# CONNECTING TO GOD THROUGH HIS MISSION

Over the past year, we have looked at:

- Connecting to God through His Church
- Connecting to God through Spiritual Habits
- Connecting to God through Ministry

This leads us to connecting to God through His Mission. When we think about missions, we often think of it as work the church does, but it's more than that. It's what the church and believers are all about! It's not "a mission", it's THE MISSION; it's God's mission.

For the next 8 weeks, we are going to look at God's mission and how he invites us to be on His mission with Him. Missions are something that everyone can be involved in, no matter their age. God calls kids, parents, and families together to be on mission with Him. Pray that over these 8 weeks, God will show you the mission He has planned for you.

## WEEK 1 UNDERSTANDING GOD'S MISSION

So, what is God's mission? Wow, that's a good question! If we're going to be on His mission with Him, we have to know what it is. Throughout the Bible, it seems that the overall mission of God is that all people would know Him, worship Him, and bring glory to Him. The result will be when Jesus who was God in flesh will come again, and "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow…and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:10-11

### Day 1 The God Mission

**Think About It:**
Isn't it fun to celebrate? We celebrate Christmas, birthdays, a sports team winning a game, even when the winner is announced on The Voice (or American Idol, America's Got Talent…). It's so fun to celebrate, but it's even more fun when you're connected to the celebration somehow! Maybe this is how people have been wired; it's how God made us, to celebrate.

**Read It:** Psalm 34:1-3, 67:3-5

**Think About It More:**
When these verses talk about blessing the Lord, praising Him, exalting His name, they are talking about celebrating. This celebration is better than a birthday or winning a game, it's celebrating God and bringing glory to Him. That's His mission, to know His glory, experience His glory, and give glory to Him.

In the next to last chapter in the Bible, we see the final outcome in eternity, the culmination of God's mission.

> But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminate it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring glory and the honor of the nations into it.
>
> Revelation 21:22-26

We will see the beauty and splendor of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and we will celebrate forever!

**Pray About It:**
Begin to celebrate God now. Pray and thank Him for how awesome He is! Thank Him for sending Jesus to take away the barrier of sin so that you could become His child and celebrate Him forever!

## Day 2 God has Established a Specific People for Himself

**Think About It:**
God chose and set apart a special people to know Him, worship Him, and reveal Him to the world. Who is this group of people? It is the Jewish people.

**Read It:** Deuteronomy 7:1-8; 1 Peter 2:9

**Think About It More:**
Throughout the Old Testament, we can see how the Jewish people were special. God used them in powerful ways, including bringing Jesus into the world. They were reminded of their special status in almost every book of the Old Testament. God's mission to save people from the power of sins is seen all along the history of the Jewish people.

God chose the Jewish people to be a group that was set apart not because of something they did, but because it was His choice. All power that the Jewish people have had throughout time is from God.

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for your heritage. Thank Him for the Jewish people and how He used them.

## Day 3 Avoid Meaninglessness

**Think About It:**
Do you ever feel like going to school is meaningless? Day after day of learning things you may never use in real life? Adults sometimes feel the same way about their jobs. All of these things we have to do; we must go to school so we can someday graduate, and then we must work to make money to buy the things we need here on earth. Do you know the one thing that will never be meaningless? GOD! He doesn't change, He doesn't lose, He is the only way to avoid meaninglessness!

**Read It:** Ecclesiastes 1:12-14

**Think About It More:**
In these verses, King Solomon has been looking to see what life is all about. He tried many things, but he came to the conclusion that everything was meaningless. He tried wisdom, things that bring pleasure, wealth, even religion, but he said these things were "vanity of vanities." Then, after his experiment, he came to this conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:13:

> Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's call.

His conclusion was that life is found in knowing and worshiping God, everything else is meaningless.

Have you ever heard someone say that we have a "God-shaped hole"? This really is true. We have a need in our lives for God; He's the only one who can fill it. People try lots of different things to fit into this whole, but God is the only answer.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will help you stay connected to Him and avoid meaninglessness.

## Day 4 God is a Jealous God

**Think About It:**
Are you ever jealous of what others have, maybe friends or your siblings? Did you know that God gets jealous too? He's not jealous like we feel though. He gets jealous because He wants the best for us.

**Read It:** Nahum 1:2

**Think About It More:**
God loves you. It doesn't matter who you are or what you have done; He loves you. When He sees you getting involved in things that keep you from experiencing His love, He is jealous. It's not because what you are doing is hurting His feelings, it's because He knows what you are doing is hurting you and will hurt you even more if you continue.

Some times it can be hard to think of God being jealous. But He tells us this in the verse we read today. God doesn't want to share us with the sin in the world; we belong to Him. He wants the best for us, and He is that best. His jealousy is there because He knows we are missing His best when we turn from Him.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will help us turn to Him more every day.

## Day 5 Jesus Glorified the Father

**Think About It:**
What was Jesus' whole life about? He was about bringing glory to His Father's name. Talk with your family about ways Jesus did this. (Some examples could be: miracles that He did, sermons where He spoke the truth, teaching the disciples so that they could continue His work.)

**Read It:** John 12: 20-33

**Think About It More:**
What was the completion of Jesus' work on earth? It was His death on the cross and His resurrection. In these verses, Jesus makes this clear. We can see again in chapter 17 verses 4-5 that Jesus talks about His life and death bringing God glory.

> I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.
>
> John 17:4-5

Jesus finished the work of the Father, and now we have the same work-to glorify Him.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will keep you focused on bringing glory to Him, just like Jesus did.

## WEEK 2 YOU WERE MADE TO BE ON THE MISSION

Last week we looked at how Jesus brought glory to God the entire time He was on earth. Even when He was born, angels were saying "Glory to God in the highest"! Jesus is God's only Son, but God has given all of us life. Just like it was Jesus' mission to bring glory to His Father, we are made for the same thing. God gave us life to bring Him glory.

### Day 1 All are Wanted, All are Purposed

**Think About It:**
Have you ever been around a little baby? There's not a whole lot that a little baby can do, but they sure are cute to watch and play with! It's hard to think about what that baby will be like in 10 or 20 years. Will the baby be good at sports, an artist, good at playing an instrument? In 20 years or more, what will that baby be doing? Will he or she be married? Will they be working at a business, a school teacher, a preacher? It's crazy to think about when you see a baby, but God already has a plan for that cute little one. Ask your parents if they had ideas about what you would be like when you were just a little baby.

