

**Week Three: *Real Help***  
***Matthew 8:1-17***

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. When was the last time you were at your wit's end? Describe a time when you just were at a loss to find a solution to a problem... perhaps you are facing a time like that now.
2. How easy is it for you to ask for help? Are you getting more or less self-reliant?
3. Would you rather give help or receive help? Explain.
4. Some churches make it their mission to provide help to people in time of need. Others make it clear their primary mission is spiritual, not physical. Which approach is right?
5. Read James 2:14-19. Did Jesus come only to save the lost? Did He come only to help those who believe? How can His example give us direction?
6. What is the danger of helping people? Explain the term “enabling.” How can you help someone without making them needy?
7. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to see the opportunity to help someone in a tangible way today.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Read Matthew 8:1-17. Check out the previous chapter(s). What had Jesus just finished?
9. Is the focus of Matthew 8:1-17 primarily additional teaching or action? Why is that important?
10. Why is it significant that Jesus touched the leper?
11. What question did the leper ask Jesus? What does that reveal about his faith?
12. Read 1 John 5:13-15. Why do we pray, “If God wills”? Why might His will be different from ours – even if it is to prevent suffering?

13. Read Mark 1:35-36. Why do you suppose Jesus urged the leper to “tell no one”? What is the danger of Jesus being primarily known as a healer, or provider of food?
14. Do you think some people today primarily look to Jesus for physical needs? How can Christians reflect the balance between providing physical help and spiritual focus that Jesus showed in His life?
15. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be the kind of witness to the goodness of God that would honor the example of Jesus.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

16. Read Matthew 8:5-13. Why is the fact that this man was a Centurion significant?
17. Why is it significant that the Centurion came to Jesus on behalf of one of his servants?
18. As a Roman Centurion, this man had significant authority over the inhabitants of Israel. Why do you think he told Jesus he was unworthy of a personal visit?
19. What was the perception of authority the Centurion was trying to avoid by the statement he makes in verses 8-9?
20. What impressed Jesus about this man?
21. What lesson(s) should we learn from the example of this man and Jesus’ statement about him in verses 10 & 11?
22. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a more humble spirit to be able to see the poor and people who serve us as worthy of our honor.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

23. Is it still important that Christians respond to people in distress? Why?
24. Do you think God primarily helps people in need through other people or by miraculous intervention? Is one more important than the other?
25. Lepers were the untouchable people of Jesus’ day. Who are the untouchables in today’s culture? Do you think Christians are portrayed in society as gracious towards those in need, or judgmental and superior? What can be done

to correct misconceptions?

26. Read James 1:2-8. What seems to be required by God if we expect an answer to our prayer(s)? Are no, not yet, and “it depends” all valid answers to heartfelt prayers?
27. In the Bible people sometimes poured oil (James 5:14) and laid hands (2 Timothy 1:6) when they prayed for their specific needs. If it is the prayer and not the action that matters, why are such actions nevertheless helpful and encouraged?
28. Take time now to pray for each other in turn, standing behind one another, praying for them with your hands resting on their shoulders.
29. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to expect more from God. Pray that your faith would expect miracles according to God’s will.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

30. Re-read Matthew 8:1-17. Why is this example of Jesus important to understand the nature of God? Read John 14:8-9.
31. If God created a perfect world in the Garden of Eden, where did sickness, death, hatred, and murder enter the picture? Read Romans 5:15-17 for insight.
32. Read Matthew 13:24-30. Suggest several reasons (e.g. good that can come from hardship) that explain why God might allow the consequence of sin to exist until the final judgment.
33. Read 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, and 2 Corinthians 9:12-15. What good can come by means of Christians rendering assistance in the name of Jesus?
34. Did Jesus limit His help to believers? (See Matthew 8:11,12) Explain the statement found in Galatians 6:9-10.
35. Read Jesus’ words from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:43-46. What is the primary teaching of this Scripture? How does it apply to our life?
36. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more generous in the use of your material possessions to provide real help to people in need.