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▷ INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to week three of the *Steps to Discipleship* spiritual growth strategy. By now we are experiencing some of the rewards of spending daily time with God and His Word. We are taking important steps into a deeper discipleship walk with God.

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▷ EXPLORING LORDSHIP

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Today, we begin to explore one of the most important aspects of the disciple's life. Choosing Jesus Christ as Savior begins our spiritual journey with Him. Choosing Him as Lord is the next major step in the spiritual journey. In fact, it is virtually inseparable from the choice to accept Him as Savior. When we believe in Jesus for our salvation, we are saying that we cannot save ourselves and that we are surrendering to Jesus. The natural extension of that surrender is to accept Jesus as Lord.

**DEFINITION: THE *MIRIAM WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY* DEFINES *LORDS* AS:**

**1 : ONE HAVING POWER AND AUTHORITY OVER OTHERS: 2 : A RULER BY HEREDITARY RIGHT OR PREEMINENCE TO WHOM SERVICE AND OBEDIENCE ARE DUE.**

For many years I thought lordship meant God says it—I do it. Not any more. Today I understand that Lordship is far more than trying to obey God. Focusing on obedience leads to a focus on personal effort rather than on God. And regardless of how hard we try, our obedience falls short of what God desires or expects.

Lordship means recognizing the reality of who God is in our lives. It means giving Jesus Christ the appropriate place in our thinking and living. It means allowing Him to be preeminent in every part of our lives. So lordship begins with Christ's identity as Creator, Redeemer, and as Sanctifier. In other words, it means letting God be God.

Christ as Creator (John 1:1-14) is the foundation or starting point for lordship. He is Owner of all. He has the power to control all. However, He limits that power to give room for us to use our freewill to choose to serve Him out of a willing heart responding in love.

As Redeemer, Jesus has moved us out of the slavery to sin (Romans 6:14-18) and into a life of obedience in submission to Him. He has freed us from the controlling power and dominion of sin. Through His death He has given us the freedom of choice. We can choose to serve Him, or we can choose to live in rebellion.

As Sanctifier, Christ transforms us and empowers us with His presence to enable us to obey. Through an intimate union with God, we are transformed and we begin a life of partnership with Him. His presence makes us holy, and His presence produces obedience in our lives. Obedience is impossible for us as sinful human beings separate from God. But as we grow in Him, obedience becomes the natural fruit of our relationship with Him.

Thus we come to the challenge of lordship. It is a choice of who will be in control in our lives. Will we seek to be in charge? Will we even try to do the right thing in our own strength? Or will we surrender to God's love, presence, and power? Will we live our lives in lonely frustration and rebellion, or will we choose partnership with the King? Will we allow **Jesus** to be Lord of our lives?

### ▷ OBJECTIVES FOR THIS WEEK

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Our daily study and quiet time for this week will lead us into three primary objectives:

- To understand the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- To accept His lordship.
- To begin integrating His lordship into the way we live our daily lives.

### ▷ HOLY HABIT—*HOLY RELEASE*

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There is a *Holy Habit* or spiritual discipline that works naturally along with our choice to accept Jesus as Lord. I call it *Holy Release*. It is the practice of conscious surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ in the details of our lives. It means choosing to trust God by releasing control to Him. It also means consciously choosing to rest in Him and not worry over the details of daily life.

Far too many of us carry huge burdens of care and worry that weigh us down and prevent us from enjoying the peace of God's presence. Jesus invites us to bring our burdens to Him (Matthew 11:28-30). He promises to give us rest. Our part in this process is to choose to release these burdens to Him. We can do so by consciously using the following steps:

- Remember who God is as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.
- Trust that God loves us and is willing and able to take care of the details of our lives (Philippians 4:13, 19).
- Come to God in response to His invitation and accept His presence (Matthew 11:28-30).
- Choose to rest in God by transferring our burdens to Him.
- Choose to make the search for God and His kingdom the first and most important aspect of our lives (Matthew 6:24-34).
- Choose to offer our daily lives as a lifestyle of worship to Him (Romans 12:1).

The practice of releasing or surrendering the issues of our lives to God's control transforms our attitudes and our **perspectives**. It gives God room to be Lord in our lives. It forces us to recognize our role in contrast to His. It helps us to focus on the things and activities that are appropriate for us while allowing God to be in control of the details of our lives.

This *Holy Release* is an ongoing process and practice. It is a matter of personal growth—learning to let God be God. And it is a process that will continue throughout our entire lives.