**Read It:** Psalm 139 (If this is too long a chapter for your family to sit through, you may want to focus on verses 13-16.)

**Think About It More:**
Before babies are born, God not only plans for their births, He has a purpose for their lives. God has a purpose for YOU. God makes no mistakes or accidents. Every child is a special gift and part of His perfect plan.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will show you your value in Him. Pray that you will begin to fulfill the plan He has for you.

### Day 2 God's Directing and Patient Hand

**Think About It:**
When your family goes on a long car ride to a new place, do you use the GPS on a phone? GPS is a great tool that not only shows you where your destination is located, but it can also show you a path to get to that location. What happens when you take a wrong turn? Sometimes it can take a while to get back on course. What about if you go into an area where you have no service? The GPS can lose its signal and you're driving around aimlessly. You can waste a lot of time traveling without a path. Did you know that God has a path for us? He directs us and wants us to stay on course with Him.

**Read It:** Hebrews 11:23-29

**Think About It More:**
God had a plan for Moses, but it took him a while to get on course with God. Moses was traveling without looking to God just like when we travel without looking at our GPS. Think about Moses…He was hidden in the Nile River, watched over by his sister, rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, taken care of by his own mother. He grew up as Pharaoh's son in the palace and had all of the advantages of a king. As he grew up, he became concerned about his people and turned away from those advantages to suffer as his own people did. Then, after 40 years, he had to flee Egypt after killing an Egyptian. For 40 years he worked as a shepherd. Then, finally, he surrendered to God's call to go to Egypt and deliver God's people out of slavery. He led the people and prepared them to enter the Land of Promise.

Moses definitely had a purpose, but it took him 80 years to join up with God's plan. What blessings and benefits might he have missed during those 80 years?

**Pray About It:**
Pray that you listen to hear how God is directing your life.

## Day 3 The Preserving Hand of God

**Think About It:**
Have you ever heard of someone making preserves? These are jams or jellies made with real fruit, preserved with sugar and other ingredients. They stay sweet and delicious and can be used long after the normal time that you could eat the fruit. They have been "preserved" or protected to use. People can be preserved, too. God preserves or protects us to be used as part of His plan.

**Read It:** 2 Kings 11:1-12

**Think About It More:**
Joash was just a baby when his aunt saved him and kept him hidden for 6 years until he became king. He didn't know what was going on. We can be the same way. God will protect us and sometimes, we don't even know it! Too often we are not even aware of the preserving hand of God.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will protect you when needed so that you can remain part of His plan.

## Day 4 Trophies of Grace

**Think About It:**
Have you ever gotten a trophy? Are you super proud of it? What did you do to receive it? Did you know that we are God's trophies? Not because of things we do, but because of what He does in us.

**Read It:** Ephesians 2:1-10

**Think About It More:**
God is proud of us, His children, not because of what we accomplish, but because of what He has accomplished in us. We are His trophies shining for His glory! Think of all He has accomplished in us.

- He made us alive when we were dead.
- He made us alive with Christ.
- He seated us in the heavenly places.

If you are a believer, you are an accomplishment of God!

**Pray About It:**
Pray and thank God for saving you (if you are a believer). Pray that you do not boast in yourself, but in what God has done through you.

## Day 5 Be Set Apart to God

**Think About It:**
What do you think of when you hear the word holy? Something that is holy is set apart.

God is holy. He is absolutely perfect. He is so perfect that He cannot be around sin. There is no one else like Him. His holiness is part of everything He does. He has a holy love, so it's a perfect love. He shows us perfect mercy, and His anger is even holy and perfect!

**Read It:** 1 Peter 1:13-16

**Think About It More:**
How can we be holy? There is no way for us to be perfect? We are made perfect through Jesus. God doesn't call us to be perfect, but He calls us to stand out from the rest of the world. When we put our trust and faith in Him as our Savior, that sets us apart. We need to live like we are set apart from the work every day.

Remember, Jesus is the only way that we can be made holy. He is the only way that we can be in the presence of God. He takes the sin away so that we can be in the presence of God.

**Pray About It:**
If you have not asked Jesus to save you from your sins? If not, is this the right time?
If you have asked Jesus to be your Savior, pray that He will help you be set apart from the rest of the world every day.

## WEEK 3 YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
>
> Acts 1:8

This week we will look at what it means to be a witness.

### Day 1 Command or a Statement of Fact?

**Think About It:**
Do you know what a witness is? A witness is someone who gives testimony to (tells about) a fact or an event. There are witnesses to traffic accidents, to important speeches, to bowl games, to all kinds of things. Jesus says that we are to be His witnesses.

**Read It:** Acts 1:1-11

**Think About It More:**
The disciples asked Jesus a question about restoring Israel. He answered them telling them that they didn't need to know these things. He could have been letting them know that this was not important at the time. He then told them what was important for now: the Holy Spirit will come, you will receive power, and you will be my witness.

The answer He gave is both a statement and command. Jesus is telling His disciples what is going to happen, but He is also giving a command like He gave in the Great Commission. We are to be witnesses in our world. When the Holy Spirit comes over us, we are new witnesses to the personal power of Jesus.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will make you a bold witness throughout your town, state, country, and the whole world.

## Day 2 What We have Experienced

**Think About It:**
Do you remember from yesterday what a witness is? A witness is someone who gives testimony (tells about) a fact or event. Did you know that the writers of the New Testament were mostly writing about what they had heard, seen, and experienced? They were giving witness.

**Read It:** 1 John 1:1-4

**Think About It More:**
In these verses, John is telling us what he heard, what he saw, and what he looked upon. He really was with Jesus and is talking about his time with Him on earth. He was a witness.

Now it's our turn to tell what we have seen, heard, and experienced with Jesus. We cannot talk about walking with Jesus physically and seeing His earthly work, but we can share about how He is working in the lives of those who become His followers. You can tell others about the work He has done and is doing in your life. We can give witness to the risen, victorious Jesus who is coming again, just like the people in the New Testament could witness about Jesus as He walked the earth.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will give you an excitement to be His witness.

## Day 3 Our Role to Witness

**Think About It:**
Do you enjoy watching tv or movies? Actors can make us believe they really are the people we see on the screen, but they are actually just playing a role. They are acting like the character in the tv show or movie would act. Actors sometimes will ask, "What's my motivation?" What do they mean by this? They are trying to figure out why their character would do or say certain things.

We have a role to play as Christians. We are called to be witnesses of Jesus.

