



# twenty one DAYS OF PRAYER

***Spring 2023***

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**Point University**

Dear friends,

As Ecclesiastes reminds us, “for everything, there is a season.” We’ve all experienced that ebb and flow in our lives, careers, relationships and ministries.

During my time as a Christian college president, I’ve experienced many seasons. Our University has experienced seasons of growth and seasons of difficulty, seasons of plenty and seasons of want. Through it all, God has remained faithful to us.

Christian colleges and universities across the country are experiencing a challenging season right now that you might not be aware of. Many institutions, including Point, are seeing a decline in the number of students preparing for full-time ministry. We have plenty of students on campus experiencing radical growth in their relationships with the Lord! But fewer of those students are feeling the call to major in ministry fields.

We know that God will remain faithful, and he will prepare workers for the harvest. Our biblical studies program is ready to educate those students for Christ-centered service throughout the world. And we want to invite you to partner with us in praying for those students!

Over the next 21 days, you’ll read these devotions and be challenged to pray specifically for God to raise up kingdom workers to attend Christian colleges and universities to prepare for ministry. Our hope is that God will hear our prayers and bring more ministry students to Point and other Christian colleges and universities.

I know this devotional resource will be helpful to you and your churches in guiding your prayers for ministry leaders to be raised up. Know that leaders on the Point University campus are praying with you!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean C. Collins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "C".

Dean C. Collins '79  
President, Point University



# hearing the call

*Week One*



# Day 1:

## *Matthew 9:35-38*

In Luke 10, Jesus appointed 72 others as his disciples and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he planned to visit, which was a common practice of Jesus.

Similarly, every day we have an opportunity to go ahead of Jesus, bringing and offering his peace wherever we find ourselves. What if we consider that every encounter is a step of preparation for Jesus to engage with the people we see? We may be going ahead of Jesus in some encounters, but just as likely, we may be joining Jesus in the work he is already doing in someone's life.

When Jesus sent the 72, he told them to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. This passage seems to suggest that the responsibility for the right number of ministers for kingdom work is on all of us. We are all called to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

The other thing we often miss in this passage is a clear understanding about ownership and stewardship. Jesus is the Lord of the harvest. None of us can manufacture the workforce, but we can pray for Jesus to provide adequate workers.

As followers of Jesus, our work includes the work of preparation along with the work of partnership with Jesus. We know that as we surrender ourselves daily to Christ, we pray that he would provide more workers for his harvest field.

We are in good hands as we follow Jesus and join him in the amazing work of kingdom harvesting.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Think about your daily schedule and the people you interact with, either strangers or friends. Write out your prayers for those people and for God to open your eyes to the work He is doing.
- Pray for God to prepare and send workers for the harvest. How can you use your gifts to join him in this work?
- Take some time to think and pray about stewarding Jesus' workers. Are there areas of your life where you need to surrender what you have back to him?

### ***Notes:***

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# Day 2:

## Genesis 12:1-3

When you start a trip, it's helpful to know your destination. However, when God called Abraham, he didn't give him an exact location, but very clear direction about what to leave behind. Abraham and Sarah were told to leave their country, their family, and their parents to go to a place God would reveal later.

Is it possible that we often fail in what God is asking from us because we are unwilling to consider what we must leave behind? In the case of Abraham, God was very consistent with his original instruction to Adam and Eve to leave mother and father and cleave to one another. God knew that in order to create his new family, he needed his chosen couple to have the faith to leave their family of origin behind.

Obedience for Abraham meant leaving parents, leaving a homeland, and leaving their comfort zone. Not many of us want to leave our comfort zones. We are creatures of many comforts. It seems that we have so many preferences, it is a wonder that God gets us to do anything meaningful in his kingdom!

Our instructions from Jesus are to go into all the world with the good news. All the world is both specific and vague. What if God is more concerned about what you are willing to let go of than the next door you are willing to walk through with him?

We should be thankful that Abraham and Sarah had the faith to leave home and the comfort of the predictable to go where God would take them. Their obedience is the spiritual root that brought each of us to the opportunity of knowing Jesus.

