



Theme: God's Dreams

"Dreams to Move Us Forward"

We have a great new way for you to get these Meditation Moments each day directly to your phone. Just text **"med moments"** to **970-426-0700** to receive the **daily Meditation Moment** each morning and start your day grounded in faith and peace.

Weekly Memory Verse:

¹³ I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. – Romans 15:13

Meditation Moments for Monday, October 5 – Read **Romans 15:13-21**. At the end of his longest letter, the apostle Paul offered a clear dream that God calls us, as followers of Christ, to work diligently and tirelessly for God's kingdom. And yet, in just these six summary verses, we find three specific references to the work of the Holy Spirit, to whom Paul gave the credit for the many amazing things he had achieved in spreading Christ's message throughout much of the Roman Empire.



Competition for honor was the norm in the 1st century, but Paul boasts but in Christ's work through him. In verse 18, he linked the two ideas in the remarkable phrase, "He did it by what I've said and what I've done." When God wants anything done, God almost always sends people to do it—yet God never sends the people alone. We are always to work "by the power of God's Spirit."



Scholar William Barclay wrote in his commentary on Romans, "Paul saw himself, in the scheme of things, as an instrument in the hands of Christ. He did not talk of what he had done; but of what Christ had done with him. He never said of anything: 'I did it' ...It is when a [person] ceases to think of what they can do and begins to think of what God can do with them, that things begin to happen." In your service to God and other people, what people and ideas

have helped you to shift from thinking only about what you can do to thinking about what God can do with you? Here's one idea, from scholar N. T. Wright, that might help you more fully adopt that focus: "Romans 15:13 is one of those summary verses which says so much in such a short space that it would be worth learning it by heart, mulling it over again and again, and turning it into prayer, prayer for our own churches, prayer for the worldwide church today and tomorrow, prayer for God to be glorified in the life of his people." Why not pray that prayer right now, as the first step to learning it by heart?

Prayer: *O God, fill me today and every day with all joy and peace in faith so that I overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Tuesday, October 6 – Read **Matthew 7:12**. Our world is more connected than ever, yet often that just makes us more divided. Some people might say the "golden rule" is a "pipe dream" when it comes to politics, social media, or the divisions in today's world. The truth is the opposite. Jesus' famous "Golden Rule" is a vital dream that can move us forward towards the Kingdom of God. It's a simple idea—treat others the way you'd want to be treated—but it has the power to draw people together, even when we disagree. Scholar William Barclay, in his commentary on Matthew, called this "the capstone of the whole discourse... the topmost peak of social ethics, and the Everest of all ethical teaching."



Various thinkers wrote "negative" forms of the Golden Rule, such as, "Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you." Barclay said Jesus shifted that: "The attitude which says, 'I must do no harm to people' is quite different from the attitude which says, 'I must do my best to help people.'" The negative is passive and about avoiding bad. Jesus' positive is active and about doing good. How might seeing others through the "Golden Rule" change your dealings this week? When has someone else treated you the Golden Rule way? How has that helped you move forward in life?



Jesus said the Golden Rule summed up all his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and throughout Israel's history: "This is the Law and the Prophets," which means all the Hebrew Bible. The apostle Paul echoed this in Romans 13:8: "Whoever loves another person has fulfilled the Law." Both knew love is not just a feeling but active care for others' well-being. How can taking the Golden Rule seriously replace division and bitterness with unity and reconciliation? Where in your life—family, work, church, community—could applying the Golden Rule heal division and move you forward?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, help me to dream your dream for you people as I treat others as I want to be treated. Teach me how to love actively, practically, the way you love. Help me treat others as I long to be treated. Amen.*

Wednesday, October 7 – Read **Zechariah 4:2-7**. We learned earlier in this series about Jerusalem being destroyed in 586 BCE and the Israelites being carried off into exile in Babylon. It seems the prophet Zechariah began preaching around 520 BCE. We know

he supported the priest Zerubbabel, who led in rebuilding the Jerusalem Temple after Persia let the Israelites return from exile in [Ezra 5:1-2](#). Zechariah's vision showed the key role of God's spirit empowering the small, rather poor community, giving them dreams to help them move forward.



Scholar N. T. Wright noted in his commentary on Zechariah, "The words for 'wind', 'breath' and 'spirit' are the same (this is true in both Hebrew and Greek). This wind is the healing breath of God's spirit, come to undo the long effects of primal rebellion." Today's reading, and other prophets' messages like [Joel 2:27-29](#), showed how Israel's prophets depended on God's life-giving Spirit. How does it expand your sense of the Spirit's work to realize Jesus' teaching wasn't new, but built on a long prophetic foundation?