**Read It:** 2 Corinthians 5:9-17

**Think About It More:**
In these verses, Paul motivates us in three ways to fulfill our role as witnesses.

First, all believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to determine the rewards to be received. This isn't the judgment seat that is talked about in Revelation 20 where only those who are unsaved will stand. We know we have eternal life because we have accepted Christ as our Savior, but we will be judged for rewards. This should motivate us to serve Him like He has called us to do. We want to hear Jesus say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Second, the fear of the Lord pushes us to be witnesses. We know God is watching us, and He has given us a clear command to go and make witnesses. We want to be busy doing what He told us to do. When your parents ask you to do something, don't you want to be working on that if they walk in the room?

Third, the love of Christ pushes us towards witnessing. Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross to save us from sin. He loves us when we are hard to love, when we were ungodly sinners and enemies (Romans 5:6-10). We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). When you love someone, don't you want to do what they ask of you? Christ proved His love for the world, the church, and you and me.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will use these 3 things to motivate you to be His witness.

## Day 4 David Gave Witness to God

**Think About It:**
Think about the Old Testament. It was written before Jesus was born. But, there were people even then who gave witness to God. The good news of Jesus coming goes all the way back to Adam and Eve as soon as sin entered the world. Genesis 3:15 says:

> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

We now know that the one that God spoke of in this verse is Jesus, but people in the Old Testament didn't know this yet. Even still, there were people who gave witness to God, and one of them was David.

**Read It:** Psalm 103

**Think About It More:**
In this chapter, David delighted in the Lord and called others to do the same. In the first 6 verses, David praised God personally. He expressed his praise and thankfulness for six things: forgiveness, healing, redemption, love, satisfaction, and renewal. Then, in verses 6-18, David gave national praise. He praised God for delivering the people of Israel and showing them mercy, even though there were many times when they had turned away. In the last few verses, David called for universal praise. He knows that we have more to praise God for than the angels in heaven!

We should praise and share God like David did. What can you thank God for personally? Your family? Health? Friends? Teachers who share God's truth with you? We are so lucky to live in the United State of America. Our country was formed on the providence of God, and He has blessed us as a nation. We should give thanks to Him for that. We also will be able to praise God from heaven ultimately. How amazing will that be? There is so much to praise God for, just like David did. This is part of our witness.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that you will be able to witness like David did, out of a grateful heart that is full of praise.

## Day 5 Zechariah Gave Witness to the Coming King

**Think About It:**
Zechariah is another man from the Old Testament. His testimony that we will read today looks forward to the coming Messiah, Jesus. He talks about times past and times in the future, but he knows that God is always in control. When God uses the Holy Spirit to guide someone to write about history in advance, that is called prophecy. That is what Zechariah wrote, a prophecy of Jesus coming.

**Read It:** Zechariah 9:1-9 (For younger children, you may want to only read verses 8-9.)

**Think About It More:**
This chapter talks about two coming rulers. In the first 7 verses of this chapter, Zechariah wrote about a coming earthly ruler. This ruler was Alexander the Great. Zechariah wrote this more than 200 years before it actually happened! God used Alexander the Great to bring judgment. Then, in verses 8-9, he writes of another coming Ruler. This Ruler is Jesus. Zechariah even writes about the triumphal entry that occurred on what we call Palm Sunday and is written about in all four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). He writes in advance his testimony of the coming Savior of the World!

**Pray About It:**
Pray that your testimony will point to Jesus just like Zechariah's does.

## WEEK 4 MORE BIBLE TESTIMONIES

The last two days of last week we looked at two testimonies of people in the Old Testament. They didn't know Jesus because He had not yet come into the world, but they knew God through the revelations they had. This week, we will look at testimonies of five people in the New Testament who encountered Jesus. While you are reading this week, begin thinking about your testimony.

### Day 1 The Samaritan Woman at the Well

**Think About It:**
There was once a boy who knew very little about karate. The boy had never seen anyone do karate, but he had seen a karate studio. Then, the boy met a friend at school who took karate. This friend began showing the boy karate moves and telling him all about his karate class. The boy went from someone who knew very little to someone who wanted to learn all he could and wanted to take karate. His interest was sparked from a friend who shared what he knew. The friend wasn't a black belt with all of the answers, but he told the boy what he could. He gave a testimony about karate. We don't need to know all of the answers when giving our testimony about Jesus; we just need to share what we know.

**Read It:** John 4:1-39

**Think About It More:**
God had a plan and purpose for Jesus going through Samaria in these verses. The woman that He meets is a Samaritan. The Jewish people didn't usually talk to Samaritan people, but Jesus didn't care; He talked to everyone. He was on a mission, and He knew people in Samaria needed to know Him.

He had a conversation with a woman that changed not only her life, but also the lives of many others in her town. She had some ideas about herself that would have kept her from knowing and worshiping the One True God, but Jesus was able to remove those ideas. He spoke to her about who He was, and He told her He knew things she had done. She was so overwhelmed with Jesus, she left her jar at the well and went into town. There, she shared about her encounter with Jesus and asked, "Could this be the Christ?" Because of her sharing this testimony, men from the town came to see Jesus for themselves. As a result, many of the Samaritans believed in Him…all because of the testimony of this woman.

It is clear to see how important it is for us to share our testimonies. Many people are brought to Jesus because they are curious about what someone tells them. The woman didn't have all of the answers about Jesus, and we don't have to have them either. We can spark others to begin seeking and searching and as a result, they come to Him in their own faith. Share what you have experienced with Jesus and watch Him draw people to Himself.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will give you the courage to begin sharing your experiences of Him with others.

## Day 2 The Apostle Paul's Testimony

**Think About It:**
Think about your life. Who were you before you met Jesus? How did you come to know the truth that Jesus is your Savior? What is Jesus doing in your life now? These are the things we can talk about in our testimony. That's exactly what Paul did in the verses we will read today.

**Read It:** Acts 26:1-23

**Think About It More:**
Paul was ready to share his testimony. He told about his life before he became a Christian, as a child, youth, and then as an adult. Then, Paul told about his experience on the road to Damascus; this was a life changing experience for him. He told about his life since meeting Jesus. The whole time he was speaking, he was respectful of his audience, the king. He did not attack or speak down to him, but he showed honor. Also, his testimony wasn't long and full of big words. It was his story, the truth about how God had worked and continued to work in his life.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will begin to give you the words to share in your testimony.

