

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Kansas City, Missouri

A SIX-DAY DEVOTIONAL JOURNEY

Simon Says:

Who Sits in the Seat of Authority in Your Life

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

JAMES 1:22 (NIV)

Based on the Sunday message by Pastor Brian Goines

Prepared for the CFBC family by Dr. Stan Archie, Senior Pastor & Co-Founder

Week of August 23, 2026

Expository. Biblically grounded. Transforming every day.

DAY 1 · SIMON SAYS: WHO SITS IN THE SEAT?

SCRIPTURE READING

JOHN 10:2–5, 27 (NIV)

“The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice. ... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Pastor Goines opened Sunday with a game most of us learned before we could read. One person gets to be Simon. Simon gives the instructions, and everyone else follows — but only when the words “Simon says” come first. Move on a command Simon never gave and you are out. Ignore a command Simon did give and you lose just the same. The whole game rests on one question, and it is not whether you are quick or clever. It is whether you know whose voice carries authority.

Somewhere between the playground and adulthood, most of us kept playing the game and simply swapped out Simon. The internet says. He said. She said. And the one that ought to trouble us most — they said. Who is they? We have built decisions, formed opinions, ended friendships, and rearranged whole seasons of our lives around voices we could not name if we were asked. Voices that have never prayed for us, never sat with us in a hospital hallway, never carried a single consequence of the counsel they gave. Yet we followed, because at that moment they were sitting in the seat.

“Christians need to place God in the seat of Simon. If God says it, you do it. If God does not say it, you do not do it — and you do not let anything or anybody put themselves in the seat of God in your life.”

Jesus described His people differently. The sheep follow the shepherd, He said, because they know His voice — and they will not follow a stranger; in fact, they will run from a stranger, because the voice does not sound like home. Notice that recognition is not presented as a gift a few special people receive. It is presented as the ordinary result of belonging. The sheep know the voice because they have lived within earshot of it. The trouble with most of us is not that we cannot hear God. It is that our ear has been trained by other voices for so long that His now sounds like an option among many.

This is our covenant responsibility with the Word of God: in order to fulfill His purpose and to communicate clearly with Him, we must respond obediently to what He says. Not admire it. Not quote it. Respond to it. And that begins with a decision we can make before this day is over — to take every other voice out of the seat and give it back to the only One who ever belonged there. God says it, so we do it. God has not said it, so we do not do it. It really is that simple, and it really is that costly. And somewhere before this week is over, one decision will test whether the seat actually changed hands.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Think about the last significant decision I made. Whose voice was actually in the seat — Scripture, a trusted counselor, a feed on my phone, or an unnamed “they said” I could not identify if pressed?*

2. *What has given that voice its authority in my life — access, admiration, fear of being left out, or simple convenience? What need is it meeting that I have never brought honestly to God?*

3. *What would it look like this week for me to check a decision against God’s Word before I check it against anyone else’s opinion — and what decision facing me right now could I practice that on?*

4. *Is there one voice I need to turn down or turn off entirely so I can hear the Shepherd more clearly? Name it, and name the day this week I will do it.*

DAY 2 · QUICK TO LISTEN: THE MARK OF A TEACHABLE HEART

SCRIPTURE READING

JAMES 1:19–20 (NIV)

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

The first answer Pastor Goines gave Sunday to how we respond obediently was not an action at all — it was a posture. Notice that James does not open with a rebuke either. He opens with affection — my dear brothers and sisters, the people I love, the people I am in fellowship with. That matters, because what follows is the kind of instruction only family can give. And the first mark of an obedient life turns out not to be performance at all. It is posture. Quick to listen. Slow to speak. Slow to become angry. Before God asks us to do anything, He asks whether we are teachable.

The old saints said it plainly: God gave you two ears and one mouth so that you would listen more than you talk. They also said you cannot learn anything with your mouth full. There is a difference between listening to learn and listening to respond — and most of us have mastered the second one. We are not receiving; we are loading. We hear the first half of a sentence and spend the rest of it building our answer. So the honest question is not whether we are willing to be taught in theory. It is whether the people closest to us would say, “Bring him in, he listens” — or something else entirely.

“Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. When correction arrives and you route it straight to your emotions, you have not defended yourself — you have only refused to grow.”

Then James adds the hardest word: slow to become angry. Stop routing every correction straight to your emotions. In Bible study this week Pastor Archie observed that everyone wants a Savior and everyone loves the Word for inspiration — but mention rebuke, and the room agrees quietly that nobody really wants that part. Can you be corrected without getting hot? Can someone show you a blind spot without you defending, explaining, going cold, or leaving? Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

There is a warning tucked in here for capable people. When you begin to feel that you know it all about something, you have already stepped onto the ground where failure grows. We live in a moment when typing a phrase into a search bar counts as research — a far cry from the days of the card catalog and the microfiche, when you held the 1919 article in your hands and no one could quietly edit it. Confidence is cheap now. Teachability is not. And it is worth remembering that God calls us His children — not because we are small, but because children are still learning, still discovering, still expecting to be shown something they did not already know. The real test is not whether we were teachable in the sanctuary on Sunday. It is whether we are teachable on Tuesday, when somebody tells us something we did not want to hear.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *When was the last time someone corrected me and I received it without defending myself, explaining my side, or quietly going cold? What did I actually do with what they said?*

2. *What is the subject I have quietly become the expert on — parenting, ministry, my marriage, my profession — where I have stopped being able to learn anything? What made me stop?*

3. *What would “quick to listen, slow to speak” look like in one specific relationship this week — with my spouse, my child, a coworker, or someone in this church who is hard for me to hear?*

4. *Who could I ask this week to tell me the truth about a blind spot in my life — and am I prepared to say thank you instead of defending myself when they answer?*

DAY 3 • GET RID OF IT: SUBMITTED IN EVERY AREA

SCRIPTURE READING

JAMES 1:21; MARK 4:5–8 (NIV)

“Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.” — “Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Pastor Goines slowed down on a single word in this verse: all. Get rid of all moral filth — not most, not the visible portion, not the parts that would embarrass us if they came out. We say we are totally submitted to God, and we mean it on Sunday. But nearly every one of us keeps a room or two where we set it down for a minute. The way we talk when the children have worn us to the end of our patience. What we watch late at night when the house is quiet and nobody is going to ask. What comes out of us when we get upset — because in that moment we would rather ask forgiveness later than ask permission now.

Pastor Goines told on himself, and it is worth sitting with. For years, the week he was scheduled to preach, he would consecrate himself: turn off the shows he watched for mindless entertainment, turn off the radio, tell people not to call him. But eventually a harder question surfaced — do I only want to be consecrated the week I preach, or is God calling for more than that? We know how to get clean for an occasion. God is asking for a life. Pastor Gatson said it in a way that lands: a soldier is not concerned about anything except his task and his commanding officer. Total submission will sometimes cost us a friendship, an invitation, a party we would rather attend. A soldier does not negotiate that.

“You can have the greatest seed in the world, but if you plant it in dry, rotted ground, nothing grows. God is not asking for your submission to punish you — He is preparing soil for a harvest.”

But understand why God asks. James says to humbly accept the word planted in us — planted, like seed. There is a harvest God is preparing, and we are the dirt. Perhaps the reason some of us are not flourishing is not that God has withheld the seed. It is that no one has dealt with the soil. Shallow ground scorches, thorny ground chokes, and good ground multiplies thirty, sixty, a hundred times over. The difference in the harvest was never the seed.

Environments determine what grows. Mold grows in the dark. Fruit does not. God’s first assignment to humanity was to be fruitful and multiply — so the places we have arranged to live in the dark are not neutral. They are simply growing something other than fruit. Submission in every area is not God taking; it is God preparing ground. That ground gets worked in an ordinary week — in what we open, who we answer, and what we stop feeding.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Where is the one area of my life I have quietly marked off limits to God — the room where I set my salvation down for a minute and pick it back up later?*

2. *What have I been steadily feeding my soul in private — what I watch, scroll, listen to, and who I talk with? Honestly, what is that planting in me over a year's time?*

3. *Mold grows in the dark; fruit does not. What in my life is only sustainable because no one can see it — and what would change if I brought it into the light this week?*

