

An intercessor's guide for
RAMADAN



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LEARNING
HOW TO PRAY FOR
MUSLIMS

**AN INTERCESSORS GUIDE
FOR RAMADAN:
LEARNING TO PRAY FOR MUSLIMS**

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All quotes from the bible are taken from the “The New International Version,” published by the International Bible Society. 1984

All quotes of the Qur’an are from “The Qur’an: A new translation” by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem. Oxford University Press, 2005

CONTENTS

DAY 1 INTRODUCTION	4
DAY 2	8
DAY 3	11
DAY 4	15
DAY 5	19
DAY 6	23
DAY 7	27
DAY 8	31
DAY 9	35
DAY 10	39
DAY 11	43
DAY 12	47
DAY 13	51
DAY 14	55
DAY 15	59
DAY 16	63
DAY 17	67
DAY 18	71
DAY 19	75
DAY 20	79
DAY 21	83
DAY 22	87
DAY 23	90
DAY 24	94
DAY 25	98
DAY 26	102
DAY 27	106
DAY 28	110
DAY 29	114
DAY 30	118
DAY 31	122

Day 01

RAMADAN – OPENING THE DOOR TO THE MESSAGE

Ramadan is a unique event in the Islamic calendar. It is a time when all of the followers of Islam are required to spend time reflecting on their faith; thirty days of fasting, listening, and sharing together in this process.

On the other hand Ramadan provides a unique opportunity to pray and interact with those who call themselves followers of the teachings of Mohammed. It presents a chance to pray, asking God to speak to Muslims in visions and dreams and through the Christians they may encounter. For Christians it is also a chance to pray for each other, that God would prepare us to respond to Muslims to whom God is speaking.

Each year the followers of the teaching of Mohammed pause for a month to consider what they have received from Allah and give thanks. During this month, they focus on the unity they have in their faith and on helping others. It is the time of remembering and giving.

During Ramadan, Muslims will eat a meal of thanksgiving in the early morning. During the day they will fast and spend time thinking about all that Allah has given them and all that they have been taught. In the evening, they will gather to eat and celebrate family, friendship and the blessings they have received. This will continue throughout the 30 days of Ramadan.

In some ways it has the same idea as Lent for Christians. Lent is a time to give up something we desire or enjoy so that we can focus more time on God and our relationship with Him.

This material is written to help us as Christians understand what God has called us to be, to help us better understand our responsibility to see and reach out to those who need to hear God's

message, and to help us better understand the issues involved in sharing this message with the followers of Mohammed. The goal is that, as we are better equipped to be true followers of Jesus the Messiah, we will be more effective and committed to praying for those who call themselves Muslims.

This devotional will have four parts.

1. **Taraweeh** – These are samples of the evening prayers of Muslims which are the introduction to a longer time of prayer which include reading a portion of the Qur’an

2. **Bible Study** –

A thought based on a passage from Colossians 4:3-6 where Paul asks for prayer that he would be more effective in sharing the message of God with others.

Paul wrote a short letter to the Colossians to affirm their faith, encourage them to continue in that faith, and share important truth about following Jesus. At the end of this letter he encourages them to pray, and more specifically for himself personally, as he continued to travel and share the message with those who had not yet heard. His goal was to guide the Colossians in living a life worthy of the message they had received and continue in reaching out to everyone with that message.

Paul believed this message to be the door to God. This door was not to be found in words written in a book but in the life and sacrifice of Jesus.

There are seven key areas that Paul asked the Colossians to pray for. Each of these will be divided into four focuses for our consideration.

3. **Qur’an/Bible Review**–

We will look at some of the beliefs and teachings of the Qur’an and the biblical response to that teaching.

The pattern will be to present a text from the Qur'an that forms the basis of a key belief of Islam. These will be followed by biblical texts that help us respond to those issues. It is important to keep in mind that this section is not for the purpose of giving us tools or ways to defend our beliefs. Its purpose is to help us understand their beliefs. It is not the defense of our beliefs that will reach their hearts. It is our commitment to being true followers of Jesus the Messiah that will bridge the gap. When that happens, we need to be prepared to answer their questions in love and patience.

4. **Prayer focus** - for the day

The goal is that this will help us pray for those who are ministering to the followers of Mohammed and help us be better prepared to respond to those we may encounter in our daily lives.

This final section will provide a sample taraweeh (daily prayer of Islam) used during Ramadan. Then we will provide a variety of ways that we can pray. It will be composed of specific points of prayer, areas of need, and key focuses. Please keep in mind that we will not include the real names of those we pray for, those who are serving in this area, or the true location of the need.

Each day we will call on God to teach us and prepare us for what he wants to accomplish in and through us. The Arabic language has a word for this action, it is the word Dua. It means to call out or summon. This will be the focus of this material. To invoke God to call us, to summon us to prayer and ministry among the Muslims, a people he dearly loves, as much as he loves each of us, even while we were sinners.

One last item. Ramadan has three focuses, reading the Qur'an, praying and honoring Allah, and fasting. As we begin this month of prayer and study, take time to consider what you might be willing to give up as a form of fasting, that will help you remember to come

before God and pray that He will reveal the doors he has opened to ministry among Muslims.

Prayer Time – Spend time today asking God to prepare you and strengthen you for the month of prayer and fasting that you are beginning. Pray that God will use this time to help you grow in your love and understanding of Muslims.

Day 02

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today help me to fast from a sincere heart, help me as I stand in prayer to do so in true obedience, use this time to awaken me from the slumber of death that plagues those who are neglectful, and pardon my iniquities, O Creator of the universe, and pardon me, O one who pardons the offenders of what is right.

Bible Study – The Reason

We are called on to pray for the lost. This month we will study one of Paul’s prayer requests and use it to guide us as we pray for those God is speaking to in the Muslim world. Also, we will learn more about how to hear God speak to us regarding what each of us needs to do to reach out to the Muslims in our communities and how to help those ministering among Muslims in other countries.

To begin our time of prayer and devotion here is the text that we will be studying during this season of Ramadan.

Col 4:2-6 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

The opening phrase is “Devote yourselves to prayer.” We are called to spend time speaking and listening to God. A key focus of such times of prayer is for those who have not heard God’s message, the gospel. This is the focus of Paul’s prayer here and in Ephesians 6:19, where he asks them to pray that he would receive the right words to speak and be fearless in proclaiming the gospel.

As we begin each day this needs to be the focus of our prayer, that we will listen, hear, and learn what God is teaching us. We need to be devoted to spending time with God so that he can prepare us. Then we will be able to watch and see what God is doing and be thankful for the opportunity to use what has been given to us as a result of devoting ourselves to prayer.

1. *Qur'an/Bible Review - God of Islam*

Sura 1:1-7 In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy! Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy, Master of the Day of Judgement. It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path: the path of those You have blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray.

Rev 15:3-4 Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

There is one thing that is clear from these two texts. The goal is to give honor and glory to God, the one who created the universe and guides all things according to his will. The difference is in the deity that is the focus of this honor and glory.

Actually, if the source of these two declarations was not included one could easily believe they came from the same source. This is another aspect that can cause further confusion. There is a significant part of the Qur'an that sounds good and represents giving honor to God, Allah.

That leads to another element we must keep in focus when translating from English to Arabic. The word in Arabic for God is the word Allah. That means that when you translate the word God,

as found in the Bible, you will use the Arabic word Allah. Which means in the above biblical text the ‘Lord God Almighty’ becomes ‘Allah the mighty one’ and ‘you, O Lord’ becomes ‘you, Allah.’

As we begin to develop a relationship with the Muslims we encounter we will need to be careful in how we respond to their praise and worship of Allah, for in many ways it reflects how we praise and worship God (who we also know as Yahweh, the Hebrew word for God).

It is critical for us to see and understand the similarities and differences that exist between the Allah of Islam and the Allah of those who follow Jesus the Messiah, while at the same time respecting their desire to bring honor to the one they worship. The goal is to let them see through our lives how we worship the one true Allah, what the differences are and help them want to know Him.

Praying for Muslims

Praying for understanding of the Muslim heart, for God to give us His perspective.

1. Pray that God will give us His understanding as we relate to Muslims. May God open our eyes to see them like He sees them.
2. Pray that we would not be held back by fear or prejudice, but that we will be filled with love for them as lost sheep and fellow human beings.
3. Pray for compassion to grow in our hearts, that we would respond to any impulse of the Holy Spirit that urges us to reach out.
4. Pray against unhelpful attitudes about Muslims, such as “they are the enemy.” Many times the enemy feeds us lies about our fellow man, preventing us from loving him.
5. Pray that God would help us to see Muslims less as a danger, and more as people who are in danger of eternal separation from God.

Day 03

Taraweeh

ALLAH, in this day, draw me ever near to that which pleases You, preserve me far from Your fury and chastisement, confer on me the favor of reciting the words of your Holy Qur'an, as an expression of your mercy to me, for you are Allah, the merciful one.

Bible Study – The Door Visible

Pray that God would open a door for our message.

Jesus identified a key issue related to this request. He said as he looked at the people there was a great harvest ready and waiting. The problem was there were not enough workers (Mt 9:38). In Revelation 3:8 the church at Philadelphia was told that God has placed an open door before them for ministry. They were a weak church in terms of resources but strong in their faith. God promised them that he had control of the door and that he would provide all that they would need.

The concept of a door is used in a number of ways in Jesus' teaching: it is the door to salvation (Mt 7:13), it is a door of protection (Lk 11:7), it is a door of access (Lk 12:36), and it is a door of opportunity (Re 3:8). When teaching the disciples about prayer he used the door as a symbol of access. In presenting this idea he gives three directions or commands. The first command is ask, the second is seek, and the third is knock. For those who do these, the door will be opened which will allow them to enter (Mt 7:7-8).

What is interesting here is that the doors are already in place. They are not hidden or out of sight. The problem then is not the existence of a door but finding the door. This means having the ability to see the door. This issue is a concern. More often than not the problem is not in knowing if a door exists but in having our eyes opened to see the doors that already exist: the harvest that is white and ready

for the workers. Doors are opening to ministry among the Muslims. They are becoming our neighbors. Many are becoming disillusioned with their faith as they see the violence being done in the name of Islam. They are asking questions. These are open doors

Jesus talks often of this issue. A key goal of his ministry was to help the blind to see. This is more than just healing the physically blind, but the spiritually blind as well (Jo 9:39). It was part of his mandate as stated in Isaiah 61:1,2, to give sight to the blind. He told the people that those who have the ability to see are blessed (Lk 10:23) and that they will see God (Mt 5:8). This ability to see the doors of opportunity is a critical part of the parable in Mt 25:32-46. Those who saw those in need, those hungry, those in jail, and did something for them were allowed into heaven. Those who did not see the opportunities to serve were turned away into eternal punishment (Mt 25:32-46).

Today's focus is on learning to see with God's eyes the doors of opportunity that already exist all around us. Do we see our Muslim neighbors as God sees them? He loves them and desires greatly that they pass through the narrow gate of salvation which we have seen and entered.

Qur'an/Bible Review - God is one

Sura 2:163 Your God is the one God: there is no god except Him, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.

Sura 112:1-4 Say, 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.'

Deut 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

On this point we agree. There is only one God and only he is deserving of our honor and respect. Jesus repeats this declaration when talking with a teacher of the law. He further adds that you are

to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength (Mk 12:29-31).

The key difference between the two is in understanding of the nature of God. In Islam Allah is a Monad. A singular being. This is important in that before creation nothing and no one existed. There was no one for Allah to relate to. No one to share his thoughts with. There was no one whom he could love. The only thing that existed beside Allah was his word which, according to the Qur'an, is eternal like Allah. This creates a problem for their teachers. If Allah is one, then nothing else can exist alongside of Allah that is also eternal. This has caused a dilemma which they cannot explain.

Our understanding of God is different. We believe that God is triune. This means that within his nature exists three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each is different but fully God. Whole books have been written in an attempt to explain this and many examples given to help us gain even a little insight into the nature of God. One is worth sharing. A man is both son, father, and husband. He does not change. He is still a single person but in each of those relationships he behaves differently. What is more important is that within that reality he learns about relations. How does he relate to himself as father, son, and husband? This also means he has the knowledge necessary to be able to understand and relate to those outside of his existence. The form of that relation will change depending on which of the three aspects of his existence is involved.

This is sufficient to reveal a key difference between a god who is only a monad and a god who is triune. The one god, or Allah, who, before creation, had no knowledge of love or what relation meant. A God, who understands fully concepts like love, faith, and communication. He has experienced all of these and more.

So, when God created, it was not out of loneliness but a desire that others would experience the true beauty of having a relationship like what exists within His being. Yes, our God is one but he is so much more. This is the ONE GOD we need to let them see in our lives.

A God who is worthy of all our love, with all our heart, mind, body, and soul.

Praying for Muslims

Praying for open doors and for opportunities to reach Muslims.

1. The present refugee crisis from Syria, Iran, Iraq, and other countries has driven many Muslim-majority populations into areas where they have easier access to the Gospel. Praise God that many can now hear the Good News!
2. Pray that Christian outreach to these refugees will be strong and loving. Pray that we as the Church will not miss this opportunity, where the unreached are coming out of the borders that often make them harder to reach.
3. Pray for Christian ministries working in Muslims contexts today, many of which face challenges, restrictions, and persecutions because they elevate Christ.
4. Pray that doors would be opened for Christian workers to reach Muslims in places where it is currently hard to gain access. Pray for creative access models to be developed, and for the necessary permissions to be granted, that a living, breathing witness for Christ may be present in every part of every country.
5. Pray for Internet and radio ministries, which can sometimes carry the hope of Christ to people who otherwise would not be permitted to hear it.

Day 04

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today my cry is that you would grant me wisdom. That you would make me alert, so that I will be kept from folly and false living. You are the generous one, allow me the privilege of sharing in all that you send to those who are faithful, for you are truly generous in all you do.

Bible Study – Reaching the Door

The second part of Jesus' directions on prayer in Mt 7:7-8 is to seek. This requires that we desire to find a way to get to the open door that we can see. That means that we do more than stand faraway and look through a spyglass, binoculars, or other device which makes it possible to see, but from a safe distance, far from any potential danger and risk to ourselves.

This is illustrated very clearly in the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-32). The priest and the Levite saw the man in need. The impact of what they saw was powerful. But instead of going closer they chose to move farther away. They had no interest in discovering how to help the person. They were more concerned about getting dirty, being late, or what it would cost them. Seeing did not result in them seeking to get closer.

Paul tells us clearly our goal should be to be like Jesus, who though holy and in heaven chose to find a way to come down to us (Ph 2:2-8). In order to seek us out he humbled himself and became like us. He made an incredible journey and was born as a baby, grew into manhood, and then lived among us. He became part of our dirty little life and world.

Seeking is about getting close enough to actually do something about the needs of others. It is about seeing the doors of ministry available and to start moving towards those doors. It means seeing

the Muslims around us and finding the paths that will take us ever closer and closer to their world until...

As Paul put it... "we can become all things to all people" (1 Co 9:22), and that includes Muslims.

Qur'an/Bible Review – God chooses to reveal himself

Sura 9:32 They try to extinguish God's light with their mouths, but God insists on bringing His light to its fullness, even if the disbelievers hate it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to show that it is above all [other] religions, however much the idolaters may hate this.

2 Peter 1:20-21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

On this we also agree. God has chosen to reveal himself to us. Step by step throughout history God has appeared, spoken, given visions, and taught his truth to us. A key issue is the manner in which God communicates. In Islam, Gabriel showed Mohammed the tablets on which the word of Allah was written and then taught Mohammed, step by step, the contents of those tablets.

This process took years and involved a process of repetition. First Mohammed repeated over and over what he was taught until Gabriel was satisfied that he had memorized it correctly and then Mohammed repeated this process to a group of faithful followers who memorized what they were taught and wrote down the information. Gabriel only spoke to one person and no one else ever heard what Allah was saying.

It is much different when it comes to the revelation we have received from God. Many persons were selected to receive God's words. They used their abilities to record what they heard and transmit it to others both orally and in writing. Instead of taking only

a few years the process spanned centuries. This has allowed us to test the words of one messenger against those of another.

The Qur'an was to be another word from Allah: a word in addition to that which had already been received. But it was not subjected to the same rigorous testing as all the other messages that had been received. However, in the bible, we can see God's veracity and unchangeable nature. His word does not change. What he revealed about himself in Genesis is the same in Revelation. What is revealed to Abraham is the same truth we hear from Paul.