### Prayer Prompts:

- Take a moment to think about what makes you uncomfortable, and then pray about the ways God may be calling you to step out of your comfort zone.
- What are three ways you can practice getting out of your comfort zone for the sake of obedience to God?
- Is there anything in your life you need to surrender or leave behind in order to follow Christ into all the world?

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# Day 3:

## Exodus 3

We’ve all heard stories of things people have said at the end of their lives, but what about our last words to God? In Numbers 27:16-17, we find the last record of Moses speaking directly to God, and his concern that the people he had been leading would not have a shepherd to lead them after he died.

In Exodus 3 we hear God’s first words to Moses and the first words Moses spoke to God. While watching his flock, an angel appeared to him in a flaming bush. Moses walked over to see this curiosity, and God called him by name out of the flames: “Moses, Moses,” and the reply of the shepherd was simply, “Here I am.”

That conversation opened a holy moment on holy ground. Moses declared that he was present and available. God told Moses what he was to do, and then we learn a lot about Moses with his response. Moses went from “Here I am” to “Who am I?”

It’s understandable. Once you have an encounter with God, there is certainly an awareness of your unworthiness.

Moses no doubt grew in leadership, strength and experience during his 40 years of leading. But his last words to God show us a heart that had changed. When God was ready to call Moses home, the one concern that Moses had was for the Israelites he led for 40 years. Moses knew that everyone needs a shepherd to lead them.

What are you doing to prepare those who follow you? What we might say in our last moments may or may not reveal much about us, but what we have done to prepare the next generation of leaders does say something about whether God is changing our hearts.

### Prayer Prompts:

- Take a moment to reflect on your response to God’s call. Do you tend to respond out of humble willingness to obey? Or do you respond out of fear and insecurity?
- Pray about the areas of influence in your life. Write out some of the ways you can intentionally prepare those around you to continue following Jesus after you’re gone.
- Take some time to pray that God would raise up more humble leaders around you, both to learn from and to teach.

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# Day 4:

## Joshua 1

Some may lead because they want the glory, the fame and the accolades, but few people want to follow that kind of leader. Other leaders seem reluctant to take up the role. Moses was definitely the latter kind of leader.

Joshua was chosen by God to be the successor of that kind of leader. No wonder that, in God’s opening lines to his new leader, he said, “Be strong and courageous” three times!

Whatever you have been charged to lead in this moment, you might also need to hear these same words. Everyone needs a leader who is strong and courageous.

In the first chapter of Joshua, we find God’s suggestion for leading well.

Be strong and courageous because...

- Of my promises
- Of my word
- Of my presence

As Joshua stepped into his season of leading, God told him to remember all God had done and to believe he could depend upon every promise God had made.

Joshua was to be bold because he was told to keep and meditate on God’s word. The word for meditate in Hebrew literally means “to mutter.” With every fearful moment, we can mutter the words we know to be true.

Finally, Joshua was promised that God would be present with him in every step, every battle, every decision, every moment. And we have more. We know from all of Scripture that the kingdom of God that Jesus leads will never end. We can be confident that he will lead us even now. And his presence is and will remain with us.

Yes, the road is foggy. No, we can’t see the next turn. But with every step, the Light will appear, and as we depend on him, we will be victorious.

### Prayer Prompts:

- Write out some of the areas of your life where you need to be strong and courageous, then pray that God will fill you with his Spirit to walk in confidence.
- How can you grow in your leadership, not as one who is proud and boastful, but as a leader who is humble and confident?
- Take some time to pray and meditate on God’s words. Surrender your fears and anxieties to him and be filled with faith in him.

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# Day 5:

## Jeremiah 1

Sometimes we put the cart before the horse.

More years ago than I want to admit, two young men entered what was then Atlanta Christian College, planning to study for ministry. One was extraordinarily gifted; the other was a prime example of the fear of public speaking. I, along with many of my colleagues, was convinced that the naturally gifted young man would make a name for himself in ministry. But we failed to take note of things like commitment and calling. Today, the young man afraid of public speaking is doing great ministry in the name of Christ; the naturally gifted young man – well, I don’t think he ever made it to ministry at all.

