

his arms  are wider

Part 2

Name:

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Spring 2020



wentzville
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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LETTER FROM KEITH

Read the gospels and you will see Jesus open his arms to people. Story after story, he runs into men and women that everyone else tries to avoid, everyone else wants nothing to do with, everyone else closes their hearts to, but Jesus is different. He talks to them, engages them and loves them. Simply put, we need to be more like Jesus because His arms are Wider.

Throughout this series we are going to look at some of the stories that show us how loving and accepting Jesus is and how we should follow his example. We look at our culture and we find ourselves pulled in different directions. Some people preach a message of tolerance and acceptance that fails to share the truth of scripture and the type of living it calls us to. Others simply wall themselves off from those who are different or those who struggle with sin and will have nothing to do with them. The reality is that the culture in Jesus' time wasn't all that different. How do we love others while holding to the truth of God's Word?

I'm convinced there is a way and that way is found by watching Jesus. His approach, his words and actions, his genuine care and concern for every person he sees. I'm also convinced that the church has to grab hold of this "Jesus way" of loving others. That we need to open up our hearts and love those around us. Let's watch Jesus. Let's see how he does it. Let's follow his example. **His Arms are Wider.**

Blessings,

Keith Comp

Senior Minister

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

The purpose of this guide is to ignite a passion for the Church in your daily life. We are told that Jesus loved the Church so much that he gave his life for her. This guide will help you develop your love for the Church and lead you to ways that you can be a better member of the body.

SERMON NOTES:

Bring this workbook to church each Sunday. As you listen to the sermon, make a note when you hear something that surprises you, intrigues you, bothers you, challenges you, or encourages you.

CONNECT QUESTIONS:

These questions will help you and your group members become more comfortable with talking and sharing with each other. Not only will you learn more about one-another, the questions will help to steer the discussion in the direction of the topic.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION:

These questions are the “meat” of the discussion and will point back to the sermon each week. Feel free to read and answer these questions before your group meets. They will also help you dig deeper into the Scriptures during your group discussions.

CHANGE QUESTIONS:

At the end of Jesus’ most famous sermon, he says that if you do not put his words into practice then you are a fool [Matthew 7:24-27]. Life transformation is the ultimate goal of a follower of Christ. Feel free to answer these questions out loud when your leader reads them or you can quietly reflect and write a response in your workbook.

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER:

Please focus this time on *your own personal* praises and requests instead of listing all of the bad things that happened to someone you know. We challenge you to get “deep” with one-another relationally, which means becoming a little bit vulnerable as you are honest with one-another.

PRAY FOR THE MISSIONS OF THE WEEK:

WCC supports many wonderful missionaries and organizations all over the world. We are committed to support them with our finances as well as our prayers and encouragement. Ask God to work in their lives and through their ministries to ignite a passion for Jesus in others.

DAILY DEVOTION:

Be consistent, honest, and intentional with this time and you will not regret it. The whole point of this workbook is to make the sermons and Scriptures stick with you in your daily walk with Christ. Digging in to God’s Word and applying it to your daily life is perhaps the best way to solidify His truth into your heart and your life.



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Week 6 - for the late-comer

WEEK 6 - HIS ARMS ARE WIDER FOR THE LATE-COMER

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. **What were some jobs you had as a young adult? Do you feel you were adequately compensated?**
2. **When you were a child, when did someone else get special treatment you felt you deserved?**
3. **When do you find yourself getting angry with others for doing something you also do yourself? [Ex: texting while driving, being impatient, wasting money, etc.]**

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. **Do you think most Americans focus more on fairness and justice, or do we tend to be more forgiving and understanding with others?**

2. **Read Luke 23:39-43. Look carefully at the words spoken by the criminals. What actions of faith and remorse do you see from the repentant criminal?**

3. **Leaders, read the explanation of the criminals below. How does this impact the way you think of this salvation story?**

CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. **What kind of worker are you in the Kingdom of God? Long-time hard worker? Disgruntled employee looking for equal pay? Lazy worker hoping to get paid? Late-comer just hoping to receive anything?**
2. **How can you keep from being judgmental or jealous of others who have not worked as long or as hard as you?**
3. **How can you open your arms wider to the late-comers? What attitude do you need to have with others?**

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR MISSIONS OF THE WEEK

HOPE Ministries Food Pantry

HOPE provides families in St. Charles county assistance with food and physical needs. You can donate non-perishable food items to this ministry by visiting the food cart in the WCC café. Take home a bag and bring it back with the items requested for the month.

