

**Growing Deeper**  
*Stranger Things*

**Week One: A Glimpse of Heaven**  
**Luke 16:19-31**

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. It's obvious humans are physical creatures, but not always clear that we are spiritual beings as well. Are you a "see it to believe it" person or are you easily aware of the unseen? How does this impact your spiritual journey?
2. Read Luke 16:19-31. Death can make us aware of the spiritual realm. Think through any experiences you've had with death. Were there indications of something beyond this world? What thoughts, feelings or conversations came from the experience?
3. Read Luke 16:14-18. Luke grouped teachings of Jesus that indicate that God sees behind appearances. How do the stories of the rich man and Lazarus fit this theme?
4. Why would Jesus want people to be aware that there is more than what is seen?
5. End your FIFTEEN in prayer by asking God to heighten your awareness of spiritual realities.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

6. Read Luke 16:19-31. How often do you think about heaven and hell?
7. What tends to remind you of the existence of heaven and hell?
8. How would an increased awareness of heaven and hell be beneficial?
9. It's been said, "We behave as we believe." In other words, our words and actions are a good test of what we think is true and important. What words or actions might indicate a belief in heaven and hell?
10. What do your behaviors indicate about heaven and hell?
11. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to open your eyes to what your behaviors indicate.

### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three**

12. Let's focus on heaven. If someone asked you to describe heaven, what would you say?
  
13. While the point of the parable is not to teach the details of the spiritual realities, some truths about spiritual reality can be discerned. Read Luke 16:19-31. What do you learn about death and the afterlife? What does this passage teach us about heaven?
  
14. Read some or all of the following and list clues about heaven.
  - a. Matthew 6:9
  
  - b. Matthew 25:34
  
  - c. Luke 23:40-43
  
  - d. 1 Peter 3:22
  
  - e. Revelation 21:1-5
  
15. What surprises you in these clues about heaven? What encourages you? What makes you long for heaven?
  
16. Jesus calls Lazarus' destination "Abraham's side". This apparently refers to a place of paradise for Old Testament believers like Abraham. Why do you think Jesus uses a person to describe heaven? Read John 14:1-6. How much of our understanding of heaven comes from being with the person of Jesus?
  
17. The passage does not specifically state why Lazarus went to heaven. Jesus may have chosen the name Lazarus because it is the Greek form of a Hebrew name which means "God is his help" or "God has delivered." How does this explain why Lazarus was considered righteous and worthy of heaven?
  
18. Finish your FIFTEEN by taking a moment to pray, thanking God for specific aspects of heaven. Thank Jesus for opening the way to heaven by taking our sin and giving us his righteousness.

### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four**

19. How would you describe hell?
  
20. Read Matthew 25:31-46. What do you learn about hell from this story from Jesus?
  
21. Can you have heaven without having a hell? Why do you think Jesus talks about a place of torment?

22. Whatever the parable indicates about the details of the spiritual realm, it clearly teaches that there is more beyond our physical life. Skim Luke 16:19-31 again. In the parable, our choices have consequences in the spiritual realm. While our thoughts and actions do not make us right with God, how do our choices reveal our heart condition with God? Why are our daily choices important?
23. Jesus never leaves us with a warning without opening a window of hope somewhere in the story. Those that listen to God's Word and believe the One who rose from the dead will be saved from hell. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking Jesus to help you to focus on his rescue of you as you make your daily choices.

**Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five**

24. Why do you think Christians might not want to be aware of spiritual realms? How might this impact others?
25. The Bible's descriptions of hell are difficult to read. They should be deeply disturbing to us. While those who have believed in Jesus should have no fear of hell, we should still think of it with great solemnity and sadness. God himself says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." (Ezekiel 33:11) How does the reality of heaven and hell change your priorities?
26. How could a heightened awareness of heaven and hell change how you relate to family, friends, and coworkers?
27. Awareness of spiritual realities drive us to compassion and urgency. The rich man went from indifference toward others to concern for them. What opportunities do you have to care for those God has placed around you?
28. God has shown us the path to become part of his kingdom. We have his rescue plan in the Bible. We have the convincing proof of Jesus' resurrection. As you finish your final FIFTEEN this week, consider all that it means to believe in and belong to God. Is that what you want for yourself? Is that what you want for others? Are you willing to trust that, no matter the sacrifices required, the struggle will be worth it to experience the Kingdom of God in your life now and in the age to come? If so, end by declaring so in prayer to God.