In Jeremiah 1, the phrase “the word of the Lord came” occurs three times: verses 4, 11 and 13. That is all about calling, and not so much about giftedness. We often quote part of Jeremiah 1 in a kind of way to say “when life begins,” but it actually is about “when God’s call begins.” If you read this wonderfully prophetic book, you realize that Jeremiah will find himself in all sorts of predicaments. He will have questions about many painful moments in life. But I don’t remember a moment when he seems to doubt his call.

God may not call us as dramatically as he did Jeremiah – or Paul on the Damascus Road. But the point isn’t that we should compare our own sense of call to theirs. The point is that the call of God in a person’s life should change everything. It certainly did for Jeremiah. It certainly can for you and me.

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that each of us would recognize God’s call in our own lives and let Jeremiah’s commitment be our commitment.
- Pray that each of us will help others recognize that call in their lives and find ways to be committed to answering His call.
- Pray that we would listen to the convicting work of God’s Spirit in our lives and answer his call.

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# Day 6:

## Luke 5:1-11

Jesus wanted to be heard.

Who among us hasn’t felt that very same sentiment? So Jesus, initially standing on the edge of the Lake of Genesaret, jumped in a nearby boat – that “just happened to belong to Simon” – pushed off from the shore a bit. The waters of the lake would act like a well-tuned sound system as his words bounced up the slopes of the area.

When the time for teaching was over, Jesus wanted to fish. He asked Simon to go out to the deep and let the nets down. Simon – not unlike how I’ve sometimes responded to Jesus – responded with a bit of “been there, done that.” But, because Jesus said do it, he mustered up the courage and obeyed.

It was a net-breaking haul of fish. So much so that Simon fell at the feet of Jesus and declared, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” Jesus – unlike how we sometimes view others – is quick to say, “Stop being afraid – you will now start catching men.”

Here’s where this text bumps squarely into my own sense of how I view my relationship with Jesus. “They . . . left everything and followed Him.” Everything. That’s a lot! Everything. Is Jesus joking?

Could it be that, in our age, we have made following Jesus too easy? If it’s costless, why bother? I wonder what would happen if we found a way to talk about God’s call in our lives as costly – but worth every single penny? Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, “When Christ calls a person, he tells them to come and die.” For most of us, that will be metaphorical; for some, it will be literal, as it was for Bonhoeffer. For all of us, it speaks to the cost of discipleship.

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would create in us a deep desire to want to be heard because we have the good news on our lips.
- Pray that we would realize that the cost of following Jesus – though great, is the best investment we ever make.
- Pray that we would recognize those around us who ought “to be catching others” for the sake of the kingdom.

**Notes:**

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# Day 7:

## *Revelation 1:9–11*

Write and send. That’s the summary John offers in describing his encounter with God as he was “in the spirit” on the Lord’s Day.

I often find myself talking about what I have come to call “the civic Jesus” as compared to what I believe “the biblical Jesus” is all about. Revelation 1 offers a picture of Jesus that is far and away different from the civic Jesus we often create and settle for. To the civic Jesus, we often come with our hands out seeking what we euphemistically call “blessings.” To the real Jesus, John “fell at his feet as though dead.” (Rev. 1:17)

But that very Jesus, the real one, places his right hand on John and says, “Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last . . .” It is really difficult to encounter the real Jesus and not be stunned. In the context of a call to ministry, perhaps it is fair to suggest that rather than focusing on all the struggles that ministry brings, we ought to focus on exactly who it is that we are following when we answer his call.

From the point of view of Jesus, we need not be afraid. Sin and death tried to kill him, but in the end, it was Jesus who defeated sin and death! The one who calls us to ministry is more than we can fully understand and more than we can explain. But what a difference he can make when we answer his call.

A few years ago, a total eclipse of the sun was scheduled to be visible in the part of the world where I live. At some place of business I visited, they were giving out “glasses” that claimed to make it safe to look directly at the eclipse. I was all ready for the eclipse. But on that day, it poured down rain in West Point, Georgia, and I saw nothing. The glasses were never used.