Team Expansion: Allen & Cherry Messimer – Taiwan

The Messimers have served as missionaries in Taiwan since 2004. Their mission is to evangelize, disciple, and provide training so every believer can use his or her gifts in a simple church ministry. This also means every church can start new, indigenous churches. Over 90% of Taiwanese people still worship idols. teamexpansion.org

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 1 & 2:

Read Luke 23:26-43

Look carefully at the words spoken by the criminal. What actions of faith and remorse do you see from the repentant criminal? In the space below, reword these statements in how you may say them yourself:

▶ “We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve”

▶ “But this man has done nothing wrong”

▶ “Jesus”

▶ “Remember me”

▶ “when you come”

▶ “into your kingdom”

▶ “Don’t you fear God”

DAYS 3 & 4:

Read Luke 23:26-43

Look at the explanations of the criminal’s words below. Reword these actions as a prayer to God in the space below:

▶ Recognized his own sinfulness

▶ Realized that Jesus was sinless

▶ Confessed that Jesus is who he says he is

DAYS 3 & 4 CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE...

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 3 & 4 (CONTINUED)

Read Luke 23:26-43

Look at the explanations of the criminal's words below. Reword these actions as a prayer to God in the space below:

- ▶ Understood that Jesus saves
- ▶ Believed in the afterlife
- ▶ Acknowledged Jesus is king

- ▶ Evangelized to other thief

DAYS 5 & 6:

Read Matthew 20:1-16

- ▶ If you were one of the first workers hired, how would you have reacted to the landowner?
[I would have complained; No complaints...I got the pay I agreed to; I would not work for him again; I would have been happy for the workers hired after I was.]

- ▶ What does this parable say to you about God and His kingdom? Which of these statements stand out to you? Why?
[God's ways are hard to understand; God is free to bless who He wants; God's grace is not dependent on our merit; God is gracious no matter how long it takes you to follow Him.]

[Source: NIV Serendipity Bible pg. 1357]



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Week 7 - for you

CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. Which brother do you identify with? What do you need to learn from this story?
2. How does it make you feel that God's arms are wider for YOU?
3. What do you need to repent of? What will it take for you to return home to your heavenly Father?

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR MISSIONS OF THE WEEK

LOVetheLOU

LOVetheLOU is a community development initiative that connects resources to the needs of St. Louis. During the constant process of growth and development, they strive to see St. Louis restored through transforming actions. LTL is proud of the progress in St. Louis and are excited about what will continue to happen as they grow and develop. lovethelou.org

Outreach International - Mexico | Josh & Susan Sanchez

This mission, called Me & My House Ministries, is a church plant in Colima City. Their goal is to begin a church planting movement within the region.

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 1 & 2:

Read Luke 15:1-10.

- ▶ What is the most financially valuable item you have misplaced before? What is the most sentimental item you have misplaced before?
- ▶ Who is in Jesus' audience, and how do they respond to him? Why do you think Luke mentions these people?
- ▶ Why do you think these two parables are told before the parable of the prodigal son?

- ▶ How do you picture the woman searching for her money in vs. 8-9? What is Jesus' point here?
- ▶ Have you ever strayed away from Jesus and your faith?
- ▶ How do these stories make you feel about your value to God?

- ▶ How could these stories affect your relationships with those you know who wander from the faith?

DAYS 3 & 4:

Read Luke 15:11-32

- ▶ What is the biggest party or celebration you have ever attended?
-
-
-
- ▶ If you were the younger son returning home, how would you feel when you first saw your father again? [*Scared; unworthy; relieved; guilty; grateful; loved; other* _____]
-
-
-

DAYS 3 & 4 CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE...