## Day 3 The Centurion's Testimony

**Think About It:**
Have you ever been to a candlelight service? The last thing we do at our Christmas Eve service is sing Silent Night in candlelight. Mr. Dennis begins by lighting his one candle, then he lights the candles of those siting near him. Slowly, the light spreads through the entire worship center, and it's as though the lights have been turned back on. From just one light, the whole place is lit! It's funny how just one little thing can spread and make an impact.

**Read It:** Mark 15:33-39

**Think About It More:**
Which verses were about the Roman centurion? Only verse 39. One verse in the whole Bible is about this man.

> And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

This one verse says a lot. The centurion was standing at the foot of the Cross, and he acknowledged who Jesus was. Isn't this what God wants for us? He wants us to come to Him and believe in Him. The centurion did this. Not only that, but think about how many people have read this verse. Even if we think this couldn't be that important, God thought it was so important that He included it in His Word for millions and millions of people to read. This one thing that may seem small really does make a big impact.

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for showing you the faith of this centurion. Pray that you will see how important it is to come to God and acknowledge who He truly is.

## Day 4 The Testimony of the Man Born Blind

**Think About It:**
Which is better, to hear about someone eating ice cream or to eat the ice cream yourself? It's always more powerful to experience something. When you experience Jesus, this is something you should share!

**Read It:** John 9:1-25

**Think About It More:**
No matter what other people were asking the blind man, he knew one thing for sure…He was blind, and thanks to Jesus, he could see. The disciples were asking questions about why the man was blind, and the Pharisees were asking questions about who the healer was. The blind man answers them in verses 24-25.

> So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."
>
> John 9:24-25

The greatest testimony of the work of Jesus is a changed life!

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will give you opportunities to share about how your life has changed with Him in your heart.

## Day 5 Simeon's Testimony

**Think About It:**
When is your birthday? Do you look forward to it coming each year? Isn't it wonderful when it finally arrives?

Simeon was a man in the Bible who was waiting for something, but it wasn't his birthday. He was waiting on the Savior to come.

**Read It:** Luke 2:25-35

**Think About It More:**
Simeon knew the promise of God to send the Messiah, and the Holy Spirit had led him to the temple at the time when Mary and Joseph were bringing baby Jesus to be dedicated. Can you imagine how excited Simeon was? This is the Savior he had been waiting for!

Simeon's testimony is one of faith. He had faith in God's promise. He was saved by faith in God's provision. Because of his faith and obedience to the Spirit, Simeon was able to see the baby who was his Salvation.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that you will have faith in the promises of God and that you will anticipate the coming of Jesus again.

## WEEK 5 SHARING MY TESTIMONY

What is a testimony? Over the past several days, we have read testimonies of people in the Old and New Testaments. Some of these testimonies were short, only one verse, and others were a little longer. When people give their testimonies today, the same is true. Some can be formal and take a while to share, and others only need a sentence or two. It doesn't matter how many words you use, a testimony is sharing what Jesus has done in your life.

This week we want to encourage you to write out a brief, personal testimony about your faith in Jesus. There will be a few questions to help you get your thoughts organized. You will also be able to read the testimonies of a few HCBC members who work with our kids.

### Day 1 Writing Your Personal Testimony

**Think About It:**
There are lots of different ways to tell the same story. Can you image how different the story of Cinderella would sound if the stepsisters told it? The story itself would be the same, Cinderella would still end up with the prince, but the details of how that happened may be very altered. The same is true of our testimonies. We are all sharing how God works in our lives through Jesus, but each one of us will give our account differently.

**Read It:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

**Think About It More:**
In these verses, Paul is referring back to the day when the Holy Spirit filled the followers of Jesus. Peter had preached that day, and he gave simple elements of the gospel that were "according to scripture." People need to hear the basic elements of salvation. That was part of the testimonies we looked at last week.

Last week we looked at several biblical testimonies, and each one of them was different. If you look back to Paul's testimony that he gave to King Agrippa in Acts 26, you can see 4 parts. These 4 parts make an easy outline for us to use to write our testimonies.

Four Parts to Your Testimony:

1. My life before I met Christ
2. How I realized I need Christ
3. How I committed my life to Christ
4. The difference it has made in my life

You can also think about how you would answer this question: If you were standing before God right now, and He asked "Why should I let you into My Heaven?" what would you say?

Ok, it's your turn! Begin writing your testimony. This is for everyone who is a believer, parents and kids. Begin writing, keep it clear and concise. When you are finished, please send a copy to your pastor- Dennis Watson for Fayetteville (dwatson@harpscrossing.com) or Chris Watson for Hollonville (cwatson@harpscrossing.com).

**Pray About It:**
Ask God to help you write your testimony. Pray that He will begin giving you opportunities to share it with others.

## Day 2 Personal Testimony of Rene Chesnut

**Think About It:**
Do you know Rene Chesnut? She is a vital part of our Children's Ministry. Today, we will read her testimony.

**Read It:** Romans 6:23

**Think About It More:**
I was raised in a Christian home where you knew if the church doors were opened, you would be there. Becoming a Christian was a part of going to church. At a revival when I was about 9 years old I felt God in my heart asking me to follow Him. The pastor shared with us about how God created us to have fellowship with him and that He gave us a choice to follow His plans or ours. The pastor shared that we are all sinners and told us that in Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death" and how God still loves us even when we sin. Instead of me dying for my sins, He sent His son, Jesus, to die for my sins, and that Jesus shed His blood for my sins. I had been given a gift of being able to say I was sorry for my sins and being given another chance. When we choose to not accept Him, it separates us from that close relationship (Isaiah 59:2). Coming to know Him means we step out in faith and ask Him to walk with us each day. This relationship is a gift from God, not something we have earned by things that we do. There is nothing I can do that would make Him not love me anymore.

Growing up, I don't remember anything that would make me doubt my decision to follow God. After I left my parents home, I found that I started having to decide if following God was what I wanted to do because of my faith in Him or because it was expected of me. I had to walk with Him and trust Him based on my faith and not my parents' faith. I struggled for a while and made choices that I knew were not what God wanted for me. Even though I walked away from Him, He didn't walk away from me. He blesses me and provides for me each day more than I ever deserve. God guides me in serving Him working with children, their families and those with special needs. I am not perfect, but I am thankful that every day I am given the choice to turn away from my sins and trust in God to take care of me.

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for Mrs. Rene and all that she does for our children's ministry. Thank Him for leading her on His path. Thank Him for never walking away from us.