John apparently didn’t have such glasses when he looked at Jesus. He fell at his feet as though dead. I’m wondering, how often do I allow it “to pour down rain” between my own life and viewing Jesus? They have yet to invent the kind of “glasses” that can make Jesus safe – if we choose to actually look at the real Jesus in Scripture.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Pray for a clear vision of who Jesus really is.
- Pray that we will take his “write and send” words and apply them appropriately in our own lives.
- Pray that God would use each of us to help others see him more clearly.

### ***Notes:***

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# training for the call

*Week Two*



# Day 8:

## *1 Samuel 17:33-37*

“Go, and may the Lord be with you.”

It was early fall 1999, and I was getting a cup of coffee with my friend and colleague Dr. Steve Hooks. Out of nowhere, he said, “Huxford, I’d like you to go to India in January for Seminary of the Nations.” I had just taken a sip of coffee and quickly spewed it all over the place.

Me? India? Right. My international experience at the time was crossing the river in Detroit into Canada (back when a driver’s license was all you needed) and having lunch at a Czechoslovakian restaurant. But one of my life principles is, “Don’t say no without prayer and consultation.”

Long story short, I went to India in January 2000 with my friend and colleague Dr. Jim Donovan. I learned I actually could teach in cultural contexts that were drastically different from my own. After that, I made over 30 such trips all over the world.

“Go, and may the Lord be with you.” David had no more experience in slaying giants than I did in teaching indigenous Indian pastors about the Bible with my friend Jim. Look at the text and notice the phrase “The Lord, who . . . will save me . . .” Answering God’s call is not about us as much as it is about the God who calls us. Too often, we are sitting on the sidelines when our coach, God, is calling us to play!

Years later, I got a report from a friend who helped set up the India trip. He told me that one of the men in our class had planted over 30 churches in his part of India, and he credited the class that Jim and I taught as the thing that started him on that path.

We should not casually say “yes” to everything we are asked to do in the kingdom. But more importantly, we should never say “no” without some prayer and consultation.

After all – His call in our lives sounds an awful lot like, “Go, and may the Lord be with you.”

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Pray that God would place authentic kingdom opportunities in front of us for which we can say, “Yes!”
- Pray that God would give us courage to step beyond whatever comfort zones we have that tend to hold us back.
- Pray that God would use us to put opportunities of ministry in front of those we know.

### ***Notes:***

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At the young age of 25, I was assigned to officiate a funeral in place of the absent senior pastor. A prominent family at the historic southside Chicago church where I was newly serving had lost a dear loved one. As I arrived at the funeral, I moved to the front of the family line to lead the processional into the sanctuary with the funeral director. As I took my place, I heard someone ask with great urgency, “Where is the pastor?” With little courage, I turned around and reassured everyone that I was a pastor on staff and that they were in good hands. However, as we began, I could feel the awkward gazes and judgmental glares on my back as we recited Psalm 27.

In this passage, Solomon was young, newly married and newly King of Israel. He must have felt great pressure, because he asked God for wisdom to lead. Do not abdicate your call because of what people may think. Instead, like Solomon, ask God to grant you wisdom to accomplish your purpose, and you will succeed

- To what big purpose do you think God may be calling you?
- Have you ever felt pressure from people around you when you were only trying to help others? Describe that feeling.
- What encouragement would you give to someone trying something new? Now rewrite it for yourself.

School was never my preferred dwelling place; however, accepting the call to ministry meant that I had to commit to studying God's Word beyond my comfort zone. Many times, I struggled in classes to push myself to study hard for my exams and tests, knowing that I had no desire to be a professional scholar at the time.

Diligence can produce a ministry worker in you that you probably at first could not see. This verse is great wisdom for young people who accept it. Paul, chained and imprisoned, sends his regards and encouragement to his mentee, Timothy.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- ### Notes:



In this verse, while just a boy, Jesus is safely preoccupied at the temple astounding the elders when he is found by his parents. Mothers know their children best, but in this case, God the Father has gripped the heart of Jesus with a divine connection.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

Jesus, the great High Priest, obediently submitted to the Father's will. His embodiment of humanity perfected him as the holy offering of salvation to rescue all people. We cannot miss our opportunity to serve our ordained eternal purpose. We, who are grafted into God's family, now are obligated to share the good news prophetically and compellingly. Take every opportunity you have to participate in the exciting work of the gospel. You never know where God will take you, the impact you may have, and how God will bless you in return as you expand your horizons to bless others.