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 3 & 4 CONTINUED:

Read Luke 15:11-32

- ▶ If you were the father, what would have been your response when your son returned?
 - a. *Good to see you, but you are grounded!*
 - b. *Where is my money?*
 - c. *I do not approve of what you have done, but you are still my son.*
 - d. *Welcome home, son...I love you!*
 - e. *Do you realize how worried I was?*
 - f. *Other _____*
-
-
-

DAYS 5 & 6:

Read Luke 15:11-32

- ▶ Which of the father's qualities do you most admire about God?
 - a. *His willingness to let his son make mistakes*
 - b. *His patience in waiting for change*
 - c. *His capacity to forgive*
 - d. *His understanding in dealing with his children*
 - e. *His ability to celebrate life*
 - f. *Other _____*

- ▶ Spiritually, where are you in your relationship with God right now?
 - a. *Never left home*
 - b. *Still at home, but feeling tempted to check out the "distant country"*
 - c. *In the distant country, trying to have a good time*
 - d. *Starting to realize I'm in a pig-pen*
 - e. *Nervously heading back to God, but not really knowing what to expect*
 - f. *Just beginning to feel God's forgiveness*
 - g. *Gradually feeling God's acceptance*
 - h. *Celebrating with the family of God*
 - i. *Other _____*

- ▶ What is the next step for you in your spiritual journey?
-
-
-

[Source: NIV Serendipity Bible pg. 1451-3]

WEEK 8 - HIS ARMS ARE WIDER FOR THOSE WHO FAIL

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. Who is someone you admire because they made a comeback after a defeat, injury, or tragedy?
2. When have you worked through some conflict with a close friend? How did you get through it and remain friends?
3. When have you made a bold promise which you intended to keep, but it did not work out the way you wanted?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Luke 22:31-34. Why do you think Jesus told Peter he was going to deny him? What do you notice at the end of verse 32?
2. All of the disciples deserted Jesus and fled for safety when he was arrested [see Mark 14:50]. Why do you think Peter was singled out by Jesus in this prophecy?
3. Read Luke 22:54-62. Why do you think Peter denied Jesus so quickly after saying he was ready to die for him?

CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. **When have you denied Jesus or failed to speak up on his behalf?**
2. **What failures have you been through in your life? How did you recover from them?**
3. **How can you be more forgiving and have your arms open wider to others who have failed?**

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR MISSIONS OF THE WEEK

Haitian Island Ministries

Steve & Terry Smith, WCC members

This organization operates medical programs providing free vitamins, medicine, and medical care and feeding programs which provide a daily meal for thousands of Haitian children each month. They also build schools and churches in some of the most remote areas of Haiti. Their medical program has served hundreds of thousands of Haitians. haitianislandministries.org

St. Louis Christian College

SLCC seeks to educate Christians and to graduate leaders who are equipped for service to God. They seek learners who are committed to Christ and highly motivated to serve God and the church; students who are capable of completing the academic rigors of a college education; adults who are willing to acquire both knowledge and skills through service and off-campus learning experiences; and men and women who are drawn from a diversity of geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. stlchristian.edu

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 1 & 2:

Read Luke 22:7-38

- ▶ Which disciple do you most identify with and why:
 - a. *Judas - I've sold out on Jesus*
 - b. *Arguing disciples - I want to follow Jesus, but I still want to be successful in the eyes of others*
 - c. *Peter - I am passionately committed to Jesus, but sometimes I fall flat on my face*
-
-

- ▶ Have you ever felt like you were being sifted by Satan? How do you respond in these times?
-
-

- ▶ What is Jesus trying to impress upon Peter in vs. 31-32? What is he trying to impress upon the others in vs. 35-38?
-
-

DAYS 3 & 4:

Read Luke 22:54-62

- ▶ Why do you think Peter denied knowing Jesus?
[Momentary insanity; Spiritual weakness; Personality weakness; Fear for his own life; He was overwhelmed; Other _____]
-
-

- ▶ When have you experienced any of these? Pray for God to help you in your weaknesses and failures today.
-
-

- ▶ How do you think Peter felt when Jesus looked at him?
-
-

DAYS 3 & 4 CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE...

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 3 & 4 CONTINUED:

Read Luke 22:54-62

- ▶ How do you usually react when you experience failure?
-
-

- ▶ What have you found helpful in dealing with failure?