## Day 3 Personal Testimony of Lois Cooke

**Think About It:**
Do you know Lois Cooke? Mrs. Lois teaches Sunday School in the Children's ministry, and she Mission Friends to our preschoolers. Being on mission with God is an important part of her life.

**Read It:** Mark 16:15

**Think About It More:**
I was born into a Christian home and grew up going to church every Sunday. When I was nine, I walked the aisle, joined the church, and was baptized. I knew all about the Bible and could explain the plan of salvation, but I'm not sure how much I truly believed it in my heart at that point. I did not receive any discipleship at that time other than the normal Sunday School and Sunday morning worship.

When I was in college, I began to wonder why it was even important to go to church at all and considered giving up going. My grandmother's death when I was a senior in college led me to wonder about life and death. I also began to wonder if I really knew Jesus. In March of 1983, a few weeks after my grandmother's death, I thought about how sinful I was and how I needed a Someone to save me from that sin. I asked Jesus to forgive me, make me clean, and change me. A new pastor and his wife began investing time in discipling me. I began studying the bible and not just reading it, and God began to change me little by little. Then, someone asked me what God was doing in my life. I hadn't realized that He wanted to DO anything in MY life; so, I began to ask Him what He wanted to do, and He began working.

One of the most significant moments in my life and spiritual journey came as a result of events that happened in the summer of 1985. All of my life, I had struggled with a very low perception of myself and my abilities. I felt like I couldn't so anything right, wasn't worth anything, and perhaps should not even be alive. (In fact, I often thought that I should have died instead of my older sister who died of leukemia when she was two and I was six months old.) God protected me during a traumatic event that summer that proved to me that He had given me life, and that He had a plan and a purpose for me. I could choose to believe the truth or the lie that I had believed. I chose to believe the truth, and that has made all of the difference. Since then, I have realized that every day I have to choose to believe God's truth instead of following lies. I also learned through those circumstances that I need to rely on the Holy Spirit to work in and through me to do whatever God was calling me to do.

Following Him led me into teaching high school English and Spanish and brought me to Harps Crossing. He also gave me a concern for missions. On my first mission trip to West Virginia, as we passed through more and more neighborhoods and towns and cities, I began to realize that the world is really big and is full of people who need to know that God sent Jesus to save them and give them life, and that somebody needed to tell them! When our church adopted the Dong people in Southeast Asia, I felt God call me to go. I spent several years in this area praying for and doing what I could to give the Good News to the Dong people. God has since led me back to Fayetteville where I got to marry David Cooke and adopt our children, Hannah and Andrew from China. Now I get to teach Sunday School and Mission Friends, and I still get to talk about the Dong people and ask others to pray for them. Everyday I continue to pray and ask Him to do whatever He wants in my life and in the life of my family.

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for Mrs. Lois and her work in our preschool and children's ministries. Thank God for the heart He gave her for missions.

## Day 4 Personal Testimony of Sheryl Bodron

**Think About It:**
Do you know Sheryl Bodron? Mrs. Sheryl has worked in our children's ministry in lots of different ways over many years. Right now, she teaches Sunday School and leads the Good News Club.

**Read It:** John 3:1-21

**Think About It More:**
I have definite memories of church events from as early as three years old when I played Joseph in the Christmas play because my older brother got sick the day of the pageant. At seven years old, I attended Good News Club after school. My Aunt Marie taught, and she always brought the best cookies! She had cool books with the words to the songs printed in them - you flipped them upside down to sing the second verse.

One of the songs we sang was "Do You Know that You've Been Born Again?" I didn't even know what that meant, so how could I sing the second verse that declared "Yes, I Know that I've Been Born Again?" After club one day in the spring of 1970, I asked my mother the meaning of those words. She showed me the story of Nicodemus in John 3 which includes that very special verse John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life." My mother led me to pray to ask Jesus into my heart that day in her bedroom.

Since that time, I have had periods of very close walking with Jesus and times when I have moved away from Him. However, He has been faithful to always be there when I was willing to call on Him. He has protected my mind and heart from so many of the evils of this world. He has blessed me beyond anything that I could ask or imagine, especially with opportunities to love children in His name. What a privilege it is to share my love for God's Word with His little ones and see their love for Him grow.

So many people have poured themselves into my life and relationship with Jesus - pastors, Sunday School teachers, Bible Study leaders, prayer partners, and friends. And most of all the countless musicians whose music leads my heart into the very presence of my Jesus!

My testimony in song comes from one of the old hymns I learned as a child:

> I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.
> And when, in scenes of glory, I sing a new, new song it'll be the old, old, story that I have loved so long!

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for Mrs. Sheryl and her work in our Children's ministry. Pray that God will make His Word clear to you.

## Day 5 Personal Testimony of Judi Knowles

**Think About It:**
Mrs. Judi is our Preschool and Children's Director. She has worked at Harp's Crossing for a long time. God has used her, and continues to do so, to touch the lives of many children and their families.

**Read It:** Jeremiah 29:11

**Think About It More:**
I grew up going to church every Sunday morning and evening with my family. I learned about Jesus and His love for me from my parents and Sunday School leaders beginning at an early age. When I was about 12 years old, a program was presented at our school concerning where you placed Jesus in your life. We were fortunate to have these types of assemblies when I was in school! The program was powerful and afterwards I signed up to speak with one of the leaders. The leader explained to me that even though I knew who Jesus was, I could still know Him personally by inviting Him into my life. This was the first time I realized there was a difference in knowing about Jesus and truly having a relationship with Him. I did not make a decision right then. But over the next few weeks, when I was at church during the invitation time at the end of each service, I could feel my heart pounding. I knew this was Jesus calling me to ask Him into my heart and life, but I was scared. See, I was afraid to be baptized, because I was afraid of water! After several weeks, I made the decision to go forward at the end of a church service. I spoke with the pastor and prayed to ask Jesus to live in my heart and be Lord of my life. The next Sunday evening, I was baptized. I admit I was still afraid, but I prayed and asked Jesus to calm me and protect me. He did and still does today!

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for Mrs. Judi and all she has done and continues to do for our church. Pray that God will help you overcome your fears to continue on His mission.

## WEEK 6 KEEP THE MISSION IN PERSPECTIVE

Luke does something interesting in his writing in the book of Acts. Instead of using pronouns like "they" and "he", he begins using "we". Do you know what this means? This means that Luke was participating in what was going on in those passages.