**Week Two: *Evil, Part 1: The Devil Made Me Do It***  
***Matthew 4:1-11***

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. To begin the week, read Matthew 4:1-11 several times. Verse 2 says, “After fasting forty days and forty nights,” Jesus was hungry. How much of an understatement do you think that was? Can you imagine how you would feel after fasting for even one week?
2. Do you think Jesus *wanted* something to eat? Or do you think his godliness made it so that he didn’t feel pain or hunger? Why or why not?
3. Just to be clear, who is “the tempter” that is introduced in verse 3?
4. When you feel tempted to sin, do you typically see it as caused by the devil? Or do you see it as your sinful nature coming out? Why?
5. Read 1 Peter 2:11 and see what it has to say about our sinful desires.
6. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, spend some time in prayer. Thank God for his help and power when facing temptation and ask him to help you better understand those times and situations when you are most tempted.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

7. Read Matthew 4:1-11 again. Did you catch anything new today or did anything different stick out to you? Often, reading the same verses over and over again can bring new details to light.
8. Right away in verse 3, how does the tempter, Satan, try to trick Jesus? What does he say?
9. How does Jesus respond to Satan? Does he answer Satan’s question directly?
10. What does Jesus’ response tell us about how to best fight temptation?
11. When Jesus was tempted, he used God’s Word, the Bible, to fight the temptation. Be as honest with yourself as you can. Do you go to God’s Word when you are tempted? If not, what do you resort to?

12. Did Satan give up? Or did he try again?

13. Before finishing your FIFTEEN spend some time in prayer. Also, if you haven't already, begin committing some Bible verses to memory. Arm yourself with God's Word to help you better fight temptation in the future.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

14. Read Matthew 4:1-11 again. Did you catch anything new today or did anything different stick out to you?

15. In verse 6, how does the tempter tempt Jesus? What does he quote?

16. Satan used the very Word of God to tempt Jesus. He twisted it and distorted it to try to get Jesus to fall for it. Can you think of a time when you were tempted by something that was actually good but was twisted to try and get you to fall?

17. Can you see how the better you know the Bible, the better you can fight the temptations that come your way?

18. In the following verse (verse 7), how does Jesus respond? Does he also quote the Bible?

19. After his second try, did Satan give up? Or did he try yet again?

20. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, close with prayer. Pray as you feel led.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

21. Read Matthew 4:1-11 again. Did you catch anything new today or did anything different stick out to you?

22. Do you find what Satan says in verse 9 interesting or noteworthy? Why or why not?

23. In verse 9, Satan says to Jesus, "All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me." But all that Satan showed Jesus was *already* his. Jesus already had it. Yet again, Satan tries to twist or distort the truth.

24. What do you think of Satan knowing the Bible so well? Have you ever thought about that? Why would it be beneficial for Satan to be familiar with the Bible?

25. How does Jesus respond to Satan the third time? (verse 10)
26. After each temptation, did Jesus actually spend *any* time thinking about giving in?
27. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to reveal those evil impulses that are inside all of us. Being better aware of them is crucial in fighting them.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

28. Read Matthew 4:1-11 one last time this week. Did you catch anything new today or did anything different stick out to you?
29. Is it beneficial spending so much time reading the text each week? Why or why not?
30. Why do you think the devil finally gave up when he did?
31. If Jesus had showed more weakness when tempted by Satan, do you think Satan would have given up as quickly as he did?
32. Read Luke 22:42. Even Jesus was tempted by his own desires. Did Jesus give in to those desires?
33. Like Jesus, each one of *us* needs to be willing to resist our own desires and instead welcome the desires God has for us. Include this in your prayer time today.
34. To finish your final FIFTEEN for this week, spend some time in prayer once again. Remember to pray that God would make us more receptive to his will rather than our own desires.