[Taking time to be alone; Having a good cry; Putting it behind me; Analyzing what went wrong; Drawing near to God; Accepting responsibility; Other _____]

DAYS 5 & 6:

Read John 21:1-25

- ▶ Why might Jesus have provided a miraculous catch of fish and then made breakfast for the disciples? What did he want to remind them of?
-
-

- ▶ Why do you think Peter jumped into the water? How would you have reacted?
-
-

- ▶ Why would Jesus ask Peter 3 times “do you truly love me”?

[To get his attention? To Help him face his past denials? To be sure Peter loved him? To make a point? Other _____]

- ▶ If Jesus asked you the same question, how would you respond today?
-
-

- ▶ Pray for God to lead you in how you can take care of and feed His sheep this week.
-
-

[Source: NIV Serendipity Bible pg. 1467; 1469; 1514]



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Week 9 - for the world

WEEK 9 - HIS ARMS ARE WIDER FOR THE WORLD

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. **What do you think is the ultimate purpose of the place where you work [or used to work]?**
2. **When have you had a bad experience with an employee who may have forgotten the overall purpose of the organization they represent?**
3. **Have you ever witnessed a crime or accident? What information did you give to the authorities?**

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. **Read Acts 1:8. What command does Jesus give? What promise does he give? Why do you think he mentions these together?**
2. **What is the significance of the places named in verse 8? What places might correspond to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria for us today?**

CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. **Where are some Jerusalem/Judea places or people should you be a witness to in your neighborhood? City? Workplace?**
2. **Where are some Samaria places or people you feel uncomfortable around?**
3. **Be honest: are your arms open wider for those around you? How will you be a witness through the power of the Holy Spirit this week?**

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR MISSIONS OF THE WEEK

Central Christian College of the Bible

The goal of Central Christian College of the Bible is to raise up servant leaders for the church and to do so as affordably as possible. CCCB believes so completely in what their students will do for Christ that they want to not only equip them with a quality education, but an affordable one so their future ministry will not be burdened by financial stress. That is why CCCB offers a Full-Tuition Scholarship and will continue to do so as long as there are means. cccb.edu

Christian Prison Ministry of Mid-America

Missouri is home to 29 prisons and 2 county jails in 5 states. CPMM's goal is to evangelize, encourage, and equip the believers in all of these prisons. To date, over 400 inmates have been baptized!

christianprisonministryofmissouri.org

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 1 & 2:

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- ▶ As you think about Jesus' "Great Commission" in vs. 18-20, what holds you back from actively passing on the Good News of Christ?
 - a. *Feeling like I don't know enough*
 - b. *Feeling like I don't have enough time*
 - c. *Feeling like others are better at it*
 - d. *Just ignoring it*
 - e. *Other _____*
-
-

- ▶ What is the central command that Jesus gives in this commission? Why is that so important for us to keep in mind?
-
-

DAYS 3 & 4:

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- ▶ Many churches and Christians are comfortable, complacent, and nominal in their faith. Rewrite the Great Commission as a parody of how some may understand our instructions from Jesus. *[For example: "Stay in bed, sleep in, don't worry about telling people about your faith because you may offend someone, and don't worry about going to church because I'm with you everywhere, even at the lake or on the golf course."]*
-
-

- ▶ The central and most important command Jesus gives is to "make disciples." He then explains how we are to do this, and what it looks like to be a disciple. Write an explanation for each one:

Go:

Baptizing them:

Teaching them:

Obey everything I have commanded:

DAYS 3 & 4 CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE...

DAILY DEVOTION

DAYS 3 & 4 CONTINUED:

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- ▶ Read the last sentence again. Why does Jesus give them this promise as his very last words on earth?
-
-

- ▶ How does this impact what he just said about making disciples? How does this impact you?
-
-

DAYS 5 & 6:

Read Acts 1:1-11

- ▶ The following words are used in the Bible to describe what we are commanded to be and/or do as followers of Jesus. Explain what each of these mean:

Witness:

Evangelist:

Teacher:

- ▶ What do you think Jesus meant by giving specific geographical locations for us to go to? Why not just say “go everywhere”?
-
-

- ▶ Write some specific places you feel God may be calling you to GO and be His witness:

Jerusalem/local:

Judea/regional:

Samaria/despised area:

Ends of the world:

- ▶ Write some specific people you feel God may be calling you to GO and be His witness to:
-
-