

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Brazos Pointe Fellowship



Bottom Line: God will lead us to those who need Jesus.

Acts 8:26-40

DAY ONE - Follow the Leader

Have you ever played the game *Follow the Leader*? Go ahead, play as a family now! To play the game you choose a leader for the activity. The leader will begin to do movements, and everyone else mimics the leader's actions. The leader can do just about anything he or she wants, such as clapping, making a kicking motion with his or her leg, jumping up and down, etc.

One variation of the game has the group stand in a circle facing inward. Ask one person to leave the room. This person will be the guesser for the round. While he or she is gone, the group decides who is the leader. The leader will again set the movements for that round. The guesser will stand in the center of the group when they return. Everyone will begin to swing their arms up and down and then follow the leader and mimic the leader's movements. Everyone in the circle should be careful to avoid prolonged eye contact with the leader, so the leader's identity is not given away.

The guesser must keep turning his or her head to try to figure out which person is the leader (the person who is starting off all the group's movements).

After you have played the game both ways, discuss the following questions:

- ★ How did you feel during the first game?
- ★ How did the Guesser feel during the second game?
- ★ How did it feel to lead? To follow?
- ★ Do you think it is better to lead or follow?
- ★ Have you ever been tempted to follow someone who was not making a good choice?

This game reminds me of a story from the Bible. We will look closer at that story tomorrow!





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Acts 8:26-40

DAY TWO - Read Acts 8:26-30

The game we played yesterday reminds me of the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Official. If you are a Christ-follower, you know Jesus is the leader and we are to follow his commands, instructions, and examples.

If you are not a Christ-follower, you may be at a disadvantage and searching for someone or something to follow. You may be following someone or something that is harmful or risky.

In the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Official, God was the leader of Philip. Philip was a Christ-follower and did what his leader, God, said to do. "Go south to the road—the desert road..." Along the road, he was told, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Philip did not question the angel of the Lord. He immediately got up and started moving in the direction the angel told him to move. Philip was so close to God that he knew He had his best interest at heart. Philip knew God wanted to use him and so he obeyed his leader.

Think about your relationship with God and discuss the following questions as a family:

- ★ Is God who you follow or are you following after something or someone else?
- ★ Do you follow where God leads you or do you hesitate and question His leading?
- ★ Does Philip inspire you to listen more closely and follow God's lead? If so, how? If not, why?
- ★ How did Philip get so close to his leader?





Bottom Line: God will lead us to those who need Jesus. **Acts 8:26-40**

DAY THREE - Read Acts 8:31-40

The Ethiopian official is what we call a seeker. He had "gone to Jerusalem to worship," and was reading the Bible as he travelled home. The official was having a hard time understanding what he was reading.

Philip was obedient to God and, therefore, he was in just the right place to interpret the Bible reading and teach the official about Jesus. The Ethiopian needed to know more about Jesus before he stepped over the line of faith to become a Christ-follower and to follow Jesus as his leader.

The official asked, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Philip then was able to tell the Ethiopian about the good news of Jesus. That day the Ethiopian saw his need for Jesus and asked God to forgive his sins. We call this stepping over the line of faith.

The Bible doesn't reveal the Ethiopian's prayer for forgiveness, but it could have been as simple as this:

Dear Jesus, thank you for providing Philip to tell me more about you. Thank you for caring about me. I know that my sin has separated me from you and I now believe that you died on the cross for my sins. I believe you rose again after three days to show me how to live. Please forgive my sins and take control of my life. I choose to follow you.

Discuss the following questions:

★ Have you stepped over the line of faith to follow Jesus? If so, what is your next step?

★ If not, you can pray a simple prayer like the one above and step over the line of faith. The Bible says that when we choose to follow the way of Jesus, the old things are gone and new things come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

★ If you are a Christ-follower, are you ready to share your story with others like Philip did?



Bottom Line: God will lead us to those who need Jesus. **Acts 8:26-40**

NEXT STEPS for Week One

Guiding people to take their next step with God is our mission here at Brazos Pointe Fellowship. If you have prayed a similar prayer like the one on Day Three and asked God to become the leader of your life and take control, then you are now a Christ-follower and BPF wants to partner with you as you take your "next steps."