- What are some ways to observe someone's needs before you begin to serve them?
- How does empathy play a role in serving others well?
- Actively listening and learning can be hard at times. What are some practical steps to help stay focused while learning how to serve?

Both of my parents smoked. I will never forget the day I picked up a cigarette and pretended to smoke. You would have thought I had committed a federal crime! They weren't walking their talk. They couldn't say, with Paul, "Follow my example." They were saying, "Do as I say, not as I do." We need more worthy mentors in our churches that can say, with Paul, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

- Who mentored you? Were they a positive influence in your life?
- Pray that there will be more ministers that mentor young people and point them toward the ministry.
- Pray that young people will seek out godly mentors instead of being mentored by athletes, actors, social media influencers and other secular leaders.

## Day 14: *1 Timothy 4:12*

When I was a counselor at camp, I once observed the behavior of a young camper throughout the week. She was humble, focused on God's Word, and trying to follow Jesus in word and deed. One night, at vespers, she asked to speak to the group. The week of camp changed after she spoke.

She talked about the behaviors she had seen at camp and the way the campers treated each other. She was humble and kind in the way she spoke. The words she spoke were powerful because they were backed by actions. In Philippians 2:14-16, Paul tells us how to shine like stars. The goal is to be a shining example for our King.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- What are five ways we are to be examples?
- How are you doing at being the type of example this verse talks about?
- Write down the names of a few young people, and pray that they will be great examples and shine like stars, as Paul says in Philippians 2:15.

**Notes:**



# **empowered for the call**

***Week Three***



## Day 15: *Acts 1:8*

I had a friend who saw a car accident. Since he saw what happened, he was called to go to court and be a witness. He didn't go to witness, but to *be* a witness. He could not unsee what he had seen. A witness simply tells what he or she has seen and experienced. We are called to be witnesses because we have seen God's power at work in us.

You might be a little intimidated by the thought of being a witness. There is no need to be fearful, because God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to help be his witness. In Acts 2, we see fishermen who turned into powerful preachers because they allowed the Spirit to speak through them. The same can happen to us.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Has there ever been a time when the Holy Spirit has given you the words to be a witness?
- How are you doing at being a witness?
- Ask God to raise up young leaders in our churches that will have the power of the Spirit to be a witness for Christ.

**Notes:**

## Day 16: *Exodus 7:10-12*

It was my first youth ministry; one of our elders had cancer, and we all knew the end was near. Our senior minister was out of town when he died. I got the phone call that they didn't expect this elder to make it through the evening. I went to the hospital to be with the family. My training for ministry had not prepared me for this.

I still don't know exactly what I said, but years later, the family continued to thank me for the words of comfort I spoke. The words that God spoke to Moses are still true today. Jesus reinforces what God will do in Matthew 10:18-20 when he tells us that the Holy Spirit will give us the words we need. We need people who will allow God to speak through them.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- What do you learn about God in these verses?
- Do you ever feel inadequate when you try to speak up for our Lord? How do these verses encourage you?
- Pray that we will see men and women who will allow God to work through them for his glory.

**Notes:**

In Scripture, however, we are challenged to make bold asks, and none is so bold as Nehemiah. Not only does he get a paid vacation to rebuild the fallen city of Jerusalem, but he petitions the king of a rival nation to fund the rebuilding! If this heroic example of a “great ask” of a pagan king exists in the Bible, how much more should we expect God to be moved by our vocalized needs?

The simple truth is that God loves to be asked for good things!

- What do you need to personally ask God for?
- What do you need to ask for someone else?
- Would you ask God to send ministry workers to rebuild what is fallen in our cities?

## Day 18: *Luke 10:17-20*

In the days of text messaging, social media and email, the notion of a sender seems a bit archaic, as outdated as the telegram. But for millennia, a person sent with a vital message was very special indeed. Especially in times of war, specially trained and marked soldiers and even entire units were prepared to bring physical messages – on foot or on horseback – to officers far away. They traveled, of course, with the protection and stamp of approval of their commanding officers.