In Islam, only one person was allowed to hear from God. Everyone else was excluded. For us the promise is different. Everyone who follows God has the right to study his words and hear from Him. God stated that he would pour out his spirit on everyone in Joel 2:28. Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit would dwell in us to teach us and remind us of God's word (Jn 14:26).

God has promised to dwell with us and reveal himself to each of us. This, the message we have, is for all people. God wants to speak to you. Our God wants to speak to everyone individually. We have this joyful task to help others understand that God is speaking and to help them to understand what he is saying to them.

Praying for Muslims

Praying for God to reveal Himself to Muslims in life-changing ways.

1. Incredible numbers of Muslims have come to faith in Christ because of dreams or visions. Pray that God would continue to reveal Himself to Muslims in mighty ways, and that this would inspire admiration and curiosity about Jesus Christ.
2. Many Bible translation projects are underway for primarily Muslim peoples. Pray for patience and success among these translation teams, so that all of what God has revealed in

Scripture may soon be in the hands of curious Muslims who want to explore its pages.

3. Pray for Bible correspondence courses that exist throughout the world, providing access to Scripture online and via mailed resources. Pray that more Muslims would take an interest in these courses to learn about God through His Word.
4. Pray that God would use the logic and innate reasoning ability He has already given Muslims, to lead them to dissatisfaction with their current belief system. Pray that a hunger would awaken within Muslims to search for God in meaningful ways outside of Islam, even though this is expressly forbidden.

Day 05

Taraweeh

ALLAH, Today, give me the strength needed to fulfill Your commands, let me know the delight of having me held in Your thoughts, a gift that exists because You are the gracious one, making possible my gratitude to you. Surround me with Your protection and shelter, You who can perceive those who understand.

Study Day – The Door Knocker

How often is the image of someone standing at a door and knocking used in scripture? The two best known images are of Jesus standing at the door and knocking, waiting to be allowed to enter the life of a person (Re 3:20). Another image is part of the instructions on prayer in Matthew 7:7-8. Not only are we to ask and then seek the door, but once we arrive we are to knock. Until we knock the door will not open.

A third image is found in the parable of a person who needs food to feed a visitor who has arrived late in the night. He goes to his neighbor to get help. At first the neighbor refuses to help him but, because he is persistent in knocking and requesting help, the neighbor finally gets up, opens the door, and gives him what he needs to care for his visitor (Lk 11:5-9).

We are told to knock at the door. To really knock at the door with the full intent of making contact with the person inside. We are to keep on knocking. We have seen the door and sought to arrive at the door. Now it is time to be sure those inside recognize we are serious about meeting the person behind the door. We cannot open the door but we can do everything necessary to convince them to open the door.

The challenges of being a door knocker is to overcome our fears; fear of rejection, fear of danger, and fear of the unknown. A closed door prevents the knocker from seeing the person on the other side

of the door. A closed door means less risk but also means we do not enter and share our faith with them. The truth is they may be just as afraid as we are. But until we knock we will never know. We will remain trapped in our fears.

Door knocking is about finding out if the door is open or closed. Not in the sense that it is standing wide open but in the sense that those in control of the door are willing to open it. I wonder how many doors we have passed by that were open - not locked, not barred - with someone just waiting for us to come so they could open it; waiting for someone to knock, not timidly, but confidently. Waiting to see a friendly face willing to meet them and say hello.

Jesus stood at the door knocking, waiting to enter. We need to do the same.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Old Testament and New Testament confirmed as God's word

Sura 5:46, We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light, and confirmation of the Torah already revealed— a guide and lesson for those who take heed of God.

Sura 5:48 We sent to you [Muhammad] the Scripture with the truth, confirming the Scriptures that came before it, and with final authority over them: so judge between them according to what God has sent down.

Matt 5:17-18 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Both Islam and Christianity believe the books of Moses, David, and that the gospels of Jesus are the word of God. The key issue is the

prominence given to the information Mohammed received. According to the Qur'an one of the key reasons Mohammed received his message from God was to confirm all that had come before. Mohammed's message was to confirm the teachings of Moses, David, and the prophets. They believe Jesus' words were given in order to confirm all that was taught in the Tawrat (Torah), and Zabur (Psalms) and as a guide and lesson to those who heed God.

A key difference is what we see in 5:48: that Mohamed was given final authority over all previous words given by God. Mohammed was allowed to judge which would have greater authority and was to be followed, between what he received and what Allah had sent before. He was to bring a message to this people but he also had the freedom to set aside or abrogate past information that he received if necessary.

This is very different from what we see in the life of Jesus. A key phrase used over and over in the gospels is the fulfillment what the scripture or prophets have said (Lk 1:1; Mt 13:14). It is not a new word. Jesus himself declared that everything written about him must be fulfilled (Lk 24:44). He knew God's word and knew it was perfect. He knew it had not been altered but had been preserved even to the smallest mark in the text. None of it could be altered, all of it must be adhered to.

There is also a powerful warning in Rev 22:18 not to add to or alter what has been given. If what comes to us is not in agreement with what God has already given, then it is not from God. The good news is we have God's perfect and unerring word. We also have the perfect expression of that word Jesus Christ. Because of this we can trust what we have been given. Further, we have a cloud of witnesses that we can turn to as evidence that what we have is the word of God (He 12:1).

With this in mind let us do all we can to help our Muslim friends to have the opportunity to read the Injeel (the gospels) so that they too can know what we know about God's word.

Praying for Muslims

Praying for boldness in witness to Muslims

1. Pray that Christians living in Muslim contexts will not let fear hold them back from sharing the hope that they have. Instead, pray that these witnesses will be compelled to share the hope that they have by the Spirit of God.
2. Pray that witnesses for Christ who are persecuted for their sharing would sense God's presence in their persecution, and that they would be encouraged to continue sharing boldly.
3. Pray that people who witness for Christ to Muslims will not only be bold, but that they will also have wisdom and love. We do not want our boldness to be disparaging or uncaring. Instead, our boldness must be born out of authentic interest in the relationship between God and Muslims.
4. Pray that more Christians would be willing to go and serve in the hard places of the world, especially where very few (if any) Christians currently reside. Pray for God to place this call on the hearts of many, because the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are especially few in some areas.
5. Pray that God would guide believers to wisely put the Scriptures into the hands of Muslims. Whether this is via printed literature, or a Bible app on the phone, pray that Christians wouldn't be ashamed to share the written Word of God in appropriate ways.

Day 06

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, make me to dwell among those who desire above all else your forgiveness. Make me to dwell among those who serve You because they are righteous and obedient. Make me to dwell, because of your compassion, as the one who is Merciful, among those who are your dearly loved ones.

Bible Study – The Entrant

The title this study 'The Entrant' was chosen for a very good reason. Entrant refers to someone who has entered a game or event and in so doing agrees to abide by the rules that are set by those in authority or leadership.

Now it is time to go through the door. Consider Jesus' in Rev 3:20. It says he wishes to enter and sup, or dine, or eat (depending on the translation) with the person inside. This means that whatever the person brings to the table in the way of food, drink, and culture will be accepted by the guest. After all he is a visitor in the house that has been entered. This is the focus of Paul's discussion in 1 Co 9:19-22. Once I enter the world of another person I will abide by their rules and culture as long it does not violate God's law.

Entering is not about following my rules, my preferences in food, beverage, dress codes, or anything else. My focus rather, is doing what is necessary for them to accept me. Going through the door will require a new level of commitment and a willingness to make mistakes and allow them to smile, even laugh, at my awkwardness.

It is never easy to enter someone else's world, even when they are like me. However, it is a true challenge to enter the world of one who is so clearly and obviously different. But this is more than what going through an open door implies. It means for us to have the strength and courage to enter the world of another and to let them judge us. In so doing, we begin to build the bridges needed to open

other doors, doors that will build friendship, trust, and hopefully interest in who we are and why we are willing to be just a friend with no strings attached.

Jesus did this often. He visited the homes of tax collectors, lepers, and common people. He allowed harlots, lepers, and sick people to touch him and in so doing was given permission to touch their lives and tell them the truth.

We have seen the door, sought the door, knocked at the door. Now we must truly enter the door.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Jesus sent to announce coming of Ahmad

Sura 61:6 Jesus, son of Mary, said, 'Children of Israel, I am sent to you by God, confirming the Torah that came before me and bringing good news of a messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad.' Yet when he came to them with clear signs, they said, 'This is obviously sorcery.'

Luke 7:22 So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

How does one validate their ministry? How does one convince others that the words they speak are truly from God? The Bible gives us some very clear points. The first being that the words spoken by a prophet actually happen. Not just occasionally but 100% of the time (Dt 18:21-22). A second is to have a known prophet announce to others that you are indeed a prophet. Jesus made this declaration in relation to John the Baptist (Mt 11:8-10). The third is found in the scripture above, by the miracles and teaching of the one called a prophet. From Moses to Jesus these have always been the tests of a true prophet.

The claim in Islam is that Jesus announced the coming of Mohammed. But we will not find this statement anywhere in the words of Jesus or by any of the authors of the New Testament. What we do hear over and over is that Jesus will return himself. These were the words of the angels to the group of believers who watched Jesus ascend into heaven (Acts 1:10). Jesus himself said that he would return. There is no need for another great prophet. Jesus came to bring God's plan to completion.

So then is Mohammed a prophet?

We are told that God calls people to serve as prophets. Every generation needs those who proclaim his truth, warn the people of sin, and lead them in how to obey God. This is a key aspect of what Mohammed did. Yes, he did call people to follow the one true God and to be obedient. But as we see above he was not sent to bring salvation or fulfill God's plan.

So, what do we need to do or say?

We need to follow Jesus' example when confronted by followers of John the Baptist. They struggled with knowing the truth about who Jesus was. Jesus told them to observe all that was happening, all the miracles and teaching. This is what we need to do for our Muslim friends. They need to see the truth in our lives long before they will be able to hear the truth. They need to see Christ in us. When that happens then they, like John's disciples, will be willing to ask who Jesus is and be able to see the truth, not because of what we say but because of how we live.

Praying for Muslims

Praying for new movements toward Christ.

1. Pray that Christian workers in Muslim contexts would not do anything to hinder the spread of the Gospel, such as imposing foreign culture on local people, or putting themselves into leadership roles.

2. Pray for Muslims who are coming to faith in Christ to immediately begin reproducing more disciples from within their family, friend, and work spheres of influence. Pray that “discipleship reproduction” will become a normative part of the DNA for every believer, and that every new disciple would see they have a part to play in discipling others.
3. Pray that new Christians—as much as it depends on them—will not reject their family and friends or forsake people in their lives who remain Muslim. Instead, pray that communities of Christ-followers will spring up from within existing relationship structures that already have a strong sense mutual support, as new Christians remain faithful members of their circles.
4. Pray that Christians in Muslim contexts will resist the temptation to imitate the Muslim model of military advance, conquest, and conversion. This can be particularly challenging in areas where both large Muslim and Christian populations coexist.

Day 07

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today teach me to avoid the shame of bringing dishonor by preventing me from acts of disobedience. Give me guidance that will lead me away from the whip of Your judgment. Guide in the paths that will not cause You anger, You who are the only desire we could ever seek after.

Bible Study – The plan hidden

Paul often talks about a special secret. He refers to it in different manners - the secret wisdom of God (1 Co 2:7), the mystery of His (God's) will (Ep 1:9), the mystery of the Gospel (Eh 6:19, and other similar phrases. In Colossians 1:26 Paul tells us that this mystery has been kept hidden until it was revealed to the saints. The Gentiles were also included in the revelation of the mystery. This was a key part of why Peter was sent to Cornelius, to reveal to everyone that God's plan of salvation was to be revealed to all nations and peoples.

The truth is that God had been revealing His plan step by step since the day Adam and Eve sinned. He chose a person, Abraham, to continue the process. Then he chose a nation to reveal his nature and love. From that nation, he chose a tribe who would provide a lineage, a physical connection that man could relate to. From that tribe, he chose the family of David and kept it intact until Jesus was born to Joseph and Mary. But it was not until Jesus' death and resurrection that everything he had been telling the prophets and others came together and we could see the plan and its development fulfilled.

There were some, however, who saw with greater clarity what was in God's mind. Some of David's psalms give us vivid images of the plan. Isaiah in chapter 53 paints an incredible image of the person who would bring the plan to life and completion. Simeon saw what the plan would accomplish and John the Baptist stated with clarity

that the lamb of God had come to take away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). Jesus over and over, in different ways, stated that the purpose of his coming was to seek and to save the lost (Lk 19:10).

The plan was never truly hidden. For those whose hearts were attuned to God they saw and gladly received the clues that would finally reveal in complete clarity God's plan to forgive and to save all those who come to him, honestly confessing their sins.

This is the mystery we are called to proclaim. Not in grand words, not in powerful judgment, but in simple honest love. A love for those, who like we once were, stand condemned before God. And so we proclaim the offer of salvation available through the sacrifice made for us by Jesus the Messiah.

Qur'an/Bible Review - No atonement

Sura 10:54 Every soul that has done evil, if it possessed all that is on the earth, would gladly offer it as ransom. When they see the punishment, they will repent in secret, but they will be judged with justice and will not be wronged.

Matt 16:26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Here is a point of agreement. We both agree, at least to some extent, that there is nothing man can gain, or do, that is equal to the value of his soul. It is the most precious thing in all of creation. We have been told this many times by God and we have wondered at this fact. It is a question that was asked by Job (Jo 7:17) and David (Ps 144:3). In the eyes of God, we are of great value. We are the only thing in all of creation that bears his image.

The key difference between what Islam and the word of God teaches regarding this is found in the word atonement. What will it take to atone for, or pay for, the incredible debt that is our sin? In Islam,

there is no payment sufficient, even adequate, for this. There is nothing available, so atonement does not exist. You cannot pay your debt and there is no alternative method of payment for this debt. The only hope is to do enough good so that God will look favorably on you and grant you mercy.

However, we have a different view of this situation. As in Islam we are just as lost, just as condemned. The debt exists and the need to pay this debt is just as true. We clearly understand that there is nothing we can do that will cause God to be merciful. There is nothing in us that looks like anything other than filthy rags, according to Isaiah (Is 64:4).

God has told us we are sinful, but he has also told us that he has provided the means for us to pay our debt and have our sin atoned for. Jesus became the sacrifice that redeemed us and reconciled us. His blood cleansed us (Ep 1:7 et. Al.). This is available to all who believe in the offer of forgiveness (Jn 3:16 et. al.)

A religion of works creates despair, especially when the only hope is based on man's futile attempts to do good. This brings desperation to prayers and in their lives. And they desperately need to see the hope we have because of the atonement made for us by Jesus. They need to see people who serve because they are forgiven and have found joy and hope.

Praying for Muslims - Missionary teams

1. Pray for missionary teams throughout the Muslim world who are focused on seeing church planting movements established. Pray that they would have wisdom as they make plans and that God would guide them as they move forward with different strategies for seeing God's Kingdom established.
2. Pray that God would protect the spiritual, mental and emotional health of missionary teams and individuals. Pray that they

would know when to seek help and that God would be their sustainer in the midst of very stressful and trying circumstances.

3. Pray for the unity of missionary teams as the enemy would seek any avenue for dismantling the work that God has in place. Pray that missionaries would learn to love each other, communicate well with each other and set an example in all they do for Muslims they are ministering to.
4. Pray for new workers to be raised up to move to Muslim countries in order to share the Gospel with those who have never heard.

Day 08

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, strengthen me in my fasting and prayers, guide me in paths that will draw me to you and away from the errors and sins that dwell in the world around me. Give me this my desire, that I will have the strength to fill my thoughts with who You are, You who reveal the right path to all who would stray.

Bible Study – The given promise

What is the value of a promise? Nothing, until the one who made it fulfills it. Nothing, unless we place our faith not in the promise but in the one who made the promise. Nothing, unless it give us hope that we will not forever be trapped where we are in our sin, but that there is something coming, a gift, an action, that will allow us to leave behind where we are and move forward to where we should be.

How much better is the promise given by God! First, because He always does what he says. This we know because God has never failed to keep his word. He has fulfilled his promises over and over. The greatest of these being his promise to provide for our salvation. Second, because the one who makes the promise is faithful. We have this confidence, the word of God never fails, it always accomplishes its purpose, and can never be altered. Third, the promises of God are filled with hope. Hope is one of the three greatest things that Paul lists - faith, hope, and love (1 Co 13:13).