The Ethiopian official's next step was to be baptized. He asked, "Look here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" Baptism is simply an outward expression of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus that shows others you are now following in the steps of your leader, Jesus.

If baptism is your next step, ask one of the BPF ministry team for more information.

For *adults* contact, Debbie: derskine@brazospointe.com For *kids* contact, Cindy: ctrout@brazospointe.com

If you have already been baptized, pray and ask God to show you what your next step with him might be and read the Bible to learn more about your leader. Pray for those who need a relationship with Jesus. Imagine what it will be like when they step over the line of faith and go public with their faith in Jesus!

Family Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for loving me and leading me to those who need to know about Jesus. Help me to follow where you lead and to tell others about your Son, Jesus. Give me courage and wisdom as I learn more about you each day. Please put people in my life that can teach me more about you and help me to listen. I love you, God. Amen!



Bottom Line: God will lead us to those who need Jesus, but it might not be obvious. **Luke 8:40-48**

DAY ONE - Where's Waldo?

How many of you have ever heard of "Where's Waldo?" You search and search until your eyes cross for the little guy in the striped red shirt. Maybe you are a fan of "I Spy" books and images where they give you a list of things to find in the picture. Both of these activities rely on our eyes to search through all of the stuff and find something specific. Once you find Waldo or the marble, it becomes OBVIOUS and you wonder how you missed it for so long.

Have you ever played *Hide and Seek* with someone who is very young? You know, they hide in plain sight, but because they can't see you, they think you can't see them. Their hiding place is OBVIOUS! Obvious means clear, plain or evident. The Bible is full of obvious messages for us.

- -Love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind
- -Honor your father and mother
- -Don't kill, don't steal, don't lie
- -Love your neighbor
- -Turn from sin and follow after Jesus
- -Pray

There are many more obviously, but sometimes, the Bible is hard to understand or unclear. If you have ever tried to read the Old Testament or Revelation, there are some things that are very confusing!

This week we will look at a story that seems very chaotic and confusing. Things that seem OBVIOUS are not.

- ★What is something that you feel is OBVIOUS, but others are confused by?
- ★ What are some other obvious things that the Bible teaches us?
- ★What are some things that you find confusing in the Bible?
- ★ Does God make it OBVIOUS who you are to pray for or help? If so, how? If not, why do you think that is?



Bottom Line: God will lead us to those who need Jesus, but it might not be obvious. **Luke 8:40-48**

DAY TWO - Read Luke 8:40-42

Close your eyes and imagine the scene. Jesus has not been in the area for a while and the people are waiting expectantly for his return. As he comes into town the news begins to spread that Jesus has arrived! As Jesus makes his way through the crowd Jairus throws himself on the ground at Jesus' feet. Jairus is a church leader or ruler and you wouldn't normally find him down in the dirt. He would have been considered part of the upper class of this community. He is pleading with Jesus to come to his house because his only daughter is very sick and dying.

It is obvious that Jairus is distraught, sad, scared and yet has faith that Jesus is the answer to his daughter's illness. It is obvious who needs Jesus's immediate attention. This girl is dying and she needs Jesus to provide healing.

In this part of the story, it is obvious who needs Jesus immediately. Jairus' daughter was near death and Jesus had arrived just in time to heal her, but the Bible says that as Jesus "was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him." Jesus arrived in time to heal Jairus' daughter, but the crowd hindered his progress. People were pressed up against him and shoving. It is hard for Jesus to put one foot in front of the other. This is the chaos we find Jesus in.

Discuss these questions together:

- ★ How do you think Jairus feels in this situation? Jesus is so close, but he is being delayed by all the people.
- ★ How do you think Jesus feels in this situation?
- ★ What are some things that get in our way of praying or helping those God asks us to help?
- ★ How would you feel if you were delayed from doing something important?
- ★ Jairus had faith that Jesus could heal his daughter. Do you have faith in Jesus and his ability to provide for all your needs? Why or why not?
- ★ It is obvious who needs Jesus more, but why does He allow the crowds to hinder him? Is there something he could do to get free?