▷ **SUGGESTED PRAYER**

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Here is a suggested sample prayer as we begin this week of study, reflection, and growth:

*Dear Heavenly Father, Help me to know your love. Help me see how interested you are in the details of my life. Teach me to trust you. Teach me to surrender control of every area of my life to you. Help me to release my burdens and worries to you. Let this week be a time in which I learn to rest in you. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**LIST BELOW THREE THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH IN YOUR JOURNEY WITH GOD THIS WEEK:**

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▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

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Our objective today is to face the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord. We want to begin to explore the impact this can have in our lives. Understanding and accepting Jesus as Lord is the greatest challenge to the contemporary Christian life. We are not exempt from this challenge, and only as we surrender to Him as Lord can He change our lives.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

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*Dear Lord, I come to you today wrestling with the concept that you are Lord. I am used to being in control. Teach me to know you and trust you. Help me learn to know and accept you as Lord of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

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We start this week with memory verse #5. We want to follow the same process we have followed during the last two weeks of using a card to help us memorize and review this passage. We also want to reflect on this text throughout the day.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)—“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV)—“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

We also want to review memory verses #2 (Psalm 34:8) and #4 (1 John 5:13). Once again, use your memory card to help you review these passages. Also spend a few minutes in quiet reflection as to how these passages can impact our lives.

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

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It is now time to explore what God wants to teach us in His Word. We want to begin the study of Jesus as Lord.

**READ THE STORY OF JESUS AND HIS TRANSFIGURATION IN MATTHEW 17:1-9.** Try to imagine that you were present when this story took place. How would you have reacted? What would you have thought about Jesus?

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**READ JOHN 1:1-14 AND COLOSSIANS 1:13-20**—These passages present Jesus as the Creator. What implications does this have for how we live? How does this reality define our relationship with Him?

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**READ ACTS 2:22-39**—Take special note of v. 36. What does it mean for Jesus to be made Lord and Christ?

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How can our acceptance of the reality of Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives change the way we live?

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▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

*Loving Father, Help me to understand how much you want to be involved in my life. Help me to trust you and give you room in my life. Help me to be sensitive to the reality of your presence with me throughout this day. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

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Our objective today is to explore further the lordship of Jesus Christ. We want to understand what His lordship is really like. For only as we know Him can we love Him.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

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*Dear God of Love, Teach me to know Jesus as Lord. Teach me to know Him as the Lord who serves. Help me to see His beauty and understand His love. I want to trust you. I want to give you room to control my life. Yet I am afraid of losing control. So help me know you better so I can trust you more. Amen.*

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

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Today, it is time to review Proverbs 3:5-6. Use your memory card and try to be word perfect. Review and reflect on this passage. What does it mean to “Trust in the Lord with all” our heart?

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▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

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Now it is time to delve deeper into God's Word and explore the meaning of Jesus as Lord and servant.

**READ THE STORY IN JOHN 13:1-17.** Try to picture the story as if you had been there. What would it have been like to have Jesus kneeling in front of you to wash your feet? What does this story tell us about His heart?

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**READ LUKE 22:24-27**—In what ways does our desire to be first show up in our lives? What does Jesus' portrayal of Himself as a servant say to us about our seeking for position and power?

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**READ MATTHEW 20:25-28**—How did Jesus manifest the true greatness He presented in this passage?

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How does the fact that Jesus came to serve us impact on your thinking?

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▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

*Loving Lord, Teach me to understand that true greatness comes in serving others. Help me see that Jesus' example is the way He wants me to live. Help me to lose myself in you to such an extent that I'm able to serve others as Jesus did. Amen.*

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

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Today, we want to understand just how much Jesus provides for us as Lord. We will discover that the only limit to His provision is our faith. We want to know Him better and trust Him more.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

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*Almighty God, Help me to understand today how great your provision is. Help me understand the riches that are mine in Christ. Help me know the privilege that is mine to have Jesus as Lord of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

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Today we want to review our memory verse from Sunday—memory verse #5, Proverbs 3:5-6. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the areas of your life in which you are seeking God's direction. How do you want God to work in these areas?

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▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

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Now we will go further in exploring what the Bible has to say about Jesus as Lord.

**READ THE STORY OF THE CENTURION IN LUKE 7:1-10.** This was a man who knew how to command. What does his faith in Jesus tell us about how he perceived Jesus? What does this story tell us about what Jesus can do in our lives?

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**READ PHILIPPIANS 4:10-19.** What do verses 11 and 12 teach us about being satisfied with what God provides?

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What does verse 13 teach us about what we can do in Christ? What are the specific areas of your life where you need this kind of power and strength?