God has given us hundreds of promises. Promises that give us hope in a world that is lost and without hope. Into that darkness came His Son, the promised Messiah, the one who would bring hope and with it the final proof that all God's promises are true.

We are called to be bringers of hope. This is a task we can accomplish because we have received God's promise. He has given His son and we have received him. We now know the heart of the

mystery of God; his son Jesus Christ. It is now our responsibility to help others understand who has made the promise, and why we can have faith in the promise and experience the freedom that comes when we accept the promised one into our lives.

Be the bringer of hope to the Muslims in your life. Be the evidence of God's promise given.

Qur'an/Bible Review -

God punishes and forgives as he pleases

Sura 5:40 Do you [Prophet] not know that control of the heavens and earth belongs solely to God? He punishes whoever He will and forgives whoever He will: God has power over everything.

Rom 2:5-6 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done.

Both Islam and Christianity believe that a day will come when God will judge all mankind. Christians believe this judgment will be true. The standard for judgment will be God himself. Only what is pure and holy will be allowed into his presence. However, Islam teaches that it will be capricious in nature. One may be judged and another forgiven based on how God feels at that moment. There is no clear standard for his judgment and no clear basis for his forgiveness.

What is important in this discussion is to understand how God judges and how he evaluates our actions. This evaluation is based on the presence of Jesus in our lives, what the Holy Spirit has done in our lives and the results of those two relationships. Islam does not have these two relationships to rely on when a person stands before God on the judgment day.

According to Islam each person will stand before God. God will have a set of scales and all their good and bad actions, thoughts, and the like will be placed on the scales. God will look at the scale and then is free to decide how he will judge the person. But it is not based on how good or bad a person is but on what God wants at that moment. The final decision will be arbitrary. Even Mohammed is not guaranteed entry into paradise.

For us who believe in Christ and follow him, our judgment will be very different. All that we have done, good and bad, will be revealed. But at the moment of judgment, one more piece of evidence will be introduced, our relationship to Jesus Christ. As a result of this we will not be judged based on what we have done but on our relationship to God through Christ.

We do not have to come before God in fear and uncertainty but as honored children of the king. Judgment will not be a cause for fear but of joy, knowing that Jesus has prepared a place for us. Our Muslim friends need to learn from us what it means to serve in joy, as people who know the love of God and do not live in fear of death or judgment. While we need to respect God, and honor him, we have the privilege of knowing him as our Father who is preparing a place for us to live with him in eternity.

Praying for Muslims

Local Churches

1. Pray for the local believers and churches that exist in majority Muslim nations. Pray that Christ would allow his presence to be especially known to these few believers as they face loneliness and persecution.
2. Pray that those who are enduring persecution would experience the peace of Christ that passes all understanding. Pray that as a result of persecution, the Gospel would move forward with greater boldness and power.

3. Pray for protection over the gatherings of believers as they meet together. Pray that they would be invisible to the eyes of those who would intend to disrupt them from meeting regularly to worship.
4. Pray for unity among local believers and house churches. Pray against division and strife that might arise as a result of differences. Pray that the Holy Spirit would create a unity that would be powerful to bring about real change in their cities.

Day 09

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, open my eyes to see the orphans, feed those who are hungry, bringing peace and mercy to their lives. Permit me the blessing of the camaraderie of your true servants, You who are the place of refuge for all who desire hope.

Bible Study – The provision

Life is filled with fear and darkness. Life is filled with anger and inescapable pain. Life is filled with desperation and infinite emptiness. Listen to the parties, the frantic pace of life, the things people desire and you will see it. When the party is over, life comes to a halt and the possessions break or pass beyond usefulness, then you can see it in the eyes and actions of all who live without God. As soon as a glimmer of reality begins to appear, to remind them of their futile existence, they start another party, run and run to avoid being caught, filling their lives with another event, another activity, or try to possess some other useless item they think has value and will bring them out of the darkness, anger and pain that is life.

God's key provision is light. Jesus is the light of the world (Jn 8:12) and in him no darkness dwells. God's word is the light that reveals the true path to follow (Ps 119:105). Light provides life (Ps 56:13). But we are scared of this light because it also reveals the truth about who we are. It reveals that darkness we live in, and all that is dark about our thoughts and desires.

But it is this light that came into the world. It is this light that helps us see ourselves as we truly are. It is this revelation that will help us understand how great the gift of God is. To be forgiven means being able to see clearly our state and, in that moment when the light shines on us, the chance to see the one who provides the light.

Once we have seen the light and allowed that light to dwell in us we are called on to be light for the world (Mt 5:14). God's light is to

reside in us and shine out from us to those around us. God wants to use our lives and the presence of Jesus in us to show the world what life looks like without fear, anger, and pain. To reveal to the Muslims that there is light and that that light will lead them to the one true God.

Let us be God's provision to those living in darkness.

Qur'an/Bible Review - God's word unchangeable

Sura 6:34 Other messengers were disbelieved before you, and they bore their rejection and persecution steadfastly until Our aid arrived— no one can alter God's promises. You have already received accounts of those messengers.

Matt 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

One of the teachings that many Muslims receive is that the Jews and early Christians altered the word of God they received. Because of this it was necessary to send another messenger to restore the truth that God sent to man. A key source of this concept, of someone altering the word of God, is that many of the Christians that Mohammed had contact with were members of rejected sects. These groups often used materials they claimed taught truth that the church had rejected as uninspired and false hundreds of years before the time of Mohammed.

Another aspect of this is a lack of understanding of the nature of God. If man could change God's word then is God as powerful as he claims to be? In the same manner, if man changed God's word once then could not man alter the words of the Qur'an as well? These are crucial questions to keep in focus as we talk with our Muslim friends. Many have not seen the above text about how no one can alter God's word. They also have little understanding of how all our translations and documents actually reveal how well God has protected his word.

The Qur'an has very little textual evidence. The actual text was not committed to written form until a hundred years after Mohammed's death. When it was, there were multiple versions with different contents and lithography (forms of writing). To correct this situation of multiple versions and types of documents, one caliph organized a committee to review all existing documents, they selected the ones they believed truly came from Mohammed and then had all variant texts destroyed. After this a group of teachers were trained to teach others the correct accents and ways to read the approved text.

There is more but this is sufficient to cause many questions about whether the Qur'an we have is truly the words given to Mohammed.

Muslims are taught not to question any of this. They are not encouraged to investigate and study the meaning of the Qur'an as an individual. There was a time when this was true for us as well. There was a time when the Bible only existed in Latin and only those trained by the church were allowed to read it and then teach it to the people. This all changed when men like Luther, Calvin, and Tyndale (who was martyred for his work) decided to translate the Bible into the languages of the people.

We have a special privilege that we can share with our Muslim friends. We know God's word because we read God's word. Do they see this in your life? Do they see your commitment to knowing the word of God and applying it as the only guide for your life?

Praying for Muslims

Women

1. Please pray for Muslim women as they struggle with the heavy burdens that are placed on them every day. Pray that they would find healing and hope in Christ.
2. Pray that these women would find true acceptance, love, and dignity in Christ.

3. Pray that they would have opportunities to hear the truth of the Gospel even if they are in a sheltered situation where little opportunity for outlet.
4. Pray that they would find the living water they thirst for in Jesus.

Day 10

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today I cry out to receive a portion of Your mercy. You are merciful beyond my knowing. Lead me clearly to the proofs that will open the way to all-embracing joy and bliss. I seek this from you who are all-loving and the foundation of all that we aspire to and desire.

Bible Study – A Purpose

What is the reason for all that exists? This is a profound question and one that everyone asks at some point in their life. We make it more personal by asking, “why do I exist?”

So why do we exist? We are told that God chose to create us. He chose to bring into existence a universe and then he placed within that universe a creation that would have his image. A creation that would experience the love and relation of its creator.

It did not take long for mankind to ruin that wondrous goal. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and we have repeated that rebellion throughout the history of mankind. Instead of seeking God and developing a relationship with him, we prefer to ignore all that we were created to be and follow our own desires, even when it is destructive to us and to others around us.

God never forgot the purpose of his act of creation. He never lost sight of why we exist and his goal of letting us experience his presence, his love, and more. This meant that he had to respond to man’s disobedience and provide a way to restore that relationship. To bring us back, not to Eden, but to what existed in Eden, the ability to know God’s presence and experience His love without barriers or fear.

It was this that was in God’s mind when he began to reveal his plan. He would use a family to bring the blessing. He would use a nation

to explain the need for the blessing. He would use individuals to express his desire to restore this relation with each person - not just groups, nations, or other structures. His purpose in creation was to have a personal relation with each of us.

And what is more powerful is that we have a purpose in this plan. One righteous person can make a difference in opening the door to God's forgiveness. Jonah preached and Nineveh responded (Jonah 3:1-10). God told Jeremiah that if he could find one honest person he would forgive the city of Jerusalem and spare them from judgment (Je 5:1). In James 5:15 we are told that our prayers make a difference. They open the doors to healing and to forgiveness.

God's plan has a clear purpose and we are part of that plan. We are called on to pray, to work at reconciliation, to proclaim the good news, even to those we think of as our enemies. But at one time, we too were God's enemies (Co 1:21). God didn't let that stop him from carrying out his plan and fulfilling his purpose - our restoration and adoption as his children. This is what we are called to do - show those who are alienated from God the way back to him so that they may be restored.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Those granted entry into garden

Sura 4:122 but We shall admit those who believe and do good deeds into Gardens graced with flowing streams, there to remain forever— a true promise from God. Who speaks more truly than God?

Sura 7:42 But those who believe and do good deeds— and We do not burden any soul with more than it can bear— are the people of the Garden and there they will remain.

Luke 10:20 but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Rev 21:3 Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Both groups believe in a life after death. Both talk about Paradise as the place where all those who are approved by God will spend eternity. After that the differences are significant, from how one is approved in order to be allowed to enter to what they will do once in Paradise.

For the Muslim it is about enjoying bliss in a garden prepared especially for those who Allah chooses. In this garden, will be wondrous food, a beautiful river, and the chance to enjoy everything the person's soul desires. There is also an element of uncertainty. This bliss will last as only long as the heavens and earth endure unless Allah wills otherwise (Sura 11:108)

The Bible tells us something quite different. We are told there will be a new heaven and earth and that all who believe in Jesus will dwell with God in this new heaven for eternity. The focus will not be in all the pleasures we will enjoy but on the privilege of being with God and knowing him as he has always known us (1 Co 3:12). Jesus promised us he was preparing a place for us. We are told of its incredible beauty and wonder. But always the last word is that we will be with God. That we will always be bathed in the light of his presence.

The key question to consider is why a person wants to go to heaven? It is easy to see how with God or Allah could become arbitrary in who is allowed into paradise if the sole purpose of one's good deeds and worship is solely to avoid punishment and to be able to enjoy physical pleasure for eternity. Jesus actually warns about this issue. He states that many will claim to do great things in Jesus' name and will be rejected (Mt 7:22-23).

Repeating over and over for eternity a particular action, or eating a specific food over and over for eternity actually doesn't sound like bliss. It sounds empty and almost like a form of hell. But to explore

the person of God, his nature, his universe, and everything related to God, that sounds like an eternal activity that will truly bring unending joy.

Heaven cannot be earned or bought. Heaven is not about satisfying our desires and wants. Heaven is about being with God. Do we truly understand this and does the joy of this truth about heaven shine through us and make others hunger for God?

The Muslim version of heaven or bliss is so small compared to heaven filled with God. We need to help them raise their sites and see what God truly wants them to receive.

Praying for Muslims

Honor and Shame

1. Pray that Muslims would see that the only one who can truly take away their shame is Jesus.
2. Pray that the interactions believers have would bring honor to their Muslim neighbors and point them to Jesus.
3. Pray that through hospitality believers in Jesus would have open doors to share the truth of the Gospel with their neighbors.
4. Pray that Muslims would begin to understand that the Bible speaks the language of their hearts as they long for honor and avoid shame.

Day 11

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today teach me to depend wholly on You. Teach me the true meaning of success from those whose success has brought them near to You. By Your kindness give me what I seek so that I will reach the goal that all seek to find.

Bible Study – The false thought

The next phrase in Paul's letter is a request that he would proclaim the message clearly.

So what is it that would confuse the message so that people would misunderstand what is being said?

There are several possible ways in which the message can become confused. They all start with one concept, the thoughts of man, or philosophy of truth, and not the words of God. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he explains this. In chapter 1 verses 16 through 21 he mentions several items.

First, he talks about human wisdom or philosophy, our attempt to explain how truth works and its source. We believe we can explain good and bad, reality, and the source of what we know.

Second, he talks about how the wisdom of man tries to exalt the insight of man so he can know what is unknown simply by the power of his mind.

Third, he talks about how all the attempts of man, the intelligence of man, will be frustrated by what cannot be explained and so is treated as foolishness.

If you have studied philosophy to any extent this becomes evident. Every attempt that man makes to explain and gain control of truth is frustrated, not by God but by man himself. Every time a new system of thought about God, truth, reality and so on is developed, it is quickly attacked by others. The flaws are revealed. The limits

are defined and then used to create another system which will again be attacked and exposed.

God has spoken. He tells us over and over that his thoughts are higher than ours and more profound than we can ever hope to comprehend (Is 55:8-9). God does not expect us to understand. What he expects is for us to listen and believe what He, the perfect creator, has planned. We are not to alter the message, nor are we asked to explain it. We are told to communicate His message without embellishment or adaptation. It is not our job to explain it, that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The core of that message is Jesus the Messiah. This is the message we are to communicate to Muslims. It is not the message that is found in the Qur'an. To Muslims the Biblical message is foolish, heretical. It is a message they struggle to hear because of all they have been taught is based on Mohammed's interpretation of truth. We need to be clear like Paul and not to argue from the basis of man's wisdom or man's interpretation. We are to proclaim the Christ.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Jesus not killed

Sura 4:157 and said, 'We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God.' (They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, though it was made to appear like that to them; those that disagreed about him are full of doubt, with no knowledge to follow, only supposition: they certainly did not kill him—)

Matt 28:12-13 When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.'"

Islam is not the first and will not be the last group or religion to deny the resurrection of Jesus. They have the same list of explanations as all the rest:

1. Jesus swooned, woke up and overcame the guard – it is hard to imagine anyone having enough strength after that ordeal to move a massive stone and defeat a roman guard.
2. The disciples stole the body – but these men were hiding in secret places for fear of being caught and killed as followers. It is also hard to imagine that the leaders would not be able to prove this. All they needed to do was produce the body.
3. Someone took Jesus’ place on the cross and God made that person look like Jesus – this is impossible given the nature and character of God. If God truly performed such deception how could we ever trust any of his promises. They would all be built on deception.
4. Jesus survived the cross and others helped him flee - see 1 and 2 above. It just was not possible.
5. Jesus only appeared to die and God took him to heaven before he actually died - that would mean our salvation is of no value. The debt remains unpaid and again God is a liar and deceiver.

Paul declares that if Jesus did not die and rise again then our faith is in vain. Then Paul declares strongly that Christ did indeed die and rise again. There were hundreds who witnessed the death and hundreds who saw the risen Lord. The leaders were helpless to deny the truth. They were unable to attack this truth. In the end, all they could do was attack the people who declared the truth.

Today we are those who must declare this truth. This truth is best proclaimed by how well we follow Jesus and how evident is our faith. Muslims and others who deny the death and resurrection will not hear the answers to the above list of explanations. But they will hear the words of a life lived in this truth.

Praying for Muslims

Sharing the Gospel

1. Pray that believers would focus on sharing about Jesus with Muslims rather than focusing on their differences.
2. Muslims respond well to stories. Pray that believer would take opportunities to tell Bible stories and have the ability to do so in an engaging way.
3. Pray that Muslims would see believers in Jesus live out their faith in practical ways as they meet felt needs around them.
4. Pray that conversations between Muslims and followers of Jesus would be seasoned with salt and full of harmony and the light of the Holy Spirit.

Day 12

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today produce in me the desire to love what is good, and loathe that which is corrupt and causes one to disobey. By Your help save me from the anger and fire that would consume. You are the helper, the one who provides for those who seek help.

Bible Study – Science confused

Another way in which man tries to explain or deny truth is through science. They use science to deny the existence of God. This is ineffective simply because science has nothing to say about the existence or non-existence of a realm that is spiritual. It has no monitors, gauges, or chemical analysis that can do this.