Bottom Line: God will lead us to those who need Jesus, but it might not be obvious. **Luke 8:40-48**

DAY THREE - Read Luke 8:43-48

In the midst of the chaotic scene from yesterday we found a woman who had been ill for 12 years. The woman was not obvious to Jesus and his disciples, she was just part of this large crowd pressing in on Jesus. She had spent all her money on doctors and no one had been able to heal her. She believed that Jesus could heal her. Her faith in Jesus was strong, but she couldn't get close to him.

The type of illness this woman had made her unclean in the eyes of the people and kept her on the fringes of society. She had faith that if she could just touch Jesus she would be healed.

Imagine her trying to push through the crushing crowd to touch Jesus' cloak. As soon as she touched his hem she was healed. Imagine that! Twelve years she had waited! Jesus felt power leave his body. "Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

His disciples probably thought he was a little crazy with all the people shoving and pushing on him. Jesus knew there was a little girl dying, yet he stopped and wanted to speak with the one who touched him. Once the woman realized she couldn't hide, she came forward and told Jesus she had been healed. I love his response: "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Discuss these questions:

- ★ How do you think the woman felt before being healed? After?
- ★ Why do you think her faith in Jesus was so strong?
- ★ How can we increase our faith in Jesus?
- ★ Why do you think Jesus took the time to stop and speak with the woman while the child was dying?





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DAY FOUR - Read Luke 8:49-56

As Jesus was still speaking, someone arrived from Jairus' house to tell him that his 12 year old daughter had died. "Do not bother the teacher any more."

Can you imagine the loss Jairus felt. Jesus was on his way to heal her and the crowd postponed his arrival. If only he had not been delayed. If only he had arrived on time. *If only...*

Two of my favorite words in the Bible follow... <u>But Jesus</u>—but Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." <u>But</u> is a conjunction and is used to introduce a phrase or clause contrasting with what has already been mentioned...

- -Your daughter is dead, but Jesus says believe and have faith and she will live.
- -You have been sick for twelve years and no one can help you, <u>but</u> Jesus says your faith has set you free and healed your body.
- -All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <u>but</u> Jesus paid our sin debt so that we can live forever with him.

When Jesus arrived at the house of the little girl he took three of his disciples, and the father and mother of the child into her room. The parents were weeping and mourning the loss of their only daughter, but Jesus said, "Do not weep, she is not dead she is only sleeping." He then took her by the hand and told her to rise. The Bible says her spirit returned and she got up at once. He told them to feed her and tell no one what had happened.

- ★ What do you think the parents were feeling before Jesus arrived?
- ★ How were they feeling when he left?
- ★ Why do you think Jesus told them not to tell anyone what happened?
- ★ What do you think it means that her spirit returned?



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NEXT STEPS for WEEK TWO

Below are some tangible, practical ways to show love to those in need:

-Blessing Bags are one way to help those in need. As a family, fill a Ziploc bag with toothpaste, a toothbrush, socks, crackers, toilet paper, hand soap, baby wipes, water, and non-perishable foods. Keep them in your car and hand them out to those in need.

-Also, Tom's Pawn has a Blessing Box in front of their stores where you can leave canned food and non-perishable food items for those in need. Just pick up some items and drop them off to bless others.

-Here's one more, collect blankets or coats and take them to the Salvation Army shelter.

Family Prayer

Dear God,

There is so much need in our world. Help me to see those who have an obvious need and help me to try and meet that need. Lord, help me to see those needs that are not so obvious. Help me to see through the chaos and distractions and show me who needs you. Show me what my next steps are and show me how to have more faith.

Amen!





Bottom Line: Don't let distractions get in the way of your time with Jesus. **Luke 10:38-42**

DAY ONE - Who is at the Door?

Imagine your doorbell rings. You run to the door and look through the peephole and Jesus is standing at your door chatting with his disciples. Jesus has come to your house. What do you do? Do you open the door? Do you invite him in? Do you pretend you aren't home?

If you invite him in, do you worry about the toys all over the floor? Do you notice all the dust bunnies around and under the furniture? Do you notice the stain on the rug and the threadbare couch? Do you notice the stinky dog bed and pet hair all over the furniture? Is the toilet and bathroom clean? These are real concerns if you are going to entertain Jesus, or anyone for that matter.