Over the last few weeks, we have looked at personal testimonies. These focus on an individual believer sharing the gospel. This week, we will make a turn to the work of the church made up of lots of believers. We will look at working together as the Body of Christ to join God in His mission. Remember, His mission is not an activity of the church, it is THE work of the church. God has invited us to join Him on His mission. Therefore, everything we do is about His mission that the whole world will know and glorify the One True God.

### Day 1 Where Do People of the Mission Come From

**Think About It:**
Do you have a favorite sports team? Why is that team your favorite? It's probably because someone you know cheers for them. You've seen and heard how they like the team, so you have learned to like that team as well.

**Read It:** Deuteronomy 6:1-9

**Think About It More:**
God gave instructions through Moses to the people that God's Word and Law should guide them in their choices and actions. Verses 4-5 were the basic confessions of faith for the Jews, and Jesus included it with what he called the greatest commandment; "You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." From there, God instructed Moses regarding teaching His Word and Law to others, including children, on a constant basis.

When something is in your heart, you want to do it; it's not an obligation. That is how we should feel about God. We should have a heart for Him, His Word, and His mission. We should want to do the things of God. When others see us joining God on His mission because we want to not because we have to, they will want to do it to. Just like cheering for your favorite team, people want to join in on things that others are doing because they have a heart for it.

*Parents, the adult devotions talk more about teaching the things of God to your children. Remember, this begins at home!*

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will help you have a heart for Him, His Word, and His mission.

## Day 2 Mentors and Mentorees

**Think About It:**
Do you know what a mentor is? A mentor is someone who guides another to greater success. A mentoree is one being mentored. All believers are being mentors and mentorees. We are learning from others and helping others to grow.

**Read It:** 2 Timothy 1:1-7

Think About It More:
Paul is writing to Timothy who he calls a son. Timothy wasn't really Paul's biological son, but he was his spiritual son. Paul was mentoring Timothy. He was thankful that he saw faith in Timothy, like he saw in his mother and grandmother. Timothy became one of the people Paul went to concerning the church at Ephesus.

Here at Harp's Crossing, there are lots of areas for mentoring. We have Sunday School, missions activities, children and preschool choirs, Life Classes, VBS, and the list goes on! Why is it important for us to provide teaching and mentoring for people of all ages? So that they will catch and learn the mission of God. Being on mission with Him includes helping others be on mission with Him also.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will bring the right people into your life as mentors for you and for you to mentor.

## Day 3 The Impact of One Deacon

**Think About It:**
Have you ever thrown rocks into a pond or lake? What happens when you do? Ripples are formed. One stone splashes in, and then multiple ripples go out from that spot.

**Read It:** Acts 7:54-8:4

**Think About It More:**
Sometimes we think that we can make a big impact for God. What can just one person do? You may never know the impact of one Jesus follower who surrenders and makes sacrifices serving the Lord. Think of all the people in your life who are making sacrifices to teach you, giving of their time and abilities. No person ever comes on mission with God without the sacrifice of others.

Stephen was one of the first deacons of the early church. He stepped up and stood firm on the gospel message and the mission of God. He was faithful in his work and in presenting the truth. He literally gave his life for God. What happened next was a major step in the missionary work of the early church. Acts 1:8 was really happening!

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will show you ways that you can provide momentum for the spread of the gospel.

## Day 4 No One Person Alone can do the Mission

**Think About It:**
Have you ever heard the word synergy? This is the combined effort being greater than the parts; the working together of two or more things, people, organizations especially when the result is greater than the sum of their individual efforts or capabilities (Encarta North American Dictionary). This is how God planned the work of the church. We are about bringing glory to His name, and no one person can do that alone.

**Read It:** Colossians 1 (If this is too long a chapter for your family to sit through, you may want to focus on verses 3-14.)

**Think About It More:**
Think about two truths about the work of the church.

First, God's work takes each of us. Paul wrote about "fellow-servants" in many of his writings, and in Colossians 4, he gives the names of some of those specifically.

Next, the work of God takes all of us. As difficult as if sometimes seems to be, working together is the plan! We are more effective together. God intends for us to cooperate together pooling our abilities, skills, and resources. He intended for the church to be one body with many different parts that can do far more together than any of them could do alone.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will help you work with others in church to help accomplish His mission.

## Day 5 Be Like Minded to Shine the Light

**Think About It:**
When you wake up in the morning, one of the first things you do is turn on the light. Sometimes it hurts your eyes because it's so bright. We are to be the light of Christ in our dark world.

**Read It:** Philippians 2 (If this is too long a chapter for your family to sit through, you may want to focus on verses 14-15.)

**Think About It More:**
God's goal for all believers is that we shine as lights in the world. Paul gives us guidance to do this. First, we need to develop like-mindedness. This means that we think in the same way. We must set aside silly arguments and differences to take the message to the world. Second, we must follow the example set by Christ. Doing these things, we will be able to keep shining His light.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will help you be like-minded with your church body and that He will help you follow the example of Christ so that you can shine His light.

## WEEK 7 THE MISSION PLAN – HOW WE GO ABOUT THE MISSION

In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells us how to be about the mission.

> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
>
> Acts 1:8

From this, we see that we are to be about the mission in our own area and beyond. This is a geographical plan. It was for the first century believers and it is for us in our geographical location.

Our "Jerusalem" is Fayetteville and Williamson, our own local mission fields.
Our "Judea" is our surrounding counties and state.
Our "Samaria" is North America.
The "world" is the rest of the world beyond North America.

For the remaining two weeks, we are going to take a quick look at our involvement as a Body of Christ in His mission and the ways we connect the Body of Christ at Harp's Crossing to His mission.

### Day 1 Someone Needs to Call the Play

**Think About It:**
Do you ever watch football? If so, who is the quarterback? What is his job? The quarterback is the leader of the offense. When the 11 men on offense come to the huddle before the play, he gives them the plan. Then, the offense must carry out the plan. He leads, and they follow.

**Read It:** Hebrews 13:7-17

**Think About It More:**
The preacher of a church is like the quarterback of a football team. He is called by God to lead, and the church is called to follow.

> Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.
>
> Hebrews 13:17

The pastor must make difficult decisions about the direction the church will go sometimes, and there will probably be people who disagree with him no matter what his decisions are. There may be many different ways to accomplish the same goal, but the pastor must choose the one best for the church. As long as the pastor is leading and his leading is biblical, moral, and ethical, then the people of the church need to pull together and follow.

There are many different ways to be on mission with God, but at HCBC, our pastors have made the decision to work with the Southern Baptist Convention. This does not mean that other mission organizations are wrong, ,but a decision must be made and our focus must be clear.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will make Harp's Crossing one as we pursue His mission.