It is true that we can use science to verify the information we have in our religious texts. We can verify the physical context, the history and geography of places and events and so on. Science can guide us in exploring the veracity or accuracy of what God has given us. This gives us confidence because the historical and physical information we have can be tested. It also gives us a foundation to help us understand the various ways God communicates and this develops trust in what He says to us; not just through one person, one event, or one situation, but a multitude of these.

But those cannot take us to the next step. They cannot prove or disprove matters of faith.

Science cannot prove that God is truth, that God is love, that God is forgiving or any other attribute of God. These are matters of faith and relationship. These are things that we must be sure are communicated clearly. God is about righteousness, holiness, and redemption (1 Co 1:30).

Here is the context. God has spoken many times, to many people, and in many ways. Science allows us to compare and evaluate that

information. After that it becomes a matter of interpretation and faith. The incredible wonder is the unity of God's message that cannot be explained by science. Science cannot manipulate events, people, and how we respond. That is a matter of faith.

The fact is that often we have it all backwards. We think God needs science to reveal his nature to us. The truth is that science needs God for its very existence. It is God who defines what science is and not science defining God. In Co 1:17 we are told that the universe is held together by Christ. Science needs God, not God needs science.

If we are not careful science will limit us to only what we can see and test. But, the message of God is about what cannot be seen or tested. And every one of us is called to seek and to know God. Science cannot explain the cross but Jesus told us that through the cross all would know him and who sent him (Jn 8:28).

As we talk with our Muslim friends it is not our job to scientifically explain God, the cross, and the resurrection. There is no science that can do this. Our task is to reveal God and his word through our lives and how they reflect the truth God has given us. The better we do this the clearer the message will be.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Jesus not God

Sura 4:171-2 People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion, and do not say anything about God except the truth: the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was nothing more than a messenger of God, His word, directed to Mary, a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not speak of a 'Trinity'— stop [this], that is better for you— God is only one God, He is far above having a son, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him and He is the best one to trust. 172The Messiah would never disdain to be a servant of God, nor would the angels who are close to Him.

He will gather before Him all those who disdain His worship and are arrogant:

Sura 23:91 God has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him— if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May God be exalted above what they describe!

Matt 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Mark 5:7 "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

It is blasphemy in Islam to claim that any one is equal to God. This would insinuate that there is more than one God. The idea that God can exist as three in one is not accepted. Instead they thought that Christians taught that Mary and Jesus were considered gods equal with God. Mohammed emphasized over and over that there is only one God and those that "ascribe partners to God" or follow other gods are to be condemned. Yet in the passages above we have Peter declaring this and Jesus allowing this, and demons declaring Jesus to be God. In both cases Jesus accepted their statements as truth.

At one level we are in agreement with what Muslims believe. There is no other God. All others are false. And they are false at many levels, they are demons attempting to trick us into serving someone other than God, they are false creations of mankind used to explain things they cannot, or they are chosen by man to replace the true God so that man will have control.

The text from the Qur'an above does contain some truth. Mary was only a woman chosen by God to bring Jesus into the world, to walk among us, and to be visible at a certain level. She was not a god, and Jesus, likewise, is not a god in the sense that he exists apart from God and seeks people to hear only him, serve only him, and deny God. He is one with God.

We truly believe that there is only one God, and that he is triune in nature, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a concept even we have difficulty in explaining, but we are talking about God, a being that cannot be explained at any level. We cannot begin to understand God or his true existence.

That is the point where we must focus. Keep God in the center and let him reveal himself to others through us. We bring God down when we assume we can explain his nature to others. It is better to focus on his oneness and let God work through us to help them see beyond what they have been taught.

Praying for Muslims

Ministers to Muslims

1. Please pray for the Holy Spirit's protection over those ministering to Muslims as they enter this time of Ramadan.
2. Please pray that their eyes would be open and they would be available to the ways the Spirit is moving around them.
3. Please pray that the Lord would provide His words and presence in the conversations they have with those who are observing Ramadan this year.
4. Please pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power in their lives during this time.

Day 13

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today teach me the beauty that is chastity and the honor it provides as a cover. From these come contentment and faithfulness, garments that You can use to help me follow justice and fairness. I desire that today You would keep me free of all that causes fear, Your presence is my protection for you are the defender and shield of all the terrified.

Bible Study – the fanatic

When we talk about religion and truth we are not really letting the message be clear. We talk about religion as if it came from a supreme being. In reality, religion is about the structures man creates to control or gain access to God. Paul talks about the Jews requiring signs; the Greeks want wisdom; and everyone wanting to appear as if they are in control (1 Co 1:22-23).

Each of these represents a concept of religion.

The Jews had religious history to build their concept of religion. They were the chosen people, a religion by birth. If you were not born a Jew, then the road to being accepted was harsh and demanding. The Jews had the temple, the symbol of their religion. They had the sacrificial system, the path to God. They had the prophets, the voice of God.

The Greeks had their gods and philosophy. They used one to try to explain the other. Their world was based on fate - controlled by the gods. What the gods decided was what happened. You could not avoid your fate. To deal with this they sought to explain their problems and somehow gain control of their world. Greek tragedy is based on the inescapable reality that we have no control and religion is about somehow avoiding the wrath of the gods (at worst), and gaining their favor (at best). The problem with their religion

was that the gods themselves were jealous, capricious, and ready to attack each other and their followers.

The Romans worshipped the state. Fidelity to the emperor, to Rome, to the empire was everything. The state became their religion and it provided great rewards to those who served faithfully, and incredible pain and loss to those who failed.

The key in each of these was to be a fanatic. To do everything possible to convince others of one's absolute loyalty. For the Jews, this was an almost maniacal commitment to possessing the land as proof that they were the chosen people. For the Greek, it was a readiness to explore every avenue of thought, worship every god, in an attempt to evade one's fate. For the Roman, absolute loyalty to the state and the complete destruction of one's enemies were the banner of a fanatic.

But are we not called to be fanatics as well? Yes and no. Yes, by our absolute faith and trust in God in response to what he has done not because of anything we do or have done. Religious and political fanatics will sacrifice everything to gain control of their future. However, God has sacrificed his son to provide a future for those who trust him.

Our focus is to help others see that the truth is not about a religion we create to gain God but in what God has done to gain us. What will it take for us to reveal this to our Muslim friends?

Qur'an/Bible Review - Jesus is God

Sura 5:72 Those who say, 'God is the Messiah, son of Mary,' have defied God. The Messiah himself said, 'Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord.' If anyone associates others with God, God will forbid him from the Garden, and Hell will be his home. No one will help such evildoers.

Sura 5:116 When God says, ‘Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to people, “Take me and my mother as two gods alongside God”?’ he will say, ‘May You be exalted! I would never say what I had no right to say— if I had said such a thing You would have known it: You know all that is within me, though I do not know what is within You, You alone have full knowledge of things unseen—

John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.”

John 14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Here we have highlighted the issue. Mohammed states that God questioned Jesus about his claim to be God. In the Qur'an Mohammed tells us that Jesus denied ever saying this. Further, anyone who believes this is to be forbidden entrance into the garden.

Yet, Jesus made many statements about being God and being one with God. Above are two examples of such statements. One is a clear statement I and the father are one or equal. I am God, He is God, and we are one. When talking to Philip he takes this another step; seeing me is the same as seeing God. Not in the sense that you see God's physical nature but in the sense that you see all that God is in relation to his character, being, and activity. I am the visible expression of his love, his mercy, his provision for forgiveness, as well as the visible evidence of his justice, his righteousness, and his holiness. All that you see in me is who God is.

Jesus also states that his words are God's word (Jn 8:28), his actions are God's actions (Jn 10:37), and I am in him and he is in me (Jn 10:38). These are only a few examples of what Jesus had to say about his status as equal with God. The Jewish leaders knew exactly what he meant when he made these statements and on several occasions sought to stone him for claiming to be God. And it was Jesus' claim to having equal authority and position with God that was used by the Sanhedrin to sentence him to death (Lk 22:69).

In contrast to all of this Mohammed never made any such claims. He only claimed to be a messenger. Now who would you rather listen to, the messenger or the one sending the message? This is what we are hoping that we will be able to share. The fact that the gospel we have was given to us, not by a messenger, but God himself. God's love was so great he came down to us to deliver it face to face.

Praying for Muslims

understanding of God

1. Please pray for those who are observing Ramadan this year to have a heart that is softened and truly open to seeing God.
2. Many of those who observe Ramadan are sincerely seeking to please God. Please pray that during this time, they would understand the true nature of our God.
3. Pray for those who are fasting for Ramadan out of a sense of duty. Pray that they would truly long for more meaning and truth in their lives.
4. Pray that Christ would reveal himself in a variety of ways to the sincere seeker of Truth.

Day 14

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today I seek to be cleansed from all that soils and spoils. I desire to learn the meaning of patience that I may understand all that has been decreed for my life. Teach me the meaning of sincerity and how to gain its benefits and the blessings of dwelling with those who are good. Allow me your help, you who are cherished by those who are in need.

Bible Study - System

The last way that man confuses the message is by creating legal systems, although, all of the previous systems contain in them a system of rules and regulations as well. Every group of people has systems. They are found in philosophy, science, and religion. Even those who are atheists have a set of rules that control their lack of belief. They use them to convince themselves that they don't believe and also to create unbelief in others.

Paul counters this by saying God chose the weak things, the lowly things, even the despised things to shame those who think they are strong and wise and so boast of what they can accomplish in order to save themselves (1 Co 1:27).

The Pharisees and Sadducees created such systems and invested their lives and resources in protecting their rules. They attacked any who would not accept their rules and despised all who dared to challenge their way of life, even Jesus.

These systems of laws and regulations are necessary, for without them philosophy, science, and religion fail and collapse on themselves. They have many names, 'golden path,' 'enlightened meditation,' 'programming,' and on the list goes of plans, systems, and methodologies all designed to allow man to prove he is worthy and so earn paradise, union with the transcendent, or even the right to create one's own world. This is about having the right to be

boastful and exalted. It is the first sin and will be the last sin - placing man and his rights before God and his purpose. Isaiah places this in proper perspective in chapter 29:16. "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "He did not make me"? Can the pot say of the potter, "He knows nothing?"

Yet God cares for us. He has prepared a way, the only way back to him. It is perfect and requires only one action on our part. Trust God.

Our task is clear; help those trapped in legal systems like Islam to see God. We are called to make the message clear. There is only one name that can save them. It is not about what we do to make ourselves acceptable. It is what God has done so that we can be transformed.

There is only one message, Jesus Christ, born, crucified, and risen. The response is simple: confess Jesus as Lord and that He is the only way to forgiveness and restoration.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Messenger

Sura 19:64 [Gabriel said], 'We only descend [with revelation] at your Lord's command— everything before us, everything behind us, everything in between, all belongs to Him— your Lord is never forgetful.

Sura 26:192-5 Truly, this Qur'an has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds: The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down to your heart [Prophet], so that you could bring warning in a clear Arabic tongue.

Deut 34:10 Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,

Isa 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Mohammed never claims to speak to Allah directly. He does claim to have directly received a word from Allah, but to do so he needed

Gabriel to read the tablets containing God's word. There are many stories about when Mohammed received these messages, the manner in which they were received, and how they were communicated by Mohammed. But never is it stated that he heard Allah speak.

In contrast in the Bible we see that God spoke directly to key people. Moses spent 40 days on the mountain as God gave him the law, directions for the construction of the tabernacle, and guidance for the people. Elijah heard the still small voice of God speak to him on the mountain (1 Ki 19:13). Isaiah heard God's call for one to go in his name. Jeremiah heard God speak and explain the work he was to do. God spoke to Solomon in answer to his prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Ch 7:2ff).

These are just a few who stated that they heard the actual voice of God, not an angel, or messenger. There are also instances of those who received messages from an angel sent from God - Samson's parents, Daniel, Mary, and others. In each of these, they received a specific message sent by God. Hebrews tell us that God spoke through the prophets and now speaks to us through His Son directly (He 1:1-2). And as we have noted in the previous study, Jesus tells us that, in fact, it is God speaking for he is God.

Praying for Muslims

Dreams and Visions

1. God often uses dreams and visions to reach Muslims because they are especially attuned to them. Sometimes someone has had a dream or a vision in the past, but no one has been able to explain its meaning to them. Please pray that they would come across a believer who would be able to explain the significance of their dream or vision.
2. Please pray that during this time of Ramadan, dreams and visions would be abundant and powerful.

3. Pray that God would give his people special wisdom to be able to interpret the dreams that Muslims are having.
4. Please pray for Christ to make himself known through visions.

Day 15

Taraweeh

ALLAH, you who are merciful, do not chastise me for errors, create in me knowledge that will decrease the number of my faults. Do not cause me to be the target for hardships and struggles, You who are the one all Muslims esteem.

Bible Study - Bridging

Paul now focuses on how we are to carry out our task. The initial focus has been on understanding what and where. Now he talks about relations. “Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders (vs 5).”

To start with we need to learn what it means to be a bridge and not a barrier. Many of us do not realize what this means. Paul was very clear when he stated that there is neither Jew nor Greek, employee or employer, male or female. All are one in Christ (Ga 3:28). Further he makes similar statements in many of his letters. Then to make the point very clear he reminds us that all of us were once God’s enemies until he reconciled us (Ro 5:10). He bridged the barrier that existed.

We must stop and consider why we don’t listen to people, why we don’t have time for their concerns and burdens, why we are so focused on ourselves that we are, in fact, creating a barrier so that others cannot see or hear God. We are in the way.

God used a unique vision of a sheet filled with forbidden food to get Peter’s attention and help him be willing to enter the house of a Gentile. This was unheard of and forbidden for any true Jew (Acts 10). Then God took it one step further and blessed the outcasts, by sending his Holy Spirit to them just like he had done for the Jews.

Jesus took time to speak to the unclean (Lepers), the rejected (demon possessed), and adulteresses, and the outcast (a Samaritan

woman). These actions bridged the way for them to hear and be healed, not of their physical condition but of their separation from God, a separation that was being enforced by the attitudes and behavior of the people around them. These people who were just as filthy in their sin, just as far from God, as any of those listed above, because of their attitude.

So, who do you treat as an enemy? Not by what you do but by what you don't do. How do you treat those who are Muslims, Hindus, or atheist? Do you love them? Will you let them walk through your life so they can reach God? Are you a bridge or a barrier?

Qur'an/Bible Review Christians to be respected if

Sura 5:82-83 you are sure to find that the closest in affection towards the believers are those who say, 'We are Christians,' for there are among them people devoted to learning and ascetics. These people are not given to arrogance, and when they listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears because they recognize the Truth [in it]. They say, 'Our Lord, we believe, so count us amongst the witnesses.

Matt 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible

2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves.

In the early teaching, Christians were to be honored and left in peace. Those that truly followed the teachings of Jesus in the Injeel were allowed to continue in their faith without interference. Slowly this changed. They were allowed to practice their faith only if they were willing to listen to the Messenger, Mohammed. In time this changed again and they were only allowed this privilege by paying a substantial fee.

The issue, of course, was whether Mohammed was, in fact, a true messenger of God or one of the false prophets that Jesus warned about. People who try to fool even the true Christian. They came with impressive words and deeds, and ominous warnings about what would happen if the people would not accept them as God's final or true messenger.

There have been numerous examples of these messengers, false prophets, and false messiahs over the years, both in Islam and Christianity. Islam has seen the Bahá'u'lláh who founded the Baha'i religion, and Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who founded the Amadiyyan faith. Christianity has seen Sung Myong Moon who founded the Unification Church as well as many others.

Every group seems to have someone claiming to be the greatest prophet, leader, or, as in Christianity, the messiah - the son of God or their reincarnation. Usually those who follow these persons are so convinced of their claim that it is difficult to persuade them that the person is false and lying.

We have been warned about their coming. We have been warned that they will deceive even those who are true believers if we are not alert. They are the enemies of the truth and we must be wary of how we respond to them. They will easily twist our words, misrepresent our responses, and mistrust us. Only love blended with truth lived out before them every day will be able to break down the barriers that exist.

They are looking for an answer. They are looking for the truth. Will we be so filled with God's truth that they will be able to see it and let it reveal the lie that they are following?