Hospitality means, "the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors or strangers." Welcoming people into your home is a gift. True hospitality makes people feel special. Hospitality is something you and I can do right now.

We can open our homes and our hearts to the family next door, or the couple who sits by us in church, or the woman at the grocery store who is so nice. How hospitable are you and your family?

Our story this week is about a surprise visit from Jesus and hospitality, but it is also about being distracted by preparations and missing out on time with Jesus.

Think about a time you had friends over for dinner and answer the following questions:

- \star Who bought the groceries and cooked the meal?
- ★ What preparations did you make before the friends arrived?
- ★ Who did most of the work?
- **★** Did everyone pitch in?
- ★ Who leads the conversation at dinner?
- ★ How hospitable were you to your guests?





Bottom Line: Don't let distractions get in the way of your time with Jesus. **Luke 10:38-42**

DAY TWO - MARY: Read Luke 10:38-39

In today's reading we find Jesus at the home of Martha. Her sister Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to what he had to say. We find Mary in the middle of the living room with Jesus and his disciples soaking up his words of wisdom. We don't know what he was teaching, but Mary did not want to miss out on time with Jesus.

The highest priority of a Christ-follower is choosing to learn as much as we can about Jesus so that we can become more like him. Our love and devotion for Jesus makes everything else less important. We are to be his disciples and a disciple learns all they can from the Master.

This is not an excuse to be lazy and not take responsibility, but what we do should be led by the Holy Spirit, whose voice we learn to hear by choosing to spend time with Jesus. Mary understood that she needed to learn more from her Master and to seek the things that have eternal value.

Like Mary, let's find time to spend with the Master and with those who follow Him so we can learn of Him and become more like Him. Mary chose to focus on eternal things instead of the current distractions.

- **★**How can we learn from the Master?
- ★ How can we as a family be more intentional and hospitable to others?
- ★ What are some practical ways we can focus on eternal things instead of the distractions of life?





Bottom Line: Don't let distractions get in the way of your time with Jesus. **Luke 10:38-42**

DAY THREE - MARTHA

Martha opened her door to Jesus and his disciples and invited them to dinner. She scurried about like a crazy person checking the lamb, setting the table and making dessert. Martha was trying to prepare a dinner for 15 people with zero help from her sister! Martha flew past the living room and noticed Mary out of the corner of her eye sitting at the feet of Jesus and that sent her over the edge! How could Mary just sit there while Martha did all the work?

This is where discontentment begins – when Martha compared her current situation to Mary's and realized she's holding the short straw. Discontentment begins to whisper we deserve more than what we currently have, or in Martha's case, she deserved more than her sister was giving. Martha was smart, though. When she was discontented by the unfairness of the situation, she wasted no time. She knew exactly who could fix things. Martha marched right up to the highest authority in the room and commanded Jesus, "Make my sister come and help me." There's something to be said for knowing who can help. Sometimes we can be tempted to share our problems with everyone else – prayer requests, social media, mom, the bestie – when the wisest thing to do is to approach the One who can actually fix things first. Martha knew what she was doing.

I find it interesting that Jesus didn't fuss at Martha for her words. Jesus accepted Martha where she was, as she was, and listened to her complaints without batting an eye. You have that kind of audience with Jesus, too. He's a strong God who doesn't get annoyed or offended when you come to Him in the middle of an emotional crisis. He won't mind if you tell Him exactly what you're feeling. In fact He adores you and longs to hear about anything and everything. Jesus is approachable, loving, and eager to listen.

After Martha said her piece, Jesus offered her the path to peace. Jesus told her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." Jesus reminded Martha – and us – what to be concerned with, where to focus, and what should take a front row seat in our brains: relationship with Him. Jesus is all we need. He is the answer to everything. Don't let the minute distractions of this life get in the way of what is eternal.

When we find ourselves lost in the distractions, don't fall into the trap of comparison and judge others for not doing what we do. Satan is the one behind these negative thoughts. He whispers lies and accusations. He tries to create conflict. He aims to lead you deeper into the distractions to keep you as far from Jesus as possible. When we listen to the lies instead of spending quality time with Jesus, it leads to angst, trouble, worry and discontentment.