In Luke chapter 10, Jesus' disciples experience the wonder of being sent. They can hardly believe that ministry in the name of Jesus includes remarkable displays of power. Jesus, however, does not want them to focus on the miracles nor the victory over demons. He wants them to remember their identity as sent ones. That is what matters.

In this prayer campaign, we are focused on praying for the sent ones. Please join us, but do not exclude yourself!

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Pray to reclaim your identity as a treasured child sent by God.
- Pray that God might send new disciples to make an impact.
- Pray that God would show you how you might be used as a sent one.

**Notes:**

## Day 19: *John 15:5*

When my sister and I were in high school, she had a boyfriend named Eric. He was a rather massive football player with a warm, gentle heart. He used to regularly bring her flowers, and even when they wilted, my sister could not bear to throw them away. Instead, she hung them up by the stem off of the ceiling in her room. I remember walking into her room countless times and feeling pretty morbid with all of the dead flowers hanging around. Such an odd memory!

Here in John 15, Jesus is giving his farewell discourse to his disciples the night of his arrest. Unsurprisingly, he uses agrarian imagery to connect to the experiences and imaginations of his disciples. If they do not remain – as individuals and as a community – connected with him, they will wither and die like the flowers in my sister’s teenage bedroom. The vine is not the Christian religion nor the church. The vine, the life source, is Jesus himself.

No amount of Christian ministry can replace connection with Jesus Christ. Today, we pray that those who are sent might experience this vital, sustaining relationship.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Pray that those who minister might experience spiritual renewal.
- Pray that those preparing for ministry might live from a vital connection to Jesus.
- Pray that your own relationship with Jesus would receive continual renewal.

### Notes:



## Day 20: 2 Peter 1:3

We have all seen advertisements that promise something that seems too good to be true. Magazine ads, billboards and especially infomercials tell us that with this exercise machine, we can get “ripped” in ten minutes a day; with this pill, we can lose all the weight we want; or with this investment, we will become millionaires. Most of us have learned to screen these ads out. We know the adage: if it is too good to be true, it probably is!

2 Peter promises something that seems almost too good to be true, and yet it is true. God has provided as a free gift everything we need for our lives. Everything . . . for free . . . no strings attached. This is the remarkable gift of the Gospel.

God does not simply give us a script and say, “Live by it.” He doesn’t set up his ideals and expect us to live accordingly. He gives us the very ability to live for him, to walk with him and to work with him.

Too often, we overcomplicate ministry. Let's pray that this free gospel will be made available to more people.

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Pray that ministers will remain anchored in the simple gospel of God's grace.
- Pray that more people will be reached with this divine power.
- Pray to live the empowered life!

## Day 21: *Matthew 28:16-20*

Our imaginations are shaped by famous moments from history. On July 4, we think about the Boston Tea Party or Washington crossing the Delaware. On Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we remember the “I Have a Dream” speech and the dream for racial reconciliation. We look at the moon and remember Armstrong’s famous words: “one small step for man...” Our brains are hardwired to remember these big moments.

At the end of Matthew's gospel, we find such a big moment. Jesus visits his doubting disciples on the mountaintop, and rather than criticize them for their doubt, he sends them out on a rather unbelievable mission, a mission to change the world. He gives them authority and the gift of baptism. He gives them his eternal presence. This promise, of course, was not just for them; it is for us.

And so we come full circle in this three-week journey, to the moment when Jesus told us to go. This devotional has been written because we need more young believers to respond to the call to go. We need more fresh missionaries, more young pastors and church-planters, more Christian leaders ready to change the world, just as Jesus' first disciples did.

Will you offer a final prayer for more?

### ***Prayer Prompts:***

- Pray for more young Christian leaders graduating from Christian colleges on a mission.
- Pray for more Christian college students following Christ's call to serve the Church.
- Pray for more students choosing Christian colleges over secular alternatives, where they might be impacted by the Gospel.

### Notes:



**Point** University