Praying for Muslims

Word of God

1. Please pray that the Word of God would be more readily available in the Muslim world.

2. Please pray for those who are working on distributing Scripture—pray for safety and wisdom for the most effective way to share the Word of God.
3. Pray that other mediums of sharing Scripture (i.e. video, radio, internet) would also be easily accessible to those who do not have the written Word of God.
4. Pray for understanding through the power of the Holy Spirit as Muslims read Scripture. May it penetrate their hearts in a way that the Qur'an does not.

Day 16

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today guide me in the way of humility, make my heart to swell, not in pride but with the cries of true repentance. Grant this petition for You are the refuge of the fearful, those who seek You.

Bible Study – The Intercession

Being a bridge is important but it does not guarantee those who need to pass through your life will be aware of, or much less see you as the bridge. If they do see you as a bridge they may fear you or think it is a trap. They may not understand what they see. Or they may be confused because those around you create confusion and doubt about what they are seeing in your life.

To avoid this, we will need to be involved in intercession. This is something Paul urged Timothy to commit himself to (1 Ti 2:1). What is interesting is that we are to intercede for people long before they are aware of what we are doing. We are to include everyone, even kings and those in authority, people we may never have contact with. We may never have the opportunity to speak with them, but they will need others to be signs, that guide them towards the bridges. We must intercede for those people around them who will have direct contact.

Intercession is about preparing the road and the signals needed to show people which way to go. It is not enough to be a bridge, we also need to guide them to the bridge. We must pray that we will be the best sign with clear directions as to where to go and how to get there. We need to pray that all of us will do the same. The purpose being that they will find God, be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth (vs 4).

I have seen road signs that cause more confusion than clarity. Signs so badly damaged or altered that the directions are incomprehensible. Intercession is about becoming a sign that

clearly leads to the bridge. Intercession is about helping others become like-minded, and Christ-like so that all of the signs point the same way. It is not enough for one of us to be a bridge or a sign. We need to work together so that all of us can provide one or the other.

Intercession is about building awareness of how all of us affect the process of someone seeing the way because of what they see in us as the family of God. It is a sad reality that many people get a glimpse of the truth because of one person but choose not to believe because of the behavior of others. We need to intercede so that we will be changed and that our lives will influence others to join us in guiding the lost to the correct path.

Are we working together to reach the Muslim? Are we truly a fellowship of joy that will create in them a desire to seek out what we have found?

Qur'an/Bible Review - God creates for hell

Sura 7:179 We have created many jinn and people who are destined for Hell, with hearts they do not use for comprehension, eyes they do not use for sight, ears they do not use for hearing. They are like cattle, no, even further astray: these are the ones who are entirely heedless.

Isa 43:7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Eph 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Is there anyone beyond hope of saving? If you take the passage in the Qur'an literally then the answer is yes. God actually created jinn (evil spirits) and people whose destiny is to go to hell. They are something worse than cattle who are to be herded to destruction.

That is in stark contrast to what the Bible tells us. We are created for the glory of God, created to do good, and created in God's image

(Ge 1:27). With that kind of value, that kind of investment, then God's desire to restore us is understandable. We were not created with the intent to be destroyed, that would be a malicious thing to do. That would not be the behavior of the God I would like to serve, knowing that I might be one of those created for the purpose of inhabiting hell.

In fact, nowhere in the bible is it even remotely suggested that God created anything for the purpose of providing residents for hell. Even more important, it is beyond the character of God to tempt anyone and cause them to be judged and sent to hell (Ja 1:13).

Our Muslim friends live in fear because they don't know how Allah will respond when they stand before him. They don't know if, in fact, their fate has always been to fail and be condemned. What a contrast to the hope we have. Yes, we wonder, as did David and Job (Job 7:7; Ps 8:4), as to why God would pay any attention to us. Not because we are worthless, but because of the horrible way we have distorted what he created us to be.

But, the truth is, we are fearfully and wonderfully made and God knows everything there is to know about us (Ps 139). We hold a special place in his thoughts and because of this we have hope. Let us pray that we can be the wonderful creation God intended us to be so they will find hope as well.

Praying for Muslims

Fotizo

1. We praise Him for the teams that have visited, they have been a source of encouragement. One of those teams came from Latin America and it was encouraging to see the steps they are taking to send their own to minister in Fotizo.
2. We praise Him for continuing to lead each one of us as we minister to those the Lord has put in our paths. We are encouraged to hear from each other how God is moving in the lives of those we are ministering to.

3. -Pray for a key vote in one of the countries. This vote will have big implications on the future of the country and the ministry of believers, likely in some ways we can't foresee right now. Please pray for peace in this process and that whatever happens that God would continue to draw people unto Him despite the uncertainty that they face.
4. Pray for local believers as they gather to worship. May they experience His hope and peace in the land. Pray for boldness and sensitivity to share the truth of Easter with unbelievers.
5. -Pray for those who will hear the gospel this month, may hearts and minds be open and the truth received. Pray that scriptures and Bibles would penetrate hard hearts and the truth of Jesus be illuminated to those reading them.
6. -Pray for the growth and maturation of God's Church. Any new believer in this society experiences a large amount of animosity from people close to them, and often hardships with work and (consequently) finances. This can be a daily reality for many, keeping them in uncertainty about how they will provide for themselves and their loved ones.

Day 17

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today make me likeminded with that which is the good, teach me to not make agreements with what is evil, guide in the good, by your wondrous mercy, until I reach your dwelling eternal, by your sovereignty, O mighty one of the creation.

Bible Study - Neighbor

The classic story of who is a neighbor is found in the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:33-36). A man, an outcast, one even considered my enemy, sees me and my trouble. He sees me, the person, not a particular race, color, or culture. He just sees me and my immediate need. This ability to see allows him to act.

The true neighbor does not see color, does not see culture, does not see enemies, he sees the person and the need.

What does this mean? It means sacrifice. Here are the questions that help evaluate what this means.

How much time can I risk to help this person?

How willing am I to put my health at risk?

How much criticism will I be able to tolerate?

How much will it cost me to help someone my friends and family dislike, even hate?

The way to measure how far we need to go is in the second greatest command. I will love them until they believe I am treating them the way I treat myself.

So how do I treat myself? I trust myself with my most valuable possessions. I provide for my most important needs. I treat myself with respect. I give myself the best that I have. I listen intently to

everything I have to say. I always have time for what I want to do and the people that are important to me.

How do you treat a person who you are afraid of or who makes you nervous? What if you became a neighbor to them? All too often we treat Muslims and people of other faiths the same way as the priest and Levite treated the injured man. It is little wonder they don't believe what we tell them about Jesus.

Until we become a neighbor they will always be skeptical and distant. Be a good neighbor.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Charitable giving

Sura 9:60 Alms are meant only for the poor, the needy, those who administer them, those whose hearts need winning over, to free slaves and help those in debt, for God's cause, and for travelers in need. This is ordained by God; God is all knowing and wise.

Matt 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Matt 6:3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

In many ways, the two teachings on giving are very similar. There is to be an awareness of those in need, what their need is, and an appropriate response to that need. Also, we are both encouraged to give to the work of God. The principles are very similar. But it does not take long to see the differences.

Giving in Islam has some very clear guidelines and definitions of how to give and when to give. The minimums are clearly defined. It is called the zakat and represents a percentage of what is left after caring for all of one's expenses, food, housing, and so on. This doesn't mean you can't do more. But clearly, giving is encouraged and generosity is honored.

God has a totally different teaching for us. Yes, we do have the tithe. The difference is the tithe is to be given before we start caring for our expenses. This is to be an act of faith and dependence on God. But that is only the first step. Next comes giving out of thanks for all God has done. This is beyond the tithe. Finally, there is giving that is sacrificial. Giving that sees beyond my needs to the needs of others. Giving that takes me from dependence on myself to dependence on God. This is what the young ruler was challenged to do (Lu 18:18-23).

And then there is the tally sheet. Giving in Islam has a very clear formula that is used to determine what you have that will be used to decide how much to give. It is almost like filling out a tax form – enter the numbers to fill out the form, then hit ENTER and out comes the amount to give.

God has no interest in this type of giving. We are to give freely, joyfully, and secretly. We give, not to be seen, but to care like God cares. God gives every day, rain, light, and more, to the saved and the unsaved. He does not have a list of people qualified to receive these things. He has no form to fill out to decide how much he should give. He just gives because there is need and everyone benefits.

This is how we need to live. Others need to see a lifestyle of giving, not a calculator that evaluates the need based on set criteria. They need us to give because God has given.

Praying for Muslims

Spiritual Awareness

During the time of Ramadan many non-devout Muslims in the Islamic world have a time of heightened spiritual awareness.

1. Pray that during this time of spiritual awareness God would reveal himself to them in a powerful way.

2. Pray that while seeking to honor the god of Islam they would instead have an encounter with Jesus the Redeemer.
3. Pray that those fasting would realize the futility of fasting to outweigh their sinfulness.
4. Pray that, while fasting, God would make them aware of the weight of sin and the impossible chasm it forms between humanity and God.

Day 18

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, direct me towards actions that are blameless, satisfy my desires and hopes, You who needs not enlightenment or examinations, You who understands the hearts of all peoples. Bring honor to Mohammed and his family, the uncontaminated.

Bible Study – Befriender

What is a friend? Pause and consider what this could mean.

There are a multitude of definitions available for us to choose from. But I am not interested in all the nice thoughts and pretty cards. I am interested in the impact a friend has. How a friend makes the ordinary seem exceptional? How a friend makes the impossible possible? How a friend turns fear into fearless?

The truth is that as you become more acquainted with a person who doesn't believe, especially a Muslim, all that is impossible begins to surround them. It is impossible to believe, it is impossible to risk losing family. They are afraid of what could and often does happen to them if family and friends even think they are listening to you.

Our ability to act wisely, truly becomes critical and that is when we need to be all that a friend is. A friend is the one who chooses to stay when danger and trouble come. Friends never give up.

Imagine with me what happened in the story of the friends who tore up a roof so their crippled brother could meet Jesus. Can you imagine what people said to them? First, outside the house as they tried to enter by the door and were pushed away. Then as they created an incredible mess of their neighbor's house. Imagine the anger, disgust, even abuse they received for being willing to do anything so their friend could possibly be healed.

They believed. No matter what anyone said, did, or threatened to do. They believed. We don't even know what kind of faith their sick

friend had. But we are told Jesus saw their faith and was moved to respond. Then came the true test of their friendship. Jesus proclaimed forgiveness for the man. He didn't go immediately to healing him.

I wish I knew how they reacted. Were they so focused on physical healing that they, like all the others criticized Jesus? Or were they true friends who desired something greater which was the chance to be in God's presence and hear those powerful words, "I forgive you."

A true friend knows what is most important and stays on track until the true answer is received. They know what really is needed is forgiveness and will do whatever is necessary for that to happen. They know that many will not approve of what they are doing and maybe even attack them.

It is the price of being a true friend. It is what it will take to be a befriender of a Muslim.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Virgin birth

Sura 19:20-21 She said, 'How can I have a son when no man has touched me? I have not been unchaste,' 21 and he said, 'This is what your Lord said: "It is easy for Me— We shall make him a sign to all people, a blessing from Us."'

Sura 21:91 Remember the one who guarded her chastity. We breathed into her from Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign for all people.

Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Matt 1:23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

We both agree that Mary was a virgin, that God's Holy Spirit created in her a new life. God moved and she became pregnant. The birth of Jesus was clearly an act of God. At the same time it did not elevate Mary to a new level of reality as another god or demi-god. She was a human being used in a unique way by God so that the Messiah could be born.

Yet many Muslims believe that we teach that God slept with Mary and impregnated her. This is surprising to us because nowhere in the Bible is this taught. But if we look beyond the bible for such teaching we will not have to look far to encounter this concept; the gods of Roman and Greek mythology slept with humans and produced unique offspring, who had god-like powers. This idea is a key part of many religions and animistic beliefs. This often resulting in unique beings with god-like powers (Hercules – Son of Zeus and a human mother, centaurs, and fawns).

The truth that we have is nothing like this. God created human beings, something quite possible for him. He created Adam and Eve from dust. He moved and childless women, like Sara, Hanna, and Elizabeth gave birth to children even when they were physically far beyond the time of childbearing. And, He placed his Son inside of Mary.

This is an easy error to correct. When this conversation comes up just show them the description of Mary's conception and birth as recorded in the New Testament. The next step, however, will not be as simple, but as we earn their trust we can begin to look at the purpose for this miraculous birth. It is found in the Scripture listed above in the name he was to receive, Emmanuel, which means God with us.

Jesus is unique. There is no other record of any messenger born of a virgin, no other messenger who would have this role, to be God among us. Jesus was not just another messenger. His birth was to be a sign that God was coming as promised. He is all powerful and can do anything he chooses to do. God has come to earth, he has walked among us, and he took the form of a man. The virgin birth

is the sign and can be a starting point in talking with our Muslims friends.

Praying for Muslims

The Family

1. Pray for Muslim families to come to faith together.
2. Pray that God would be working in the hearts of entire families.
3. Pray that, like the Philippian jailor and his family, entire households would come to faith in Christ together.
4. Pray that these families would hold fast to one another and would endure the difficulties of living out their Christian faith in an Islamic context.

Day 19

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, train me to prefer over all that which is virtuous, and to revile dishonesty and defiance, restrain from rage and the fire (of the Inferno), through Your support, O great one who supplies all who seek your aid.

Bible Study – Opportunity Knocking

Col 4:5 make the most of every opportunity

How many short phrases do you know about opportunity?

- Opportunity only knocks once
- Opportunities come but do not linger
- Opportunity never knocks
- One opportunity leads directly to another
- Problems are only opportunities with thorns on them

And there are many more. An interesting factor in each of these is the ability to perceive that opportunity exists. Opportunity is not about what is happening or not happening. It is more about our willingness to believe in what could happen if we respond.

‘Opportunity only knocks once’ is about being sure we are paying attention to what is happening around us so that we will be prepared to identify it and respond to it. Opportunity can be a fleeting thing. A missed opportunity usually does not come back.

‘It never lingers’ is so true. The open doors come and go rapidly. If we don’t respond, if we are unable to respond, if we are unprepared to respond then the opportunity will be lost. If you missed the sunrise you cannot reverse time to see how it passed. Another sunrise will come but it will not be the same. The nature of the opportunity available now will not come again. Something always changes.

‘It never knocks’ is the reality. This is about being aware, close enough to what is happening so that it is unnecessary for others to announce to us that the door is open or that they are interested. Do we listen and watch with the intention of seeing and hearing opportunity?

‘One thing leads to another’ is a valuable lesson to be learned. However, it goes both ways. If we don’t respond, then a situation can move in a negative direction. We don’t just lose the first opportunity but help to build barriers to further access and make it more difficult to respond and be believed. But, if we respond in a timely and positive manner, this often provides further opportunities. Laying the first foundational block in a building correctly makes the rest of the work easier and better.

‘Problems are only opportunities with thorns on them’ contains a critical truth. Opening the way to those who fear us and who we fear may look problematic. But it is often in the face of trial and struggle that true connections are made. How many inventions exist because someone overcame an obstacle? How many doors will open if we overcome the barriers and see the opportunity hidden behind the barrier?

The first step in making use of every opportunity in reaching out to Muslims is being aware of their presence, listening so when the door opens we are ready, and being wise in making the most of every opportunity (Ep 5:14).

Qur’an/Bible Review - Jesus sinless

Sura 19:19 but he said, ‘I am but a Messenger from your Lord, [come] to announce to you the gift of a pure son.’

2 Cor 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

It is interesting to note that Muslims consider Jesus to be pure and without sin. He is the only person that both faiths consider to be without sin. While many were declared righteous and walked with God, none of the great prophets and leaders of the Bible are declared sinless. Even Mohammed the messenger of Islam is not considered sinless. Sura 80, titled He Frowned, is a story about how Allah rebuked Mohammed for mistreating a poor Muslim man. He ignored him so that he could try to convert nonbelievers.

The story itself shows the contrast between the attitude of the Messiah and Mohammed. Jesus always had time for everyone. When two blind men started shouting to get Jesus' attention, the people tried to quiet them, they didn't want the two beggars to bother Jesus. But Jesus stopped what he was doing to meet their needs (Mt 20:30-34). This happens over and over in the gospels. A woman touches Jesus' robe hoping to be healed; a group of friends tear a hole in a roof to reach Jesus; the children come to Jesus, and on the list could go.

Jesus' perfection did not keep him from ignoring anyone. His message was about reaching everyone and excluding no one. If you chose not to listen you became your own judge. Even when Jesus' key focus was the people of Israel, he still had time for a Samaritan woman, a Roman officer, a Phoenician woman, and on the list goes. He could not physically go to the whole world, there was not enough time, but when the world came to him he always had time.

