.

We could pray that as mission workers preach the gospel, their listeners are receptive; that Satan is prevented from deceiving minds and distorting the truth; that local leaders – both political and religious – would be sympathetic to the mission work going on around them; that mission workers would be led by the Spirit to discern situations and that brothers and sisters in Christ would have courage, faith, humility and spiritual wisdom.

In summary, we need to be proactive while Satan is still planning His schemes, and not just reactive after he has done something! Why not make this kind of praying an integral part of your daily prayers? It’s not wrong to use prayer to heap blessings on our family and friends, or in response to specific difficulties, but your intercession could literally make all the difference in the world.



DAY TWENTY-THREE: HILARIOUS GIVING

READING – 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15

Verse 7 “Each man should give what he has decided ... not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Christian giving is our privilege and our responsibility. Giving can be of time and energy but here we are specifically looking at the giving of money. According to the Bible: first, our giving is to be well thought-out and well-balanced. 1 Corinthians 16:2 says, “On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.” We are to put to one side a proportion of our income before we think about our expenses. As someone said, “We are to give God what’s right not what’s left!”

Secondly, our giving is to be sacrificial. When we consider that our money could spiritually feed minds and physically feed stomachs, we need to think about how much we can give away. When we do give it may prevent us from buying things we want or at least delay our purchasing them. But when we have so much, and others have so little, why not give so that it hurts a bit! RG LeTourneau wrote, “The question is not how much of my money I give to God, but rather how much of God’s money I keep.” All that we have has come from the Lord. So, when we give, we are simply giving back what already belongs to God. If you’re thinking that you don’t have much money, look around you and remember there are those with not just little but with nothing.

Thirdly, our giving is to be cheerful. In fact, our giving is to be hilarious – the Greek for ‘cheerful’ in our key verse is *hilaros*. Our giving should not be associated with obligation but rather it should be related to a yearning to give. We give because we want to give. We give and we burst into hysterics; we give and we jump for joy! God loves it when we give extravagantly because this is how God gives.

Why not, even right now, ask the Lord to guide you in your giving. How much could you give? To whom should you give?

**DAY TWENTY-FOUR: THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST**

READING – ACTS 4:1-21

Verse 12 “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the exclusive King of the Universe and the unique Saviour of the world? A growing number of people argue that all religions are equally valid. What do you think? This is crucial – if you believe that Jesus Christ is the only way, the only truth and the only life, you are far more likely to share the good news of Christ than if you feel that it doesn't matter which religion a person believes as long as they believe in something.

Let's be convinced and confident. Look at our key verse – salvation is found in no one else! Jesus is uniquely unique: His divinity is unequalled in any other religion (Colossians 2:9). No religious leader – other than Jesus – has ever broken through the barrier of death (Romans 1:4). In addition, no other religion claims that its founder is alive today (Revelation 1:18) and that we can know Him (1 John 5:20). There are many other elements to Christ's uniqueness – His present intercessions for His people, His defeat of the devil, His promise to come back and make all things new – but we don't have the space to consider everything!

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said “All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me.” Christ is in control; He goes on to command His followers to “make disciples of all nations.” Jesus also calls us to love our neighbours. Those of other faiths are our neighbours and we cannot claim to love them if we leave them in ignorance of Jesus Christ.

We know Jesus, but He Himself said that we only love Him when we do what He has commanded (John 14:15). We have the privilege and responsibility of sharing His glory and love with people of other faiths, which, as 1 Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”



DAY TWENTY-FIVE: **RESPONDING TO CHRIST'S COMMISSION**

READING – REVELATION 5

Verse 9 "... with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

I want to challenge you again about seriously considering worshipping and serving the Lord through overseas mission work. I make no apology for this because the worldwide physical and spiritual needs are so enormous.

Our passage tells us that it cost Christ everything to implement the next phase of God's eternal plan. It was because Christ – God's Lamb – was slaughtered that people were bought at such a great price. Jesus' horrific death was needed to reconcile heaven and earth. If it cost the Son of God His life – which He willingly gave – what are we prepared to give?

Each of us needs to consider our part in sharing the truth about the world's Saviour with the whole world. For some of us, we need to be directly involved in taking the radical truth of Christ to the furthest corners of the globe. Christ's sacrificial death has done it all. Only Jesus has the power and love to transform every culture, custom and country. The paradox is that while there are people all over the world desperately searching for meaning and purpose there are so few people who are going out to introduce them to the Lord Jesus Christ. This can mean that these truth-searchers end up looking in all the wrong places. The Apostle Paul wrote, "... how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how they can hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:14).

What are we waiting for? When we examine our Bibles, the message is clear: God wants to bless all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3) and because He loves this world so much, "he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). We should not be waiting for a special revelation to get involved because God has already commissioned us to go!

**DAY TWENTY-SIX: BIG DREAMS**

READING – JOHN 14:1-21

Verse 12 “... anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these ...”