**Week Three: *Evil Part 2: The Unseen Battle***  
***Ephesians 6:10-24***

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Billy Graham said that every Christian has three enemies, as described in Ephesians 2:1-3. Look up that passage. What three enemies can you identify in this text?
2. If our three enemies are “the world,” “our own flesh,” and “Satan,” how would you rank them in terms of the threat that they pose? What factors informed your ranking?
3. Many people might rank Satan last, if only because half of Christian believers in the United States don’t think Satan is real. What do you think about the existence of Satan?
4. Now read Paul’s letter to the believers in the ancient town of Ephesus. Which of the three enemies does Paul call out in Ephesians 6:10-12?
5. What does Paul want us to do in light of this enemy?
6. How seriously have you taken this particular adversary? What steps, if any, have you taken in your own faith journey to resist the devil?
7. End your FIFTEEN by praying to God and ask him to help you identify the devil’s presence in your life, so that you may more capably fight against this particular enemy.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. According to the Apostle Paul, every Christian is supposed to be equipped like a soldier in the battle against the devil. Does Paul’s exhortation sound thrilling to you or intimidating? Why?
9. Read Ephesians 6:10-14. What two pieces of armor does Paul identify?
10. What do you think it looks like in real life to buckle on a “belt of truth”?
11. What particular characteristic of Satan would a belt of truth protect us against? (See John 8:44 for help with this answer.)

12. “Righteousness” is a complex word. Look up Romans 3:22. What do you think righteousness means in this context, and how might it protect you from the attacks of the devil, which make you doubt what Jesus Christ has given you?
13. What is one practical change you could make today that would help you embrace truth and righteousness for your spiritual warfare?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for God to equip you mightily with his armor, to spot the devil’s lies and quench the doubts he tries to enflame in God’s faithful.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. The apostle Paul continues his list of spiritual armor from yesterday. Read Ephesians 6:10-16, focusing especially on verses 15 and 16. What are the two new pieces of equipment?
16. A belt of truth and breastplate of righteousness are pretty straightforward. But what do you think is the connection between shoes and “the gospel of peace”?
17. Is the peace for helping you stand your ground, or for running into (or out of) battle? Why do you think that?
18. How is faith related to peace? Why might Paul have considered faith to be a shield?
19. As a reminder, who is shooting the “fiery arrows” at you?
20. What are the kinds of “arrows” Satan has shot at you? What lies or attacks have been thrown at you?
21. End your FIFTEEN by taking the things you thought of and pray them to God, asking him to give you a large shield of faith with which to block out the fiery arrows of the devil.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

22. The heavenly boot camp continues! Read Ephesians 6:10-17. What are the final two pieces of God’s spiritual armor for you?
23. What part of the body does a helmet protect? Why do you think salvation is the promise that protects our heads?



24. What are real, practical things we can do to “protect our heads” when it comes to living out the faith?
25. What do you think Paul means by saying the sword is “of the Spirit”? Who owns the sword? Does the Spirit empower the sword?
26. In real world (non-metaphorical terms), what does Paul say the sword of the Spirit actually is?
27. How can you wield this sword in real life? And who is the sword supposed to pierce? Other people? Satan? Your own self?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to give you his discernment, through reading his Word, to use the sword of the Spirit wisely and well.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

29. Start your time by simply re-reading Ephesians 6:10-20. What piece of armor sticks out to you? Why?
30. Do you think these pieces of armor are intended to be defensive or offensive? Why do you think so?
31. Look again at verses 18-20. What is the key action that Paul wants us to do once we are strapped into God’s armor?
32. How easy is it to pray “at all times and on every occasion”?
33. Let’s practice what Paul describes. Spend the rest of your FIFTEEN praying intentionally for the believers in your life, so that you may help strengthen them for the unseen battle that they are facing right now.

**Week Four: *The Heavenly Heavies***  
***Hebrews 2:1-18***

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. How would you rate your understanding of angels; who they are and the role they play? Are you comfortable with what you know about angels? Why or why not?
2. One way to better understand angels is to understand what they are not. Read John 1:1-3. Who was with God in the beginning when he created the heavens and earth?
3. Now read Genesis 1:6-2:3. Who was created in the six days of creation?
4. The Bible tells us that Jesus (known as The Word in John 1) was with God from the beginning, he is God and was with God, and along with him created the heavens and the Earth - including humans, animals and angels. Look again at Genesis 2:1-3. What had been completed?
5. Read Genesis 1:27 & 2:4-7. How did God create man?
6. Angels are not human, nor are they God. They were created by God, just as humans were. But they were not created the same way. We are the crown of his creation. Only humans were made in God's image. He did not breathe his life into angels, only humans. How does this knowledge make you feel about how God purposely created you?
7. As you finish your FIFTEEN, ask God to continue to fill you with awe at his perfect plan for creation.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. When you think of angels what images come to mind? Are they pleasant images or frightening ones to you?
9. Another way to better understand angels is to understand their role. The name "angel" comes from the Greek word "angelos," which means messenger. The role of messenger is probably one of the most familiar roles to us. We often see angels announcing news and delivering warnings. Some examples are an angel appearing to Mary to tell her she will give birth to a son, appearing to Joseph, Jesus' father, in a dream to warn him to leave town, and announcing Jesus' birth to the shepherds. Try to imagine God delivering news to you through an angel, what do you think would be your reaction?
10. Read Hebrews 1:1-14. What does this say about Jesus' relationship to the angels and to mankind?