The importance of this is highlighted and further revealed by the fact that Jesus was perfect and holy, yet this truth did not limit his activity. He did not just go to the temple and avoid contact with sin, as if such contact would somehow stain him. It was the opposite; he went into the world knowing that his presence could bring cleansing to those he touched.

We do not have just a messenger bringing us the truth, a messenger who sins and can make mistakes maybe even in the message he communicates. We have the Son of God, perfect in every way. One who was tempted and never failed, who lived among us and was never stained by our contact. One who can truly forgive us and stand before God as our advocate. One who can present us as acceptable because of his sacrifice.

This is Jesus the Messiah. Our perfect advocate. Our perfect sacrifice. The one, not just another one with a message, but the only way to God.

Praying for Muslims

Social groups

1. Pray for existing groups to encounter Christ together.
2. Pray that, instead of individuals being ostracized from their social circles because of their faith, groups would encounter Christ and believe together.
3. Pray for a tight bond of unity among groups of believers that they may cling to each other and to their faith in Christ during hardships.
4. Pray that these groups would in turn reach other groups with the Gospel of Christ.

Day 20

Taraweeh

ALLAH, Today, increase the benefits of this day, and facilitate the journey to gain its gifts, do not restrict me from receiving from this day all its benefits, O God, overseer of the way to pure truth.

Bible Study – Answering

Doors go both ways. You need to be watching for any opportunity to go through an open door. What will you say to someone on the other side of the door. Are you prepared to respond if people are surprised, shocked, dismayed, or afraid. Are you prepared to deal with their response to you?

Gal 6:10 states “therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Making the most of an opportunity is being ready to do what is good. Actually, it is making sure we are prepared and understand, not just to do good, but to do what is good in each situation. We learn this by first learning how to treat each other. If we don’t know how to care for each other, to do good to our own family, how can we expect to do good to strangers or those we perceive as enemies?

Jesus made an interesting point when talking about opportunities, especially those that appear negative in Mt 5:38-48. He starts with changing the eye for an eye concept. If a person seeks to hurt you, let it go; and be prepared for it to happen again. In other words, don’t avoid the danger. It is our willingness to not run that often provides a more effective answer than our words.

Then he gives a series of examples:

1. If the person wants your coat give him your shirt as well. Really, what is more important, your property, which won’t last, or opening the door and responding in love?

2. If the person needs your help for a mile then go two miles. Answering the small simple request is not enough. Giving a minimum of our time will never make a real difference. Are we prepared to truly become involved in their life?
3. If they ask, give. If they need to borrow something, let them. Will you let them see into your life realizing that they may actually enter into it and walk around in your world? They may actually see who you really are. People don't borrow from strangers. Are you prepared for what will happen when you stop acting like an enemy or stranger?
4. Love them and include them without thought about how you may benefit or be repaid. This is how God loves us. He came, he died, he forgave, knowing we could never repay him; all with one purpose in mind for us to hear him answer our cry for help.

The Muslims around us represent a great opportunity. Are we ready to answer their knock when it comes?

Qur'an/Bible Review – Jesus Obedient

Sur 5:117 I told them only what You commanded me to: “Worship God, my Lord and your Lord.” I was a witness over them during my time among them. Ever since You took my soul, You alone have been the watcher over them: You are witness to all things

John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

John 14:31 but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

John 15:10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

Jesus was obedient to God in all that he did and said. But in the minds and hearts of Muslims Mohammed did the same; he obeyed

Allah and did the work given to him. But there are some critical differences.

- Jesus' ministry was one of love and forgiveness.
- Jesus condemned violence and force even when it was used to protect him.
- Jesus' life was governed by the existing, revealed word of God
- Jesus came to fulfill the word of God
- Jesus came to fulfill the promises given by God of a Messiah who would bring salvation
- Jesus became the sacrifice promised by God

Over and over, especially in Matthew, we are told how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies and declarations of God regarding his life and his work.

Mohammed, on the other hand, was never more than a messenger and he declared this clearly throughout the Qur'an. Mohammed stated that his words were in addition to the past words given by God. There is only one reference of a possible prophecy regarding the coming of Mohammed and it is only found in the Qur'an. It is an interpretation of the one who would come and be like Moses in giving a word from God.

We have so much to share with them about God's plan and how Jesus fulfilled perfectly that plan. Pray that God will open your heart and the hearts of Muslims so that we can share this truth with them: that Jesus truly came in obedience to God so that all would be saved.

Praying for Muslims - Persecutors

1. Pray for Muslims who are persecuting believers.
2. Pray for those who believe they are honoring God by persecuting believers in Christ.
3. Pray that God would intervene on behalf of His children and reveal Himself to persecutors with power.

4. Pray that, like the apostle Paul, persecutors would encounter Christ and put their faith in Him.

Day 21

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, make the doors of heaven give access to me, and secure the doors of the inferno so I cannot approach them, make me able to recite your word, the Qur'an, you who sent down to us true peace to the hearts of the true believers.

Bible Study – Opportunity Guide

This is the tricky step. Knowing how to turn one opportunity into another.

So, what is the purpose of our activity? Are we becoming part of their world so that we can tell them the truth or to correct the errors of their belief? Or. Are we there to guide them or do we have our 4-step plan, or 12-truths or something similar that we need to deliver to them as soon as possible? Or are we willing to let them provide the steps we must follow?

A true understanding of making use of every opportunity is in allowing the opportunity to guide our actions. Each step we take closer or forward to developing a relationship will allow us to see more and then be able to respond appropriately.

An example. If you are following a path you will need to realize that all paths are not the same. One path may have a river to cross, another a canyon to cross. One may lead you through a swamp. This one has beautiful trees to shade you but another crosses a barren desert. Each one provides different opportunities and experiences and so requires different resources and preparation. Until you start the trip and move forward you may not know what you need to deal with - river, canyon, swamp, or desert.

Making the most of every opportunity is about being a guide, not an expert. Experts provide answers, even if they may not work or don't

fit the context. Guides lead people to answers that work in the context. Reflect on the words of the wise found in Pr 16:21-23.

The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction. Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly brings punishment to fools. A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.

Not every opportunity will follow the same path and provide the same openings for sharing and ministry. Each person we meet needs to be our guide in how we move forward and in that process, this allows us to be the right guide for the path we will walk together.

Muslims are no different. We cannot treat them as if they are all the same. Backgrounds, culture, family, and more will vary greatly and require us to adapt and learn how to be guided by their questions and context and then how to guide them as we walk together.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Jesus filled with Holy Spirit

Sura 2:87 We gave Moses the Scripture and We sent messengers after him in succession. We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. So how is it that, whenever a messenger brings you something you do not like, you become arrogant, calling some impostors and killing others?

Sura 5:110 Then God will say, 'Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My favor to you and to your mother: how I strengthened you with the holy spirit,

Mark 1:10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

Luke 3:22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

It is interesting that Islam accepts the fact that Jesus was uniquely filled with the Holy Spirit. Yet at the same time denies it that the Holy Spirit is God. Further, there is no indication that Mohammed received this blessing.

The second interesting fact is that both of the men were given a word from God to speak to the people. With Mohammed however, the only proof of the validity of this fact is that people would see him go into a trance, and after the trance, he would tell them the words he had received from Gabriel as written on the tablets of God's word. Jesus, because of the power of the Holy Spirit in him, not only spoke God's words but performed many miracles. This fact is also recorded in the Qur'an.

Jesus stated clearly that these signs and miracles were given to help people believe who he was and the message he was given by God. The book of John speaks of key miracles used as special signs to the people of the divinity and purpose of Jesus' coming; one of them was the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

We could continue the comparisons but it all goes back to something that we believe in but the Muslim doesn't understand; the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We know this to be the third person of the Trinity, not another god, but God revealing to us another aspect of who He is.

Let us keep in mind that we are not the ones to convince, convict, or convert anyone to this belief and understanding. We are clearly told it is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:8). But a key way that he does this is through our lives and relationship with God. So does the Holy Spirit have access to your life? Are you obedient, like Jesus, to go where the Holy Spirit leads, even when it is to those you fear and do not understand?

Praying for Muslims

Future workers

1. Pray that God would raise up evangelists, church planters, and spiritual leaders.
2. Pray that God would be raise up evangelists, church planters, and spiritual leaders in Islamic communities.
3. Pray that He would be preparing the leadership of the coming church.
4. Pray for bold evangelists like Paul to share fearlessly and effectively.
5. Pray that even before they put their faith in Christ, God would be preparing leaders for their life of ministry.

Day 22

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, reveal to me the path that will gain Your delight, do not allow the Evil One to have victory over me, prepare for me a true place of repose within Paradise, You who satisfies the appeals of those who are deprived and in need.

Bible Study – Destination Objective

While the paths we may need to follow will vary greatly from one person to another, there is one objective that we must keep in focus. This objective defines and clarifies the destination we seek.

So here is the question – Who are you leading others to? What direction will you take when you have the opportunity to guide someone?

This is the moment when Satan attacks and wants to make every opportunity about you. You have been in the right place. You saw the door. You opened your mouth and spoke. You told them the truth. You listened to them and so on and so on.

And all of this makes you feel great and very special. Right?

But it is all wrong.

You are who you are because of Jesus. You are in the place where you are because of Jesus. Your eyes would see nothing without Jesus and his light shining through you.. You can listen because God created you as a being capable of listening and you have learned what it means to be heard, because God heard you when you were crying. You are not the truth, and the words you speak come from the Holy Spirit with one purpose, to point others to Jesus

Every time an opportunity presents itself we need to be sure we point them to Jesus. Only Jesus can touch their heart, ease the pain of their soul, and calm their fears. We are to be the channel he uses. This is the point of making the most of every opportunity; seeing

every one of them as a means to lead, to draw them to one person, Jesus.

When they see us, do they see it as an opportunity to learn about Jesus, the Christ?

Qur'an/Bible Review - Jesus intercedes

Sura 2:255 God: there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and in the earth, belongs to Him. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they do not comprehend any of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth; it does not weary Him to preserve them both. He is the Most High, the Tremendous.

Rom 8:27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Heb 7:24-25 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

In Islam there is no intercessor. Mohammed was only sent to deliver the message that was given to him. He was told not to worry about whether or not people responded to the message, because each person will be required to stand before Allah and present their case, their good works, with the hope of convincing Allah they are worthy.

We have a very different situation. We have one who is there to intercede. No, actually we have two that are interceding for us. We are told by Jesus that the counselor, the Holy Spirit, will come and be with us and (because he knows our hearts and minds) will intercede on our behalf (Ro 8:26-27). Jesus promises to do the same and begins the work of intercession in his prayer in John 17.

Hebrews also explains that he is always interceding on our behalf (He7:25).

Even more important is the fact that God has chosen to reveal himself and live within each of us. In doing this he has chosen to come and let us know and understand his plan and purpose for each of us.

We have the joyous opportunity to share with our Muslim friends that indeed God has chosen someone to intercede for us. First, the Holy Spirit, who knows everything about us and who knows the heart and mind of God. And second, Jesus, who understands intimately our life and situation. God has truly blessed us.

Praying for Muslims

Presenting the Gospel

1. Pray that when workers are presented with opportunities to share the gospel message with local people during Ramadan, that they might have clear words and boldness of speech according to Colossians 4:3-6
2. Pray against the reasoning and schemes that Satan might use to prevent laborers from continuing to stay/work in the harvest fields.
3. Pray that workers would daily put on the full armor of God (especially during Ramadan) to protect them from spiritual warfare according to Ephesians 6:10-17

Day 23

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, give to me an open way to your Favor, let its blessings descend on me, draw me towards that which is the source of your Favor, and let me have an abode in Paradise and know its consolation, You who responds to the cry of those who are troubled.

Bible Study – Shaker

Col 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

The topic is grace. Something we don't deserve and they don't deserve. "They," being everyone who we choose to exclude. Exclude by inaction, by decision, or any other method that keeps them at a distance so they never experience the salt of truth.

Our behavior, words and attitude should be like a salt shaker, always ready to disperse the grace of God. That forgiveness that no one deserves but everyone needs. That restoration that changes us from an enemy of God (Ro 5:10) to those who have been reconciled, restored (vs 11).

Jesus calls us the salt of the earth (Mt 5:13) a substance that preserves, protects, and brings flavor to all it touches as long as it is used correctly. Too much salt becomes destructive, too little salt and it has no effect. The goal is to be just the right amount of salt, the right example to those we encounter.

While both grace and salt are similar in preserving, protecting, and flavoring, the difference is you can never have too little or too much grace. Which means there is no such thing as too little or too much forgiveness. Either we forgive or we don't forgive. This is how God treated us and how we are to treat others. It is grace that helps us monitor how we use and add the salt, our knowledge of God. But forgiveness is all or nothing. You cannot partially forgive someone

or forgive one area and leave the rest untouched. Grace helps us see how to forgive and so flavor or touch the whole person.

It is sad how many people use the salt of their knowledge of God and his Word to destroy others. They wield the salt more like a weapon rather than a seasoning which reveals what is hidden, preserve what is at risk, and protects from hidden danger.

So, conversation full of grace, seasoned with salt. Complete forgiveness with the right amount of love, patience, etc to make them want more.

This is a challenge. So often, those deeply committed to their beliefs, like the Muslims, find our lives distasteful and filled with judgment and unforgiveness. Our words allow no room for forgiveness. We become the hypocrites they believe we are.

This will not change until we stop and think about how far we were from God and about the grace we have received. To remember that we too were his enemies and he forgave us. We need to stop and think about what Jesus meant when he said "...forgive my sins the way I forgive the sins of other" (Mt 6:15). And consider the warning "...if we don't forgive them then we will not be forgiven (vs 14)."

Qur'an/Bible Review - Jesus near to God

Sura 3:45 The angels said, 'Mary, God gives you news of a Word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, who will be held in honor in this world and the next, who will be one of those brought near to God.

Sura 3:55 God said, 'Jesus, I will take you back and raise you up to Me: I will purify you of the disbelievers. To the Day of Resurrection I will make those who followed you superior to those who disbelieved. Then you will all return to Me and I will judge between you regarding your differences.

Heb 2:9 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Mark 14:62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

We agree completely that Jesus is to be honored above all. To this end we teach and proclaim his teachings, making disciples of all nations. Jesus alone has seen God and has stood in the presence of God. Jesus alone knows the heart of God and can teach us those truths. Jesus alone has been raised from the dead and exalted to the highest place of honor. He sits at the right hand of God.

Jesus gained this right and position by his obedience to the Father. He submitted himself to God's will, even when that meant death on the cross, in order to reveal to all the true nature and plan of God. He is honored everyday by those who are his followers, those who have confessed their sins and been forgiven. It is only in his name that repentance will bring restoration.

For the Muslim proclaiming the name of Mohammed as the messenger of Allah only declares that one is a Muslim. This name and its declaration does not bring salvation. It is only one step of many that a person must take to maybe be accepted by Allah. In Jesus' name, however, we have the key that opens the door to God's presence and salvation.

This is the difference. Mohammed died. Jesus was raised to life after he died. Mohammed died. Jesus suffered for us but now He sits enthroned with God as proof that all he did was ordered by God and will bring us into God's presence. Mohammed died.

Our task is to reveal Jesus is alive and preparing a place for us in heaven. This message does not exist in Islam. Yes, Mohammed taught the people to believe in one god. Yes, he taught what he believed were the words of God. But then he died and left everyone without an advocate. We, on the other hand have Jesus, who is

honored by God and given the right to act on our behalf, to bring us before God as promised.

We also are told clearly in Jn 1:1-4 that Jesus is the word and has existed eternally with God. He is the source of all that exists.

So, we have a choice: to follow a messenger who was shown tablets he could not read and needed them translated by an angel? Or do we follow the word of God, Jesus?

It will be a critical step in our relationship when our Muslim friends begin to ask about Jesus as God's word. This will represent a heart that is being opened to learn more about God and what he has spoken to us. Be ready to give them a copy of the Injeel, the New Testament, and let them read for themselves God's words.

2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Praying for Muslims

1. Pray that workers would remember to edify one another according to Philippians 2:2-5
2. Pray that workers would be protected from illness and diseases that would make it impossible for them to share during the month of Ramadan.

Day 24

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, purify me from my sins, cleanse me from all defects, test my heart by the sincere faith of the those who believe, you who passes over the shortcomings of the sinners.