Zerubbabel and the people in Jerusalem faced a tough task, with extremely limited resources. God sent the prophet Zechariah with a key message: "Neither by power, nor by strength, but by my Spirit." When have you faced (or are now facing) situations where you don't seem to have enough power or strength? How might Zechariah's message suggest a different approach? Are you willing to listen?

Prayer: *Lord God, through your Spirit give me the courage and responsiveness to make the world better in whatever ways, large or small, you call me to. Amen*

Thursday, October 8 – Read **1 Thessalonians 1:4-6**. Most of us have a built-in resistance to change. Too often, it takes a health crisis to get us to change exercise or eating patterns, or a relationship struggle to make us willing to work on our emotional health. The Bible said the Holy Spirit sometimes gives us a forceful inner nudge, one that produces a deep personal sense of conviction, whether we've done something wrong or need a closer walk with God.



John Wesley, Methodism's founder, used the term "prevenient grace" to say the Holy Spirit is active in every person before we accept Jesus. Paul didn't use the word "prevenient," but he believed the same thing. He told the believers in Thessalonica that the Holy Spirit had prepared them to respond to the good news the Spirit led him to preach. In what ways (if any) can you see that God was preparing your heart even before you openly became a disciple?



The believers in Thessalonica accepted the good news about Jesus "with joy in spite of great suffering." In the last few years, we've lived through the fears and limitations of a global pandemic, an ugly war in Europe, and severe economic stress. We may all have a clearer sense of what suffering feels like. What habits or practices have you learned to link you with the Holy Spirit's strength so you can have inner joy and resilience, and not let any challenges crush you?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you don't always fit my human expectations, but you are alive and active even in this broken, troubled world. Let my life reflect yours in words, but even more importantly in actions. Amen.*

Friday, October 2 – Read **2 Timothy 1:1-8**. The apostle Paul started churches in modern day Turkey and parts of Greece. Timothy was his protégé. Paul no doubt dreamed that Timothy would take over for him and give him strength to lead after Paul was gone. Acts 14 tells us that Paul likely met Timothy's mother and grandmother on his first visit to the city of Lystra (in modern-day Turkey) and won them to Christ. Timothy must have been a child then, but he had a strong faith heritage from those two women. Unlike many converts, he didn't have to "unlearn" pagan habits of thought and worship. That no doubt made the strong friendship Paul formed with him easier.



How did Paul's language in verse 3 show that he saw his Christian life as a fulfillment of his Hebrew faith, not as a rejection of it? How did he connect his heritage of faith with Timothy's family heritage of trust in God? Who, whether a blood relative or not, has played roles like Lois and Eunice in your life and given you strength to dream?



In verse 7 Paul tells us that fear and timidity do not come from God; instead, God equips us with the courage and strength to dream and to act. In Paul's day, the Roman emperor claimed to be a god. Most Romans thought any who served a different Lord (like Jesus) were enemies of the Empire and fools. Facing that, would you be able to answer verse 8's call to "not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord"? How can you be unashamed of Jesus in the world today and find strength to be honest about your faith?

Prayer: Strong God, when I am afraid or feel small, remind me that I am enough and your dream is that I might be your child, serving you and others, each day. It's a simple and profound dream. Give me strength to live it! Amen.

Saturday, October 10 – Read **Acts 1:2-8**. The Holy Spirit has always been an active partner in God's dealings with the human family. Luke said Jesus himself was "working in the power of the Holy Spirit" in verse 2 as he told his followers to wait for the Spirit's power.



Jesus' mission for his followers was not primarily to create organizational charts or articles of incorporation. Things like that are often helpful as tools to carry out Jesus' mission, but his basic commission ("be my witnesses") meant evoking a response from real people. How do Jesus' marching orders make it clear that, in the end, our mission as individuals and as a church is much more about reaching people than labels or job titles?



Surely the creator God could have thundered the news of Jesus from the skies if that were desirable. Instead, God's main way of carrying out the mission also employed people: "You will be my witnesses." What made it more effective, in the end, for God to use people as witnesses? Whose witness has shaped your life? In what ways have you been able to live out Jesus' calling for you to be one of his witnesses?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, give me a heart open to your Spirit's power, and a willingness to answer your call, wherever you and your mission may take me. Amen