11. How are angels described in verse 14?
12. Read Matthew 4:1-11 and Matthew 26:52-54. What does Jesus say about angels in this scripture?
13. How does it make you feel that God uses the angels to minister to both humans and Jesus, his very own son? What does that say about the importance of man to him?
14. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to open your eyes to all of the ways he takes care of you that you may have never noticed.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. We've only looked at a couple of biblical descriptions of angels so far this week, but we can already see that there are more to angels than meets the eye. Read Hebrews 2:1-18 and note anything that sticks out at you.
16. Look again at Hebrews 2:14-18.
  - a. What do humans share with Jesus that distinguishes us from angels?
  - b. What do humans receive because of Jesus?
17. Read Acts 12:7. What did the angel do?
18. One thing that distinguishes man from the angels is flesh and blood. As in the example in question 17, angels sometimes have a physical form for a short time to carry out a mission. But, angels are spirits, and humans are flesh and blood. Because Jesus came to earth and became flesh and blood, he shares in our humanity, which includes not only flesh and blood, but suffering and even temptation. How does knowing Jesus experienced what we do, first-hand, make you feel?
19. Now, think about the fact that Jesus knows exactly what we experience, the hardships, temptations, and trials, and in addition, has the power to call down legions of angels on our behalf? Could this change the way you might live your life? List some ways this knowledge can give you courage.
20. Finish your FIFTEEN by looking over your list. What things would you most like to do? Once you've narrowed it down, commit your plan to God. Ask him to use all of his heavenly power to help you accomplish your steps.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

21. Do you have a favorite movie or television show about angels? What appeals to you about that story/premise?
  
22. Look again at Hebrews 2:1-18. On week one, we took a glimpse of heaven. Did you learn anything about heaven that surprised you? How about angels? Has anything specifically about angels surprised you?
  
23. Read Luke 16:22. What happened when the man died?
  
24. Read Matthew 22:29-30. In what way are the humans in heaven compared to angels in this verse?
  
25. One of the things about heaven that often surprises people is that people and angels are there together. Have you ever heard someone say that a loved one that passed away has earned their angel wings? Do you find this a comforting thought or is it more comforting to know that God has a special place for humans in heaven? Why or why not?
  
26. We see that angels do not reproduce in heaven (neither will humans) and as we saw in Genesis 2:1-3 on day one of this week, all of the heavens and the earth were created in the first six days of creation. Scripture is clear that humans and angels were both created by God, and each have their own distinct place and role in God's creation. If you find the thought that humans do not become angels distressing, look again at the beautiful picture that God has for us by re-reading Hebrews 2:5-8.
  
27. Spend of the rest of your FIFTEEN giving praise to God, for his plan to give you an eternity in his perfect presence, starting right here on Earth.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

28. Popular culture has depicted angels in many ways, some accurate, others pure fiction. The Bible tells us that angels are high, supernatural beings, pressed into our service. This does not sound so bad, right? Read the following scriptures and note the different types of angels and whether or not they sound scary to you.
  - a. Genesis 3:24
  
  - b. Isaiah 6:2
  
  - c. Corinthians 1:16 (Hint: a throne is an angel ☺)
  
  - d. 1 Thessalonians 4:16
  
29. Now read the following verses and note how each makes you feel about angels.
  - a. Psalm 91:11-13
  
  - b. Psalm 34:7

c. Psalm 103:20

d. Hebrews 13:2

30. How does knowing this about angels inform how you think about them? About the way you live your life?

31. One final verse to read this week, 1 John 4:1-4. What does this passage say we should do when we feel we have encountered an angel?