Bible Study – Reuniter

The grace Paul talks about helps us understand our critical task. We are to reunite people with their creator. The technical word is reconciling. This means resolving an existing conflict and bringing people and groups back into harmony. Paul writes about this in 2 Co 5:18-21.

The hard work has been done. God has dealt with the debt, penalty, and price of our rebellion. He has dealt with everything that would prevent him from reaching out to us and being reunited with those he deeply loves. Our task, then, is to help others understand where they are in relation to God, why they are separated, and what is involved in being reconciled, or reunited with God.

In the world the process of reconciliation is complicated and difficult. This is mainly because people tend to hide the truth about their part in the problem. They avoid the truth because it might reveal the fact that they are to blame at some level for the separation that exists. In the world, both sides of a conflict are behaving in this way. Both are hiding, to some extent, from the truth and how they have contributed to the conflict.

With God, this is not true. He is not at fault but we are completely at fault. While there is nothing we can hide from him still we don't want to admit this truth. So why is it so difficult to help people be reconciled and reunited with their creator?

Perhaps they are avoiding the truth. Perhaps they don't want to submit. They want to be free, or at least that is what they think.

While it is true they are at fault for their thinking, we must share in the blame for the situation. We often do a miserable job of being a reconciler. They don't see in us the joy and freedom we talk about. They see fear. They see us trying to control them. They see how we cover up our own sin. They see our falseness and wonder if anything we say is true.

In the passage in 2 Co 5 Paul challenges the Christians to be ambassadors. To be a living example of what true reconciliation is; reconciliation that reunites a person to God. We need to be sure we are a living example of one who knows God and what He can do in the life of a true follower of Jesus.

Muslims are looking for this. They are hungering to be reconciled to a God who cares. A God who is by their side. That is the task, the ministry of reconciliation, that Christians must fulfill.

Qur'an/Bible Review - God a schemer

Sura 3:54 The [disbelievers] schemed but God also schemed; God is the Best of Schemers.

Ps 33:10-11 The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

The Qur'an depicts God as one who conspires or schemes against man. The Sura passage makes it sound like God is a deceiver and trickster. If we, for example, attempt to create a plan that will give us control in place of God or plan something secretly that Allah disapproves of, then Allah will seek to disrupt our plan, even if it means deceiving us so that our scheme will fail.

Scheming means doing something in secret and not visible. Something that will take control away, or cause another to lose face, appear foolish. We are all about this. We like to scheme, to plan and act in hiding hoping to take over someone's position place or

benefits. And what are schemes? They are our plans to try and gain control of our world and that of others. And we do it in such a way that the people don't know what it is we are doing until we have already won.

Man's greatest attempts at scheming are in an effort to escape judgment and punishment, to cover up our failures, sins, and disobedience, to derail the plans of God. Some of the most elaborate lies and schemes are for these purposes.

This is not how God works. He is not scheming in an attempt to fool us, defeat us, or bring our plans to ruin. It is actually the opposite. God works at foiling our schemes and carrying out his clearly defined plans. He tells us in Prov 21:30 that there is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord.

God foils man's plans so that his carefully laid plan will be revealed and continue without confusion. Jesus died because it was God's plan. Jesus rose again because it was God's plan. The leaders thought they were getting rid of a nuisance when in fact they were being carefully led to aid in the completion of God's plan. And when he rose again their scheming was revealed to all. And when they tried to scheme and silence the Apostles, Gamaliel warned them to be careful or they would find themselves opposing the plan of God.

We have this message for our Muslim friends. God is not a better schemer. He never schemes as is the way of man. He is a better planner and knows all the schemes of man and they never interfere with the plans of God. We have this truth to share. God never fails to carry out his plan and man can never alter what God has planned. In Jesus, the Messiah, we see this truth and receive the offer of forgiveness just as God had planned.

Praying for Muslims

Believers

1. Pray for the believers as they encounter family and colleagues who may want to shame them for not fasting during the month of Ramadan. Pray that they would remain strong in their faith and that the Lord would give them the right words to share during these conversations.
2. Pray that local believers would not feel the oppression and darkness or a spirit of discouragement during this month of Ramadan. It can be heart-breaking and wearing to see so many pour energy and focus into religious practices in a “hope” to add more weight to their good deeds scale to overcome the bad in their life.
3. Pray that the believers would be bold in their faith during the month of Ramadan. Pray that they would see the month of fasting as an opportunity to share their belief in Jesus. As many Muslims who are fasting during the month are seeking to be closer to God, pray that they would be open to spiritual conversations about Jesus.
4. Pray for protection for believers during this month. Many times believers are persecuted, beaten or ostracized by their families during Ramadan for not fasting.
5. Pray that believers would grow closer to the Lord during this month. As many Muslims are fasting and praying to be closer to God, pray that the believers would also seek God's presence in their lives by deliberately praying and reading the Word more during this month.

Day 25

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, I seek from you that which brings You pleasure and I seek sanctuary from the things that offend you, I implore you to confer on me the privilege of obedience and to be kept far from what offends, You who are abundant in Your beneficence to those who seek you.

Bible Study – Liberator

Fear is a powerful emotion. It is a powerful trap. Grace brings freedom from fear and release from its trap.

As we talk to those who do not know Jesus the Messiah, do they see the freedom we have?

Remember that the word messiah means the one who will set free. This is the key theme of an early message of Jesus taken from Is 61:1-2. He came to proclaim freedom for prisoners, sight for blind, and release of the oppressed (Lk 4:18-19).

Paul calls this a rescue operation (Co 1:13). The work done to deliver someone from danger, to protect their life, even to sacrifice to make possible their escape and freedom.

The issue is that many people do not understand the trap they are in. They don't see their situation as a trap. They don't know the danger they are in but rather see their trap as a gilded cage. A cage which protects them, but which keeps them from liberty and hope. This is the power of darkness.

The first work of a liberator is to reveal the true nature of the danger and the trap. Sometimes this is easy, but only because the Holy Spirit has been preparing them for our arrival. Most times it is time-consuming and hard. The second work of a liberator is not to set them free. It is a common reality that prisoners who are freed from prison often are lost and unable to function outside the rules and

boundaries of their former cage. Instead, the key job is help them find the one who can free them forever.

A key mistake made by many a well-intentioned person is to tell someone to just follow them, listen to their directions, to trust them, and depend on them for all they need to gain their freedom. A second key mistake is to make them believe that certain improvements in life are the evidence of freedom. This is a key error of prosperity thinking.

Being freed from the prison of sin does not mean they will be safe from all danger. But it does mean they will be freed from the debt of their sin, they will be freed from hopelessness. They will be freed from all that prevents them from knowing God.

Our work is very clear. We are to bring others to God. He is the true liberator. When a Muslim starts this journey, he will need us as a reminder of what true liberation is. Can they see in us how God's grace brings true freedom?

Qur'an/Bible Review - Fall of Satan and sin

Sura 15:29-39 When I have fashioned him and breathed My spirit into him, bow down before him,' 30and the angels all did so. 31But not Iblis: he refused to bow down like the others. 32God said, 'Iblis, why did you not bow down like the others?' 33and he answered, 'I will not bow to a mortal You created from dried clay, formed from dark mud.' 34'Get out of here!' said God. 'You are an outcast, 35rejected until the Day of Judgement.' 36Iblis said, 'My Lord, give me respite until the Day when they are raised from the dead.' 37' You have respite,' said God, 38' until the Day of the Appointed Time.' 39Iblis then said to God, 'Because You have put me in the wrong, I will lure mankind on earth and put them in the wrong,

Isa 14:12-13 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit

enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

The description of the fall of Satan is quite different. Islam has Satan's fall tied to a command from God that he should bow down and worship the man he created. Satan refused, God punished, and Satan pled for mercy which he received. But instead of responding positively Satan threatens God. Therefore, Satan's action to tempt and destroy man are driven by revenge for being punished for not worshiping man. For this, according to Islam, man will suffer and has little to say about it.

Suffering, then, is as much about Satan's revenge as it is about our failure to obey. Yet when judgment comes little is said about Satan's role in our situation. Each person will be judged without reference to Satan's work in placing them in the wrong.

The Bible has a different understanding. Satan's fall is unrelated to the creation of man. He attempted to usurp God. His attempt failed and he and everyone who followed him were punished. They were cast out of heaven. Because of this, Satan, being who he is, a usurper, makes use of any opportunity to take God's place. So when Adam and Eve were created, he promptly sought to replace God or at least cause them to question God's authority and serve someone other than God.

In Islam Satan's stated goal is to lure man away. Also remember from a prior study that their teaching states that man was created for hell and in another passage it states that man was created for toil and trouble (90:4) If this is true then why is the judgment of Allah so harsh? He created the situation, yet mankind will pay for this fact unless he can do enough good to convince Allah to treat him otherwise.

In Scripture, we are clearly told that the fault lies in our own choices. Satan may have power to influence us but in the end each of us is responsible for how we respond. Also, God never intended

man to be an object of worship, rather a being that could build a relationship with God.

The good news is that God has willingly provided a way for us to overcome our failure to obey. We have a second chance. This is not just a possibility, but a promise. This is so different from our Muslim friends who live in fear and with limited hope. We have an incredible blessing and promise to share with them. They do not need to fear Satan and the jinn (demons). God has provided a way so we can stand before him and know his love.

Praying for Muslims

Marriage

1. Pray that married Muslims would come to faith in Christ together.
2. Pray that God would redeem their marriage and be a testimony of His transforming power.
3. Pray that Muslims seeking Salvation would find peace in their homes.
4. Pray for the women who have decided to follow Christ and are married to a Muslim, pray for God's protection from beatings. Pray for her to honor Christ, and to be able to intercede for her husband's salvation.
5. Pray for men who have a Muslim wife, pray that she would hear Jesus calling her to salvation, may she see honor and character in her husband that would draw her to Christ.
6. Pray for Christians looking for spouses to find other believers to marry.
7. Pray that Christian marriages in Muslim communities would be blessed with children who can grow up in homes that honor and follow the Bible.

Day 26

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, include me with those who love Your servants, and hate Your enemies, those who adhere to the life of Your final Prophet, O Watcher of the spirits of the Prophets.

Bible Study – Refreshment

The last part in this conversation of grace is to be an energy drink for them when others need it. One of key elements of drinks like gaterade, powerade, and others are the salts that are included in the beverage. While there is some sugar the focus is on providing missing salt to the body.

The goal of these types of drinks is to energize and refresh the body, most commonly during times of exertion and struggle. They help restore key nutrients and liquids so the body can continue with whatever strenuous activity it is involved in.

This is our task - to provide a place to refresh, restore, and reenergize the mind and soul. This is not about being positive or negative. It is about understanding the needs of the person in each moment.

Too much salt can actually slow the body, increase its risk of disease, and alter their emotional state. It also impacts how the brain functions causing problems with cognitive skills. The most interesting effect is that the person loses the ability to enjoy the taste of salt. Being salt is about learning what is needed at each point as we help a person search for God. Yes, there is a place for critical evaluation, a review of the errors and mistakes we make. But the focus here is not on showing how badly someone is doing but on what can be learned from a mistake or failure. Failure often opens our minds and thoughts to what needs to be changed. Our task is not to focus on the problem but to help the person move beyond it. To provide a place where there is liberty to learn and grow.

This is a place for encouragement. Again, the issue is balance. We are not to be like the parent who never sees the mistakes of their child but only gives high praise. This is like too much salt. Constant praise eventually loses its meaning and value and creates a false reality that will eventually fail and do serious damage to the person. Seeing only the positive will weaken the person. Then when confronted with struggle it will open the door to attack and create a lack of ability to identify what is happening and to deal with their struggles.

We need to be a place where a Muslim can come and feel refreshed, strengthened, and recover from the struggles they will face as they explore the truths of the Bible and what they have been taught. It is critical to be a source of hope and encouragement. When our conversation is filled with grace and has the proper amount of salt they will be refreshed and desire to learn more.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Gospel a light

Sura 5:46-48 We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light, and confirmation of the Torah already revealed— a guide and lesson for those who take heed of God. 47 So let the followers of the Gospel judge according to what God has sent down in it. Those who do not judge according to what God has revealed are lawbreakers.

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it

1 Cor 15:2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

As we can see above in both the Qur'an and the Bible the gospel has a special place. In both, the Gospel is to be used to judge and understand what God has already given us. To deny this is be

condemned. The key difference between the two is that the gospel of the Bible also has the function of leading us to God's grace and forgiveness.

This is its central purpose. When we respond to the message of Jesus Christ we will be saved. It is first and foremost a message of life. When Jesus began to preach, and sent others to preach the gospel it was with the intent of announcing freedom to those lost in darkness and sin. The gospel is only a source of judgment to those who reject its message.

And when we come to the time of judgment, its primary work is to reveal those who have, in fact, heard and responded to its message of love and forgiveness. But in doing so, out of necessity, it will also reveal those who have rejected it. A sad fact, but inescapable.

It is unfortunate that our Muslim brothers are not taught this key truth about the purpose of the gospel. Therefore it is our task to provide them with the opportunity to receive the words of Jesus, and be prepared to help them see the life offered through the gospel (Injeel). A book they are told contains truth and should be encouraged to read.

Praying for Muslims

Children

1. Pray for the children who are encouraged to participate in Ramadan, pray for their protection from the lies and pressure to gain their parents approval.
2. Pray for the children would learn of Jesus and His love and acceptance of them.
3. Pray for the children who are exploited in many Muslim cultures. Pray for their protection and for advocates to help in their times of need.

4. Pray against the wrong information shared about Christianity, may the truth be seen by the younger generations.

Day 27

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, cause my labors to be praiseworthy in Your eyes, and my sins pardoned, my conduct approved, my weakness masked, O perceives above all others.

Bible Study - Purifier

Col 4:6 seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Salt is used in critical ways, it purifies, it preserves, and it flavors. These are the three that relate to food. These make it possible for the food to be purified and preserved until we eat it.

It has long been known that bathing in salt water is good for wounds. It helps cleanse and purify the wound. Another common practice is to add a small amount of salt to water to purify it.

So what does this mean for us as we talk to the Muslims we meet?

It is quite simple. Does God's work make a difference in your life? Has it cleansed you from your past and former lifestyle? Has it removed the filth so that people do not see what you were but what God has made you to be. Do they see a liar, or one they can believe?

They need to see how God's word works in us, to see Paul's teaching in 2 Tim 3:16-17 in real time. To see that the teaching of God does really change, correct, and teach people how to walk with God. They need to see how it has replaced the filth of our sin and made it possible to be their friend and not their enemy.

This does not mean that every time we speak they hear a quote from the Bible. Instead they should hear/see how the words of the Bible have become part of our life and have purified our thoughts and actions. They need to see that it is God's work that makes it possible

to live a life of purity and love, not one filled with anger and offensiveness (Ps119:9).

James adds to this by saying that as we understand God's law we gain freedom. They need to see what that freedom means (Ja 4:8) and how the lives of those purified by God's word are blessed.

The salt of God's word in our lives cleanses us and lets others have a chance to see what it looks like to know God personally. Purify your life with God's word and help them hear the word and desire it in their life as well.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Apostasy

Sura 4:137-8 As for those who believe, then reject the faith, then believe again, then reject the faith again and become increasingly defiant, God will not forgive them, nor will He guide them on any path. 138 [Prophet], tell such hypocrites that an agonizing torment awaits them.

Mark 3:28-29 I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."

For both groups, coming to a point of belief and then rejecting that belief is considered a serious offense. But the manner in which it is dealt with is quite different.

In Islam there are dire warnings for such a choice as seen in the passage above. This can often lead to direct and severe action on the part of the person's families and friends. It is not uncommon to hear of a family member or other person causing the death of one who chooses to deny Islam to follow another faith. In fact it is often a matter of honor to do so. Instead of waiting for Allah to punish, they believe they should help the process along by sending the person direct to Mohammed and the torment that awaits all who are

apostate. Avoiding shame is a key motivator in this type of response.

This reality, the fear of retribution by friends and family, causes many Muslims to avoid talking to followers of Christ, to avoid being seen as questioning their Moslem faith and as a result being attacked by family and friends. It is a part of why it is so difficult to break through the barriers that exist and begin to build a relation with followers of Christ (called people of the book in the Qur'an). Which is strange since the Qur'an gives special recognition to those who truly follow the teachings given to Jesus.