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How does verse 19 bring us confidence and courage? What are the specific needs you want God to supply in your life today?

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▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

*Loving Father, Truly, you have loved me and blessed me in ways I can only begin to understand. Help me to accept and trust what I have studied today. Help me understand that I have all I need when I have Jesus. And help me to be open to your presence and power today. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

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Our objective today is to make the lordship of Jesus Christ something very personal for our own lives. Jesus is Lord. This is a historical and biblical fact. But it has little meaning in our lives until we choose to let Him be Lord of every part of our lives.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

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*Dear Lord and God, Allowing you to be Lord of my life is not easy, for I am used to being in control. Teach me to trust you. Help me know you well enough to be willing to surrender to you. Help me know and trust your heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

▷ MEMORY VERSE

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Our memory verse for today is Matthew 11:28-30. Follow the process we have learned to write this passage on a card and begin to memorize these verses.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)—“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV)—“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

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We also want to review memory verse #3, Ephesians 2:8-9, from last week. This ongoing review process helps us transfer the passage from our short-term to our long-term memory.

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

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We will now open our Bibles to explore and better understand what it means for Jesus to be “my Lord.”

**READ THE STORY OF THOMAS FOUND IN JOHN 20:24-29.** Have you ever felt like Thomas? In what ways have you been dissatisfied with a second-hand relationship with God? How would you like to experience God first-hand?

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**READ MATTHEW 22:37**—What does this level of love mean to you? How can this take place in your life?

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**READ 1 PETER 3:15**— In what ways can you make Jesus Lord of your life?

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**READ MATTHEW 7:21-23**—What do these verses tell you about Jesus being Lord of our lives?

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▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, I am only beginning to understand what it means for you to be my Lord. Thank you for your patience. Help me grow in allowing you into my life. Help me truly know you as Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



**READ ROMANS 10:8-13**—What does it mean to confess that Jesus is Lord? Why is this part of the basis for our salvation?

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**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:3**—In what ways is the Holy Spirit involved in leading us to confess Jesus as Lord?

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In what ways is God asking you to confess Him as Lord? In what areas of your life do you need to surrender and allow Him control?

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▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

*Loving Lord, There are areas of my life where you are still not Lord. Reveal them to me and help me surrender them to your love and power. Teach me to trust you enough to give you unlimited access and control. Amen.*

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

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Today's objective focuses on learning to integrate Christ's lordship into our lives. This is a continual process—not a one time act. And it must extend into every part of our lives.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

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*Dear Lord, Help me learn just how much you can do in my life. Help me see your presence and power today. Amen.*

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

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Our verse to review today is #6, Matthew 11:28-30. We started learning this verse on Wednesday. Today, we want to reflect on the areas of our lives that are a special burden to us. How can we bring them to Jesus?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

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We now want to go deeper in God's Word to explore how Jesus as Lord can make a difference in our lives.

**READ THE STORY OF MATTHEW 8:23-27. COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH PSALM 107:29.** What does it mean for Jesus to have this kind of power? Why was He able to sleep when the others were so worried?

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What are the storms in your life that you would like Jesus to calm? How can you invite Him into these "storms?"

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**READ COLOSSIANS 2:6-7**—How did you receive Jesus as Savior? How can you receive Him as Lord? What are the implications for living with Jesus as Lord?

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**READ ROMANS 13:11-14**—What does it mean to clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ? What impact do you think this could have on your life?

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**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:57**—This passage tells us that victory is ours in Jesus our Lord. In what areas of your life would you like to claim victory in Him?

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▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

*God of Love, Today I choose you as Lord. Teach me to grow in this journey. Open my eyes to your will and give me the courage to follow. Teach me to claim the reality that is mine in Jesus. Teach me to surrender and yield to your presence and love. In Jesus' name. Amen*

This week has been one of the most important weeks of the entire *Steps to Discipleship* process. The choice of Jesus as Lord is the turning point in the Christian life. Contemporary Christianity speaks a great deal about Jesus as Savior. However, it does not want to accept Him as Lord. This surrender to God's control is the key to successful discipleship. Spend the next few minutes reflecting on what the last few days have meant to your spiritual journey.

How has your daily time with God grown during the last week? What does it mean to you today?

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How has the challenge of Jesus as Lord confronted you during this week?

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What specific challenges to your discipleship walk have you experienced during these last seven days?

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How is the choice to let Jesus be Lord of your life making a difference in how you choose to live each day?

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How do you want God to work in your life during the coming week?

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