## Day 2 Mission Perspective: The Shining Light

**Think About It:**
Lighthouses are sometimes the only light that ships see when looking toward land. They have provided safety many times for ships that were too close to shore. Lighthouses can be seen from miles away still shining bright. As bright as they seem from the ocean, imagine how bright the light must be if you were standing right next to it. The bulb would be blinding!

**Read It:** Genesis 1:3; Matthew 5:16; 2 Corinthians 4:6

Think About It More:
C.T. Studd was a British Missionary who lived from 1860 to 1931. He has been credited with the quote, "The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home." What does this mean? He was talking about churches and shining the light of the gospel message. If a church shines brightly at home, it will shine far. The opposite is also true; if a church shines far, it will shine brightly at home. To really make a difference in the world, we must make a difference at home – both our home where we live and our home church.

All that we do at Harp's Crossing is focused on His mission. That means each one of us must have the light shining bright in us, in our homes, in our community, and in our church. We are responsible to keep the light going by worship, studying God's Word, and meeting with the Body for worship and fellowship. When the light is shining brightly in us, it will shine brightly in our church body. We need to be shining that light in the ministries of our church. This way, others are inspired, encouraged, and want to shine their light brightly as well.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that God will help you shine your light in your home and in your church? Pray that you will see how you can help our church shine brightly.

## Day 3 Home Base: A Mean's to an End

**Think About It:**
Do you ever play tag with your friends? Do you have a home base to go as a safe spot? This may be where the game starts, where you can go and rest, where you make different rules about the game, or just a spot where you can not be tagged. You go out from the base ready to run and play. Home base isn't the most important spot in tag, but it does keep you ready to play the game.

**Read It:** Acts 8:3-8 (below)
And Saul just went wild, devastating the church, entering house after house after house, dragging men and women off to jail. 4 Forced to leave home base, the Christians all became missionaries. Wherever they were scattered, they preached the Message about Jesus. 5 Going down to a Samaritan city, Philip proclaimed the Message of the Messiah. 6 When the people heard what he had to say and saw the miracles, the clear signs of God's action, they hung on his every word. 7 Many who could neither stand nor walk were healed that day. The evil spirits protested loudly as they were sent on their way. 8 And what joy in the city! Acts 8:3-8 (MSG)

**Think About It More:**
The passage above is from The Message paraphrase of the Bible. It talks about the people who had to leave their "home base". It also refers to the people as missionaries. This word wasn't around when this was written, but it makes it a little easier for us to see that they really were missionaries.

There are three important things that we can see in this passage. First, the people went out proclaiming the gospel message. They were filled with the Spirit and were witnesses of Jesus (see Acts 1:8). Second, they had a "home base". They went out from their church. We have a home church; it is vital to our lives and our witness. Even though we may not be scattered like the people in these verses, we are still called to go out into our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the world. The third thing that is important here is the home base is not the end, it's a way to reach the end-the mission. These people had been strengthened and disciple in their home church, just like we need to be. They had the courage that had come from worship of God, study of His Word, and fellowship with other believers.

We have so many opportunities to get connected in our church. Ministries like Sunday School, Life Classes, music ministry, mission activities, women's ministries, men's ministries, preschool and children's ministries, student ministries are not an end. They are a way to reach the end-the mission. Are you and your family taking advantage of these ministries and connecting to others in the mission?

**Pray About It:**
Pray that you will connect to your "home base" to be preparing to go out into the world on His mission.

## Day 4 Keep the Home Fires Burning

**Think About It:**
Have you ever heard the phrase "keep the home fires burning"? There was a song written in 1914 as a British patriotic song during World War I that had this title. The song was to encourage people and families to keep their homes a strong, positive, and hopeful place until the soldiers came home.

**Read It:** Acts 3:1-12

Think About It More:
Home needs to be a hopeful, strong, and courageous place where the fires of faith are always burning to continue to support people who are sent out on His mission. The work that is done at our home base with our body is very important. Everything we do is about the mission. When we are doing all we can do to seek to be about the mission, it expands.

In Acts, we read that when the church would send people out, they did so by prayer, laying on of hands, and fasting. They did this to Barnabas and Paul when they wen into other places to share the gospel. We do this at HCBC on Sunday mornings when people go out from our church. This is not the only time that people go out from our church. Families move, people get transferred, students go to college; there are lots of people who go out from our church. When they go, the mission goes with them. What we do at our church has a lasting impact.

**Pray About It:**
Pray that we will always be a church that keeps the home fires burning.

## Day 5 The Mission Trip Mindset

**Think About It:**
All over the world, the United States has ambassadors. These men and women are representatives of our country. They are working for the USA, but they have been assigned to work in another country.

**Read It:** 1 Corinthians 5:12-20

**Think About It More:**
Paul uses the word "ambassador" in verse 20. We are here on earth as Christ's ambassadors. We are His representatives; our lives are lived representing Him. This is not an occasional thing, it's all day every day; it's our life. We're not just His ambassadors when we are on a mission trip, unless we think about each day as a mission trip.

Our church gives people many opportunities to go on mission trips. When people go on these trips, they focus on the task at hand. They have a "mission trip mindset". They are there for the mission, and everything else just calls into place. When they return home, however, they lose that mindset. How can we keep that mindset? We must live every day as if we are on a mission trip because we really are! Being on mission with Him isn't something we turn on and off, it's always who we are because we are children of God.

**Pray About It:**
Every morning when you get up, tell yourself, "Today, all day, I am Christ's representative." Pray that that will be your mindset.

## WEEK 8 CONNECTING TO THE MISSION THROUGH HCBC

How connected are you to God through His mission? This week, we will finish this series of "Connecting" that has gone on in our church for over four years! Are you growing in your connection to God? Hopefully so! One of the ways to connect is to join Him on a mission event. At Harp's, we seek to have mission activities and events so many of us can connect to God through His mission. This week, we will look at a few of the overall mission connections of HCBC so that your family can jump in and connect through them. In the adult devotion guide, there will be a listing of mission connection activities with a brief description of each. Look over these and perhaps try a new mission connection. It could be a real blessing in your connection with God.

### Day 1 The Southern Baptist Convention

**Think About It:**
Sometimes we have jobs that are just too big for one person to complete. We need a team of people who can work together to accomplish more.