We, too, are warned about the dangers of blaspheme and apostasy. It is a serious concern and the punishment awaiting such people is no less severe than what is described in the Qur'an. The key difference is the door to repentance and restoration remains open except for the most severe of blasphemy, which is against the Holy Spirit.

The key here is that we are not encouraged to judge or attack them but to love them and seek to restore them (1 Jn 5:16). That includes our Muslim brothers. They are in a trap. They need our love and forgiveness so that they will be restored and not destroyed. Our presence, our words, and our lives should not be focused on judgment and sending them to the torment God has prepared, but on restoring them.

Praying for Muslim

Community

1. Pray for the Imams and religious teachers of the communities to come to faith in Jesus.

2. Pray for those working in the education field to seek out the truth, and to read the Bible, and to know Jesus is the answer for eternal life.
3. Pray that governors, legislators, and leaders of Muslim nations would have an encounter with Jesus. May they see His power and know his victory over death and destruction.
4. Pray for churches to grow within Muslim communities, pray for encouragement, support, and love to be found as believers gather.

Day 28

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, grant to me the blessings of Laylat al Qadr, the blessings of the first night the words of the Qur'an were revealed, make it be that my actions be changed from being hard to simple, acknowledge my confession and lessen the weight of my failures and problems, You who is the Benevolent one towards all who serve and are blameless.

Bible Study - Sustainer

In the past, using salt was about the only way to preserve food. Meat was packed or dried in salt to make it last. Today we have many other options for preserving food, but all have the same purpose, making sure that it lasts until it is needed.

God's word does this, it protects those who listen. God's word brings hope to those who have no hope. It helps them believe in something better, something that cannot be taken away even with the passage of time. Even if they lose everything else God's word will not fail to bring them to him in times of need.

When we speak to Muslims about Jesus they will be afraid. Afraid that they may lose everything they hold dear, their family, their culture, and their future. Is there enough salt, enough words of God, to overcome this?

What I am about to say will sound harsh, and it is. Often it is our families, our friends, our culture, and our desired future that must be lost for us to find life. Some of Jesus' most difficult teachings reflect this truth.

- He who loves his mother and father more than me is not worthy of me (Mt 10:37).
- To the person worried about caring for his parents he said let the dead bury the dead (Mt 8:20).

- Jesus told them they would have to give up their life in order to save it (Mt 18:25; Mk 8:35; Jn 12:25).
- Take up your cross and follow me (Lk 9:23).

Paul continues this idea by talking about what he gave up in Ph 3:4-8. He gives us a list of things related to his culture and world that he willingly sacrificed to follow Jesus.

As we begin to understand our Muslim acquaintances we will need to let them see the power of God's word in our lives. Why? Because to listen to our words and accept them as the words of God will come at a price or, at least, a risk. They need to know what they will risk and gain if they choose God over all they have been taught. That choice could come at great cost, even loss of life.

It is not our job to assure them of peace when there may not be peace ahead (Je 6:14). Jesus told the disciples that they would be hated and attacked because of him (Lk 21:17). But he promised them a peace and joy that the world could not offer nor destroy (Jn 14:6).

Speaking truth does not hide the risk. Speaking truth reveals the risk. Speaking truth provides the means to preserve the truth until it carries them home to Jesus, the Messiah. And this is the salt we need to share with our Muslim friends. That and so much more.

But will they believe us? Only if they truly see Jesus in and through us.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Cannot compel belief

Sura 42:8 If God had so pleased, He could have made them a single community, but He admits to His mercy whoever He will; the evildoers will have no one to protect or help them.

Sura 42:13 In matters of faith, He has laid down for you [people] the same commandment that He gave Noah, which We have revealed to you [Muhammad] and which We enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus: 'Uphold the faith and do not divide into

factions within it'— what you [Prophet] call upon the idolaters to do is hard for them; God chooses whoever He pleases for Himself and guides towards Himself those who turn to Him.

John 16:8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

Col 1:28

28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

This is often a sensitive topic. Can one compel or force a person to believe? Historically, there is a lot of confusion and anger when one enters into this discussion. We know that many people in the early years of Islam were compelled to convert. At first Christians and Jews were exempt but slowly that changed, until there was little evidence of the presence of Christianity in many areas where it had been strong and vibrant. Islam brought about conversion by conquest. It was simple - convert or suffer, even die.

We need to be honest at this point. The church has been involved in similar practices in the past. A king converted, and all his subjects were often forced to convert as well. This did not produce a healthy vibrant church. Nor did it allow much freedom for those who refused.

So how do we compel them to come? At one level that is not our responsibility. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. His work is to convict and draw people to God. But his chosen tool is us. Even when he provides dreams and visions, he still uses us to help them receive critical information in understanding what has been revealed.

At another level, it is our work. But we cannot compel them by force. We are to compel them by the nature of the life we live. As we truly walk with God, and they see how we treat them they will

be open to God and be compelled to seek out God, and often that means they will come to us for help in understanding what God is doing.

All this means being sufficiently involved in their world that they do not object to our presence and do not reject what we have to share with them. Is our life a sufficient reason to respond, is our life such that it compels them to reconsider what they have been taught and so what they believe is the truth?

Praying for Muslims –

Night of Power or “Laylat al-Qadr”

1. The night of power usually occurs on the 27th night during the month of Ramadan. It is to commemorate the first revelation given to Muhammad. This night is special to Muslims and it is believed that prayer on this night will count far more than on any other day of the year. Muslims are seeking and praying harder this night than any other night during Ramadan. Please pray for those who are sincerely seeking to please Allah during this night.
2. Pray that as Muslims pray on the Night of Power that Jesus would reveal himself through a dream or vision in direct response to their longing hearts.

Day 29

Taraweeh

ALLAH, Today, permit a portion the nawafil (the blessing of speaking to you from the heart), bring respect to me by caring for my troubles, place within my grasp that which makes possible for me to enter your presence, using all measures, You who is not distracted by the petitions of those who seek you.

Bible Study - Appetite

The most common use of salt by almost everyone today is to bring out the flavor hidden in the food we cook. But is it enough to reveal only what is hidden? Should it not do much more? Create a desire for more?

The best chefs in the world base their hope on a key concept, that their cooking will be so good you will want more. Not just more of the same dish but a desire to taste any and everything they prepare for you to eat.

This is not solely about how much salt is used. It is about the ability to add just the right amount in combination with any other number of spices and ingredients. When it is done correctly the nose, the eyes, the tongue, and even the stomach know and want not just one bite, one dish, but want to come back again and again.

This is what our words and life need to be to our Muslim friends. We must be so filled with the flavor of God that every time we enter their lives all of their senses are alerted. They inhale the scent of our friendship; they appreciate all they see and observe in our behavior and attitude; their mouth waters in anticipation of the truth they may receive from us. Their inner being knows that it will be truly nourished by what it is about to enjoy.

Does this sound a bit dramatic and overdone? But is this not exactly the tone of so many of David's Psalms?

- Taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps 34:8)
- How sweet are your words to my taste (Ps 119:103).
- I delight in your decrees (Ps 119:24).
- Paul tells us that we are to be the aroma of Christ in the world (2 Co 2:15).
- I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight (119:174).

Our words are to create the desire for more, because they are God's word and our life is seasoned with them. Salt creates and satisfies the appetite. This is what we should be learning and sharing with the Muslims we meet. This is what we should be praying is happening for those who are ministering in that context. Our lives should be so savory they want more of what we have, Jesus the Messiah.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Denying the Trinity

Sura 4:171 People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion, and do not say anything about God except the truth: the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was nothing more than a messenger of God, His word, directed to Mary, a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not speak of a 'Trinity'— stop [this], that is better for you— God is only one God, He is far above having a son, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him and He is the best one to trust.

Matt 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Denying something that is difficult to understand will not change the reality. Denying truth will not make it easier to obtain what we want. The action of denial only creates greater confusion and a failure to be able to respond to what is true. Denial results in fantasy thinking and that leads to mistakes in our actions and behavior.

It is like a young man who desperately wants a young lady to like him. This desperation results in falsely believing she does and so he misinterprets her responses to him. She tells him clearly that she is not interested but remains kind and considerate to him. He misinterprets her response as confirmation that she does love him and that causes him to behave inappropriately even as far as misinforming others of her love. Unfortunately, some believe him. However, this does not change the truth, it only clouds it.

Denying God and his word is much the same. Our refusal to accept what is true opens the door to denying it and creating our own interpretation of truth that fits what we choose to believe. This is not a new reality. We were warned that people would come denying the truth in order to deceive and in so doing avoid having to deal with the consequences of that truth (Mt 24:5, 11, 24).

By denying Jesus as God, the Holy Spirit as God, the Father as God, a person can then deny the commands given and select only what he wishes to obey. Now he is free to serve God the way he wants and goes down a false path that will lead others astray as well.

God is triune. And he has revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit so that we may better understand the nature of his love, his word, and so carry the message to the nations, even to our Muslim neighbors.

Praying for Muslims

Healing

1. As Muslims are looking for signs of Allah during the “nights of power” in Ramadan, may they see miracles of God.
2. Pray for Christians in Muslim communities to have opportunities to pray for healings.

3. Pray for Christians to be bold in proclaiming the Power of Christ in their lives and give them a heart of compassion as they interact with Muslims.
4. Pray for bridges of healing to be formed among Christians and Muslims, pray for the gospel to be able to be shared in non-hostile situations.

Day 30

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today shelter me in the mantle of your Favor, endow me with its triumph and shelter, cleanse my heart from the shadow of dishonest allegations, O Compassionate one to those who place their confidence in You.

Bible Study – Energizer

As we mentioned in an earlier study, a critical function of salt is to be restorative. It is to enervate again the function of the body in accessing its resources in order to continue moving forward in a time of testing, trial, work, or competition. The activity involved may deplete the body's resources that are easily accessed and to continue means opening channels to more resources so that we can maintain the level of activity. The right amount of salt is critical for this to happen. It can be in a specific food, beverage, or even in the form of a pill. Taken at the right time and in the right amount energizes the body.

The key is knowing when it is needed.

Much of our normal life does not need additional action. Our normal diet is sufficient to care for the demands that we place on our bodies. However, it is when we exceed what is normal, or the environment changes that there may be a need for salt in order to keep on going. This is true when the activity involves higher temperatures and our body loses more water than normal. It is true when the level of intensity increases. It is true when the length of time involved is extended beyond our normal time frame.

It is important to identify these factors and respond at the appropriate time so the body can access more of its energy resources. It is important to maintain a balance in our hydration so that the body can process what it accesses. Too much and it becomes

sluggish; too little and it shuts down. This is different for each person.

This is a key aspect of the phrase, “seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (Co 4:6).” We are to know how to energize each person individually. We must take the time to listen and learn about the person, their areas of strength and weakness, their capacity to recover and continue, and their level of commitment and willingness to accept what we offer.

The old saying “you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink” is very helpful in understanding our role. We can’t make others accept our help. Our task is to make sure they have what they need when it is needed. Forcing them to drink is counterproductive, even when we know they desperately need a word from God.

So the question that remains is, will we stay with them, patiently waiting until they are ready for the refreshment they need? Ministering among Muslims is more like a marathon than a sprint. The truth is we may be the ones who need a team praying and ministering to us and refreshing us with God’s word so that we can stay in the race.

Are you ready for the marathon and the reward of the prize of finishing the race?

Qur’an/Bible Review - Jesus the word of God

Sura 3:48 He will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel,

Sura 5:46 We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light, and confirmation of the Torah already revealed— a guide and lesson for those who take heed of God. 47

So let the followers of the Gospel judge according to what God has sent down in it. Those who do not judge according to what God has revealed are lawbreakers.

Heb 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

This is the point of all that we have been studying. Where did the message come from and why should we listen to one over the other?

If we are only talking about people who have received a message from God, then we are responsible to determine if they are a true messenger; one who clearly brings to us the message they have been given without mistake or alteration.

But in reference to the life and person of Jesus, we have something very different. Based on all we know about Jesus, his teaching and life. Based on the veracity of his crucifixion and resurrection. Based on the reaction of the disciples and how they spoke of Jesus it becomes clear that we are not talking about just another messenger.

Which would you rather hear from, a messenger, or the source of the message? Messengers can make mistakes, they can forget something, not remember clearly, and just leave out something. It is a part of reality, at least in the days when it was necessary to transmit messages verbally. Writing them down was not always possible or practical. Even if they were written down a great deal of energy was spent in verifying, if in fact, it was accurately recorded or really came from the person listed as the source. There are enough stories of falsified documents, past and present, to make this something worth considering. Multiple sources are always better. They allow us to verify the message and its source.

But if a king were to personally deliver his message that would change everything. Now there is no question about validity but only acceptance of the message. No longer is there a question about its source or content. The source is before us.

This is the critical difference and it allows us to verify all previous and future messages that are purported to be from the king. So, if God, the king, has come, that means we can test all the words given before and all that come after by that message. Nowhere in the Qur'an is this status given to Mohammed. But in the Bible, this is given to Jesus. He is God and he has spoken to us. We can now certify any prior message and future message.

Let us be diligent in making the Injeel (gospels) available to our Muslim friends so that they will be able to do like us, verify all the messages against the true source of God's word, Jesus.

Praying for Muslims

Men

1. Pray that the cares of this world that drive Muslim men to work hard would stir in their hearts a longing for the One who can meet all of their needs.
2. Pray that as devout Muslim men faithfully go to the mosque each Friday, they would have an encounter with the Risen Christ.
3. Pray that men would be able to lay down their pride and humble themselves before the feet of Jesus.
4. Pray that as Christ begins to transform Muslim men as they turn to follow Him, that they would influence their family to begin walking in the way of Christ.

Day 31

Taraweeh

ALLAH, today, make my abstinence precious and that of which you approve, gratifying what You have told us brings pleasure, and which satisfies the Messenger, the branches receiving their sustenance from the roots, to bring blessing to our guide, Mohammed, and his family who you have cleansed. Praise be to ALLAH, the Lord of the worlds.

Ya Haqq!

Bible Study – The Fast

Col 4:2-6 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Today is the last day of Ramadan. Muslims gather as families and friends to celebrate. They have spent a month thinking about their faith, the teachings of Mohammed, and listening to the Qur'an. They have done this in the hope that Allah will hear them, that they will be a little closer to being allowed into Paradise. They celebrate the blessings they have received and then begin anew the daily prayers, the confirmation that "Behold Allah is one and his messenger is Mohammed," the giving of alms and waiting for the next time of fasting.

But they have received nothing permanent.

Review Paul's words above. Take time to evaluate if you have done this. Have you helped open windows of hope in the lives of those

trapped in an unending cycle of trying to gain the approval of a being that does not know or express love?

The fast is over. I pray that the way to hope has begun because we are responding and going to them.

Qur'an/Bible Review - Forgiveness

Sura 3:56-57 I will make the disbelievers suffer severely in this world and the next; no one will help them.' 57As for those who believe and do good deeds God will pay them their reward in full but God does not love evildoers.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This is an appropriate way to end this time of prayer and devotion. In Islam there is no forgiveness for sin. There is only judgment. This is because Allah has no plan for restoration. It is all about satisfying a set of standards and then hoping it will be sufficient for Allah to allow a few into his reward. He only has love for those who satisfy his criteria.

For us there is a different plan. God already knows we cannot do enough. We are all sinners and all condemned. Knowing this and still loving us God put in place a plan to provide forgiveness. We are not destined for destruction, we are not without hope. We were created for relationship with God and there is a clear path for us to be restored.

God loved us before we were born He knew we would sin over and over again. And yet he came with forgiveness for all willing to receive it. Without this kind of love there is no hope of satisfying God. But there is hope and that is what we want our Muslims friends to know and experience. God loves them and will forgive them.

It is my hope that these studies have been helpful so that you can cross into their world and tell them about God's love and forgiveness. And in knowing this they can find hope.

Praying for Muslims

Immigrants and Refugees

1. Pray for Muslim immigrants and refugees who have moved to or fled to new countries. Pray that they would be able to settle into their new home and sense acceptance from those around them.
2. Pray that the fear of terrorism that keeps people from engaging with or trusting Muslim immigrants and refugees to be dispelled through the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Pray that believers in Jesus would be the first people who would reach out to their new Muslim neighbors and that this would speak volumes to them as they love them in the name of Christ.
4. Pray that refugees and immigrants would begin to turn to follow Jesus in unprecedented numbers as they experience the love of God through the kindness of Christians around them