- **★** Do you identify more with Mary or Martha? Why?
- ★ What are some steps we can take to be less distracted?
- ★ What distractions does Satan use to keep you from spending time with Jesus?



Bottom Line: Don't let distractions get in the way of your time with Jesus. **Luke 10:38-42**

NEXT STEPS for WEEK THREE

Here are some practical steps to go along with this week's devotion.

Ideas for hosting friends:

- -Invite a few of your neighbors to dinner
- -Invite friends over for a game night and snacks
- -Invite someone over for coffee, cake and conversation
- -Have a potluck dinner in your neighborhood
- -Invite friends over for a movie and popcorn
- -Start a book club and host the first meeting

Ideas for spending more time with Jesus:

- -Read your Bible, use a Bible Reading Plan (Go by the GuideMarks Resource Center!)
- -Read a chapter of Proverbs each day for a month
- -Listen to the Bible in your car
- -Listen to worship music at home and when you drive listen to the words and for what Jesus is speaking into your life
- -Attend church consistently
- -Pray Talk with Jesus throughout your day
- -Look for ways to minimize distractions
- -Get up earlier before the crazy of the day starts
- -Make spending time with Jesus a priority before bedtime
- -Carve out time at lunch for Bible study and prayer



Dear God,

Help me to be more like Mary and spend my time getting to know you better. Help me to realize when I am distracted and focus on the important things, not the trivial ones. Lord, help me to find ways to build relationships with others that could lead to them finding you. Thank you for loving me and help me to see and love others like you do.





Bottom Line: Be ready to share Jesus with others at all times. Luke 18:35-43

DAY ONE - Blindfolded

This week we are going to read and learn about a blind beggar in Jericho. So, it might be interesting to play a few games blindfolded. Play several of the games below that require blindfolds.

Blind Leads—This is a great way to develop trust and communication, sometimes called *Trust Walks*. One person is blindfolded and their partner is sighted. The person takes the other for a walk by holding their hand or arm and talking to them as they go. This activity with blindfolds can progress by: Making the route they take more complex with regards to turns and twists, low level obstacles to step over can be incorporated, and/or the contact between the partners can be reduced to verbal communication only. Remember: the sighted partner is there to provide safety and support for the person ensuring that they follow a safe route!

Blindfold Catch—One person sits on the floor and around them are a number of items, some small, some larger, all interesting and nothing heavier than a football. The rest of the group stands at the edge of the room. Once the person sitting has put on a blindfold, then other group members take it in turns to try to retrieve an object. If they make noise and the person with blindfold hears them, then the blindfolded person points to them and says 'heard you', if they point at a person then that person's turn ends and it is on to the next person. Either let the game run till all the objects are gone or until an appropriate length of time has passed, say 10 minutes. Then another person, perhaps the one who retrieved the most objects, is selected to sit in the middle and be blindfolded and the blindfold game continues.

Blindfold Drawing—A leader calls out an object to be drawn, group members each have to draw that item while wearing blindfolds. Make it more complex—The leader is given a complex shape drawn with straight lines. They must communicate this shape to a drawer who is wearing a blindfold and get them to recreate the shape.

Pin the Tail on the Donkey—Using a large picture or outline drawing of a donkey, each group member takes turns to pin a tail made of string on the donkey while wearing a blindfold. Start the individual about 6 feet from the drawing.

- ★ How did it feel to be blindfolded?
- ★ How helpful was the person leading you?
- ★ How close did you come to the donkey with your tail?
- ★ How was your drawing that you made blindfolded?
- ★ Were you able to catch someone sneaking up?





Bottom Line: Be ready to share Jesus with others at all times. Luke 18:35-43

DAY TWO - Read Luke 18:35-39

The story begins with a blind man sitting by the road near Jericho. He was begging for food and money because he could not work due to his disability. Blind people normally have a heightened sense of sound and he noticed the crowd sounded different than on a normal day. He heard a multitude of people and he asked what all the noise was about.