How about creating a personal mission strategy? This is a natural extension of your journal. Look back through your entries – has something, in particular, struck you about your participation in God’s global plan? What has the Lord been highlighting for you? Now, connected to what God is revealing to you, why not think big or maybe dream big dreams? Let your imagination run away with you – where do you want to be in five or ten years time? What do you want to have achieved? How are you going to take what God is saying so that it moves from being a good idea to being a reality? If the Lord is encouraging you towards becoming a full-time mission worker then break that down into steps. What do you need to do to get there – wherever there happens to be for you?

Our passage constantly astounds me. Think about it – not only can the man or woman of faith do what Jesus did while He walked this earth, but he or she can do even greater things! Even greater things than Jesus the dead-raiser, the leprosy-healer, the demon-exPELLER, the storm-stiller! Amazing! These things are not done because the people are holy or super-spiritual but because Christ returned to the Father and sends the Holy Spirit of wisdom and power. So as you consider a mission plan, don’t think too small or too narrow. Our God is the King of the Cosmos, the Extinguisher of Evil, the Healer of humanity, and absolutely nothing is impossible for Him!

Remember that in Proverbs 16:9 we read, “In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.” When you have laid out your bold strategy, one thing which would be a good idea to do is to ask a group of people – maybe from within your church – to pray for you. Then you, yourself, keep praying, keep listening and keep going.



DAY TWENTY-SEVEN: IF WE ARE THE BODY ...

READING – 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Verse 12 “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body.”

I hope that as we come to the end of these studies you are encouraged to be thankful for everything that happened on your WEC Trek and you begin to understand your role in world evangelization.

Whatever role we take on, we should recognise that every ministry is equally important – going is not more spiritual than staying. However, what is important is getting stuck in and playing our part in world evangelization.

God loves you and wants the very best for you. He wants to continue healing your past, helping you in your current situation and leading you forward in the great explorations of life. God wants to work in you and through you, not as an end in itself but so that you can be a healer, helper and leader to many others.

Peter Grieg of *24-7 Prayer* wrote a prayer-cum-prophecy entitled, “The Vision”. It concerns an army of Jesus followers who are willing to do anything and everything for Christ. I include this small piece for your reflection:

“They are mobile like the wind, they belong to the nations, they need no passport. People write their addresses in pencil and wonder at their strange existence. They are free, yet they are slaves of the hurting and dirty and dying ... Such heroes are as radical on Monday morning as Sunday night ... With blood and sweat and many tears, with sleepless nights and fruitless days, they pray as if it all depends on God and live as if it all depends on them.”

Take time now to consider what God has been saying to you through these studies. Praise Him for His interest in you and intervention in your life. Remember that, whatever comes next, we should always “fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

**DAYS TWENTY-EIGHT: KEEP LEARNING, PRAYING, MOVING**

On our last day together I want to encourage you to keep learning, keep praying and keep moving with regards to all things mission. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

WEBSITES:

- 1 **www.ethne.net** – Ethne is a site providing resources for all peoples to be involved in prayer and action for those peoples less reached by the gospel.
- 2 **www.joshuaproject.net** – the Joshua Project seeks to “identify and highlight the people groups of the world that have the least exposure to the gospel.”
- 3 **www.thejourneydeepens.com** – Journey Deepens has a range of resources. There is also “Ask a Missionary” with 300 questions and answers.

BOOKS:

- 4 ***Operation World*** – the definitive prayer guide to the nations, peoples and cities of the world by Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk.
- 5 ***The Vision and the Vow*** – full version of Pete Grieg’s prophetic poem which has touched literally millions of lives around the world.
- 6 ***Marching to a Different Drummer*** – Jim Raymo on rediscovering missions in an age of affluence and self-interest.

FULL- AND PART-TIME TRAINING COURSES:

- 7 ***Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*** – a dynamic course where you’ll discover what God is doing around the world and consider your part in His purposes.
 - 8 **WEC Training Colleges** – for English speakers: Cornerstone in the Netherlands, East-West College in New Zealand, Gateway in Canada and Worldview in Australia. (*Spanish and Portuguese courses are also available.*)
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FURTHER READING

For more resources, help in acquiring the books, or further information on the training courses, contact your nearest Trek office:

NOTES



Trekking Deeper

Returning and Advancing

NOTES

Trekking Deeper is a devotional discipleship programme specifically written for short-term volunteers. The aim of the Course is to help “Trekking Deeper” keep their focus on Christ and to grow spiritually during their placements.



Trekking Deeper consists of a series of nine booklets:

The ABC of Preparation
Costly Discipleship
Dynamic Prayer
Exploring God's Word
God's Guidance

Practical Faith
Living Holiness
United in Discipleship
Returning & Advancing

“Refreshing, stretching, packed with helpful insights, I found the Trekking Deeper booklets an excellent tool for personal discipleship.” **Glenn Myers (author of the Briefings series)**

“I learnt a lot about prayer and it was good to have notes with short-termers in mind.” **Gillian Thom (Mexico)**

“I learnt stuff I didn't know before.” **Jeremy Estabrook (Senegal)**

“The questions made you analyse and pray about your feelings rather than just pottering on.” **Lindsey Hale (Mexico)**

“I learnt things that I could apply and think about and they weren't boring!” **Alison Davey (Sierra Leone)**