32. When we look at what the Bible say about angels, we can see that they are powerful, because God created them to be powerful - even the fallen angels we looked at last week. God is more powerful than any spirit and he has surrounded us with them to guard us and take care of us. Finish your final FIFTEEN of the week in prayer. Ask God to help you use your understanding of angels to fully trust his plans for your life.

## **Week Five: *The Forgotten God***

### ***Acts 1:8***

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. If a friend were to ask you to explain the Trinity, how comfortable would you feel explaining the Trinity to him or her?
2. The Bible says that God is three “Persons”, and that each of these Persons reflects an aspect of God’s relationship with humanity. God the Father who creates, God the Son who saves, and God the Spirit who empowers. Which Person of the Trinity do you feel the most connected with, and why?
3. All three Persons are fully God, and we should be careful not to ignore any of them. Read Ezekiel 36:25-27. Which Person is God talking about in this section?
4. What specific functions does it sound like God’s Spirit will accomplish in us?
5. How does the description in Ezekiel compare to your own experience of God? Have you felt such things from the Spirit that he describes?
6. If yes, what things have you done that allowed the Spirit to act so powerfully in your life? If no, what things might you be doing that keep the Spirit from acting so powerfully in your life?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - and ask him to fulfill his promise from Ezekiel 36 in your life.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Start by watching this short, cute video from author Francis Chan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mite667rJnA>. What do you think the big red tractor represents?
9. Read Acts 1:8. Whose power should we be relying on to live fruitful lives?
10. What kept the village people from using the tractor the way it had been intended to be used?
11. What changed once they got back to the original intent of the tractor?

12. How does this map to the situation in the church today?
13. How does this connect to your own life and your reliance on the Holy Spirit to bear fruit?
14. As you finish your FIFTEEN, ask God to reveal to you how his Spirit could be working far more powerfully in your life than you may have thought possible.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. Read Acts 3:1-8. What miracle did Peter perform?
16. What gave him the confidence to make such a bold promise to the beggar?
17. If the Holy Spirit is so amazingly powerful to accomplish miracles and bear fruit in our lives, then why do you think more believers aren't focused on tapping into the Spirit of God? Why don't more people want to do miracles?
18. How about you? Acts 1:8 promises that you have the power of God available to you 24/7. What keeps you from asking for it, and maybe doing miracles like Peter?
19. Pastor Francis Chan speculates that there are two kinds of fear that keep us from relying on the Holy Spirit: fear that God won't come through in the moment, or fear that God *will* come through! Which one resonates with you more?
20. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer in which you face your fear. Whichever way your fear goes, call it out, and trust that God wants to give you the best things (Luke 11:13).

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

21. Which kind of Christian would you think has more confidence and supernatural power: one of the ones who followed Jesus personally in the first century, or a Christ-follower in 2018? Why?
22. Read John 14:11-17. What does Jesus say about the kind of work his followers will do?
23. How can it possibly be true that we will do greater works than Jesus? What does he promise to do to enable this for us in verses 16-17?

24. Read John 16:5-9. Jesus makes an astounding statement about leaving his followers behind. What is it?
25. If the world's sin is that "people do not believe in Jesus," then how will the coming of the Holy Spirit change that?
26. Check out Paul's encouragement to believers in Ephesians 3:16-19. What differences in our own lives does he point out will come from having the Spirit?
27. End your FIFTEEN by asking God to fill you with his divine power, as he promised. Pray for his Spirit to manifest in both power and love, so that you will be a shining witness to the people around you.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

28. Why would you say that someone should desire to have more of the Holy Spirit in their life?
29. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. In this letter about the Holy Spirit, what reason does Paul give for why we should desire the gifts of the Spirit? (See verse 7 if you need help.)
30. Of the spiritual gifts listed in verses 8-11, are there any that you have noticed manifesting in your own life? Which ones have you noticed and how have you seen them play out?
31. If you haven't seen much evidence of spiritual gifting, or not as much as you'd like, what do you think might be a good next step to take?
32. One thing that might help you to receive spiritual power is to start with a spiritual guarantee: Read Romans 8:15-17. What identity do we receive through the power of the Holy Spirit?
33. Confidence in identity is the beginning of all power. Nobody can affect change in the world around them unless they believe they have the right and the ability to make changes. What right and ability has the Lord given you?
34. Close your FIFTEEN by claiming God's identity for yourself, and asking him to help you confidently embrace his power to do the work he created for you to do (Ephesians 2:10).