**Read It:** Exodus 18:17-26

**Think About It More:**
Harp's Crossing Baptist Church is a Southern Baptist Church. The Southern Baptist Convention was established in Augusta, Georgia in 1845. The Southern Baptist Convention was formed with a Gospel vision. Its founding charter identifies its singular focus: . . . for the purpose of eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the Baptist denomination of Christians, for the propagation of the Gospel. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has grown to be a network of more than fifty thousand cooperating churches and church-type missions banded together to make an impact for God's Kingdom. Though as many as two hundred could be counted as "mega-churches," the vast majority of Southern Baptist churches run less than two hundred in weekly worship. No two Southern Baptist churches are alike; but there are certain commonalities that bind Southern Baptists together, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, size, or locale. (Pasted from http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/)
The Southern Baptist Convention is actually the churches. The SBC is organized with different agencies to enable the nearly 50,000 church to pool resources and work together. We all work together for His mission.

**Pray About It:**
Pray for the other churches that are part of the SBC; pray that they will keep His mission as their focus.

## Day 2 The Cooperative Program

**Think About It:**
Yesterday we talked about the Southern Baptist Convention. Our convention is all about God's mission. There are different ways that are coordinated for being on God's mission. One major resource of the SBC is the Cooperative Program.

**Read It:** Philippians 1:1-5 (below)
PAUL AND Timothy, bond servants of Christ Jesus (the Messiah), to all the saints (God's consecrated people) in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops (overseers) and deacons (assistants): 2 Grace (favor and blessing) to you and [heart] peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you. 4 In every prayer of mine I always make my entreaty and petition for you all with joy (delight). 5 I thank my God for your fellowship (your sympathetic cooperation and contributions and partnership) in advancing the good news (the Gospel) from the first day you heard it until now.

**Think About It More:**
The Cooperative Program is the Southern Baptists' plan of giving where Southern Baptist churches give a percentage of their offerings in support of their state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministries. So, how does it work?

*It all begins with you!* You give yourself to God, and then, out of gratitude and obedience, you give your tithe. Remember, the tithe is 10% of what you make.
*Your Church* decides the next step. Every year, the church decides what percentage it gives to the Cooperative Program. Then, this amount is given to the Georgia Baptist Convention (or whatever state other churches are in).
*State Conventions* have annual meetings where people from all the different churches come together and decide what percentage will state in the state to help local missions and ministries and what percentage will go to the SBC for North American and international missions and ministries.
**The Southern Baptist Convention** has an annual meeting where people from all over the country come together and decide how the gifts received from the states will be given out to the SBC groups. These gifts are used to send and support missionaries, train pastors and other ministry leaders, provide relief for retired ministers and widows, address social, moral, and ethical concerns relating to our faith and families.

The bottom line of the Cooperative Program: people around the world hear the gospel and receive Christ!

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for the SBC Cooperative Program and what a powerful tool it is for carrying out God's mission.

## Day 3 The International Mission Board

**Think About It:**
There are people all over the world who have never heard about God. Can you imagine? There are limitless opportunities to share God in our world today.

**Read It:** Matthew 9:35-38

**Think About It More:**
Being organized to reach the world includes being connected to the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. This means we can go into areas of the world along with mission teams already in place to give us guidance so we can join them the best way possible. One big event that our church has is in December. We, along with about 46,000 other SBC churches, give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. 100% of this offering goes to international missions.

**Pray About It:**
Pray for how our church is involved in international missions.

## Day 4 The North American Mission Board

**Think About It:**
Just like there are people all over the world who need to hear about God, there are people here in North America who need to hear also.

**Read It:** Acts 8:26-40

**Think About It More:**
One of the parts of our Southern Baptist Convention is the North American Mission Board. We have worked very closely with the North American Mission Board (NAMB) for many years. The NAMB works with churches to connect them to the work of spreading the gospel on this continent. Harp's Crossing, in the past, has connected up with NAMB to do work in Canada, West Virginia, Arizona and most recently in Baltimore. A link is established with NAMB personnel on the field to come alongside to assist in the work that is already going on.

So, what does the NAMB do? Here is a description from their website. The North American Mission Board exists to work with churches, associations and state conventions in mobilizing Southern Baptists as a missional force to impact North America with the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism and church planting. We accomplish that through Send North America, our national strategy for mobilizing churches to plant churches and mobilizing church planters and other missionaries to assist with those efforts. Through Send Relief, the North American Mission Board is assisting churches in reaching people in need with practical help and the hope of the gospel. The North American Mission Board is an entity supported by the generous contributions of Southern Baptists with the goal of seeing the gospel change lives and communities. NAMB assists churches with evangelistic church planting strategy, the identification and training of missionaries, chaplains and church planters through the Send Network, and helps churches impact their communities through Send Relief. NAMB accomplishes this by serving in cooperation with churches, associations, state conventions, other national SBC entitles and the Canadian National Baptist Convention. http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/entities/namb.asp

**Pray About It:**
Thank God for the connection to God's mission through the North American Mission Board. Thank Him for allowing us to work with people in North America as well as those just visiting.

## Day 5 Invitation: Time to Connect

**Think About It:**
Have you ever received a birthday party invitation? It's exciting to think about all the fun that will go on at the party. Usually when people send out an invitation, they ask for and RSVP. This means they want to a response; will you be able to come to the party or not? No matter how you respond to the invitation, the party will go on. Being on mission with God is like this. He gives us an invitation to join Him, and we have to respond. No matter what our answer is, though, His mission will continue.

**Read It:** Isaiah 6:1-8

**Think About It More:**
Isaiah had a very special time where he heard from God. God spoke to him and asked him, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" God wasn't just asking this; He wanted a response. This was an invitation. Isaiah did respond, "Here am I! Send me."

Just like Isaiah, we have a message to share. When we do, some people will accept it and others will not. It is our job to tell no matter what.

God speaks through His Word, through pastors, and others who share His Word, and on the Lord's behalf; they invite people to respond to the Lord's invitation. Each time we worship together at Harp's, we have an invitation. This is not a signal that it's time to go home, this is an important part of the service. This is the time to respond to what God has said. God does not speak to entertain or to encourage. God speaks so we can surrender to His voice in obedience. At HCBC we have lots of opportunities to get in on God's mission and give glory to Him. There are chances here at home and those that are outside of our church. Have you heard about mission trips and opportunities in church, but you haven't really thought that the invitation is for you? Will you be willing to say, "Here am I! Send me?"

**Pray About It:**
Pray and respond to the invitation that God is giving you to join Him on His mission.

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