Someone told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." This man knew of Jesus and believed in him because he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" The Bible says that Jesus was the Son of David, the promised Messiah. The blind man knew Jesus was the Savior. He believed and had faith in Jesus and earnestly begged for his favor.

The people in the crowd told him to stop bothering the Master. The blind man was not compelled to stop because he believed that Jesus was the answer to his problem. So he cried out louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" He was begging for Jesus to help him. Others around him told him to stop bothering the Master, but Jesus had mercy on him.

- ★ How do we cry out to Jesus?
- ★ Have you ever begged Jesus for something?
- \star Do you believe He is the answer to all your problems?
- \star How do you respond to people with disabilities or the poor?
- ★ What can we learn from the way the crowd treated the blind man and the way Jesus treated the blind man?
- ★ Think about the games we played yesterday with the blindfolds. Can you relate better to the blind man?





Bottom Line: Be ready to share Jesus with others at all times. Luke 18:35-43

DAY THREE - Read Luke 18:40-43

The blind man cried out to Jesus. This was not a feeble, helpless cry for help. He was loud and insistent. He was shouting for Jesus to have mercy on him. His faith in Jesus was his motivating factor, he knew that Jesus was the Messiah and would grant his request if he is heard. He would not take no for an answer. He would not be quiet. He would not stop trying to get Jesus' attention. His faith was unstoppable. The people of the town were probably embarrassed by the scene he was making. The beggar didn't care, he knew Jesus was the answer and was determined to get to him. This man was eager and ready for Jesus.

Jesus heard his cry for mercy and told those who were shushing the beggar to bring him forward. Jesus was pleased by this man's unstoppable faith. Jesus was fully man and fully God and knows our every thought and yet he asked the man what he wanted him to do for him. "Lord, I want to see," he replied.

Why do you think Jesus asked? Wasn't it obvious? Did Jesus need the man to vocalize his need? Did Jesus want to make sure his sight is what he wanted from him?

Jesus answered him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." As soon as the words were spoken the man could see. Jesus praised the man's faith. He was showing them what faith in God is able to do.

After the beggar received his sight, he "followed Jesus, praising God" and "when all the people saw it, they also praised God." The once-blind man became a follower of Jesus, or a disciple. His faith was strong and he was ready to follow Jesus.

Can you imagine him telling his story to others? "I was blind and now I can see! Praise God!" This story is a reminder to us to not give up. Keep praying and asking for what you need. Keep praying for that loved one to find Jesus. Keep praying for your friend who needs healing. Keep praying for that coworker. Keep praying and have faith that Jesus hears you.

- ★ Why do you think the blind beggar was so eager and ready for Jesus?
- ★ Why did Jesus ask him what he wanted? What was the purpose of his question?
- ★What can we learn from the man's unstoppable faith?
- ★After his healing, the man followed Jesus, praising God. How can we model our lives after this man?
- ★The Bible says the people in the crowd brought the man to Jesus. How can we bring people to Jesus?



Bottom Line: Be ready to share Jesus with others at all times. **Luke 18:35-43**

NEXT STEPS for WEEK FOUR

Our mission at BPF is, "Guiding people to take their next step with God."

Our 4-point strategy, including GuideMarks, was developed to guide your next steps!

Need help with a next step? Call the church office, 979.266.9992, or email...

Worship Ministry, contact David — dking@brazospointe.com

Volunteer Opportunities, contact Michelle — mmasterson@brazospointe.com

NextGen Ministry, contact Chris — chrislong@brazospointe.com

Preschool Ministry, contact Erin — emartin@brazospointe.com

Elementary Ministry, contact Cindy— ctrout@brazospointe.com

Student Ministry, contact Joseph — jcastillo@brazospointe.com

GlobaLocal Ministry, contact Leah — lmcmullen@brazospointe.com

Mid County Campus, contact Michael — macres@brazospointe.com

Family Prayer

Dear God.

Thank you for loving me as I am. Help me to have an unstoppable faith like the blind beggar. Help me to be eager to run to you with all my needs. Help me to be willing to bring others to you as well. Give me faith to move mountains and show me what my next step is with you.

Amen