4. *Is there a relationship, habit, or feed I need to release so the soil of my heart is ready for what God wants to plant? Name it, and set the date I will act.*

DAY 4 · DO WHAT IT SAYS: THE WORD AS LIFE INSTRUCTIONS

SCRIPTURE READING

JAMES 1:22; 2 TIMOTHY 3:16–17 (NIV)

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” — “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Pastor Goines described a conversation every one of us has had. You are talking to someone and you can tell they are hearing you but they are not listening. “Yeah. Yeah, you’re right.” Nothing landed. Nothing will change. That is exactly what James is describing, and he uses a startling word for it — deception. The person who hears the Word without doing it has not simply underperformed. He has fooled himself into believing that exposure is the same thing as obedience.

Minister Manning reminded us that God’s Word does not return void. So it is worth asking whether the void places in our lives are void because the Word was never brought into them. Maybe the marriage is where it is because the Word is not in it. Maybe the finances look the way they look because the Word has never been applied there. Maybe the situation you keep circling back to — the one where you say, “Lord, I don’t know why I keep ending up here” — has an answer you have not picked up yet. God has something to say about everything.

“If God’s Word is not your life instruction, what is it? If it is only filler — inspiration you enjoy and never obey — then where exactly is your power supposed to come from?”

That is why we say every Sunday and every Wednesday that God’s Word is FACT — the final authority that addresses every issue. So why do we move as though He has no opinion about how we treat that man, that woman, our children, our money, our tempers? Too often we come to Scripture with a preference: give me the inspiration, keep the rules, and definitely keep the rebuke. “I know it says that, but wasn’t that written to Timothy? Isn’t that for pastors?” Paul settles it — all Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped. Rebuke is not the fine print of discipleship. It is part of the equipment.

So the right question when we close the Book is never “Wasn’t that good?” It is “What is my charge from this?” We can go on a thousand retreats and have a wonderful time, but if we do not come back into small groups, come back working in the church, come back praying, come back apologizing to somebody, come back transformed — then it was a church field trip. You could have taken a trip with your own family on your own money and enjoyed it just as much. If God’s Word is not functioning as your life instruction, then what exactly is it to you? And if it is only filler, where is your power supposed to come from? Sunday asked the question. This week is where it gets answered.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Name one instruction from Scripture I have heard clearly this year and still have not obeyed. What specifically has kept me from doing it?*

2. *Where are the void places in my life right now — my marriage, my money, my temper, my calendar? Have I actually searched what God says about them, or have I assumed He is silent?*

3. *What is the single next action the Word is requiring of me — a conversation, an apology, a repayment, a boundary, a return to service? Write it as a sentence beginning, "This week I will..."*

4. *Am I willing to receive rebuke and correction from Scripture as readily as I receive inspiration? What passage have I been avoiding because I already know what it would ask of me?*

DAY 5 · THE DANGEROUS MIRROR: THE COST OF FORGETTING

SCRIPTURE READING

JAMES 1:23–24; EZEKIEL 28:17 (NIV)

“Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” — “Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

The mirror, Pastor Goines warned us Sunday, can be a dangerous place. James is careful about how he says it: the man in his illustration did look. He saw himself clearly. The failure was not blindness — it was that he walked away and, within a few steps, could no longer remember what he had seen. That is what happens to us with Scripture more often than we would like to admit. We are moved on Sunday, convicted on Wednesday, and by Thursday afternoon we could not tell you what the Word showed us about ourselves.

Pastor Archie has taught us where that pattern can lead. There was one in heaven, surrounded by the worship of God, who caught a glimpse of himself and thought, “Wait — look at me. Do you see me?” In that single moment he forgot his purpose. He did not rebel for a thousand years first. He looked in the mirror, forgot who he was and whose he was, and it cost him heaven — and he took a third of the angels with him. Ezekiel’s oracle names the mechanism exactly: the heart became proud because of beauty, and wisdom was corrupted by splendor. One disconnected second is all it took.

“He did not rebel for a thousand years. He looked in the mirror, forgot his purpose for a moment, and lost heaven. Disconnection rarely announces itself — it only takes a second of forgetting.”

This is why James places the warning where he does. The threat to most believers is not open rebellion; it is interruption. Failure and setback tend to live on the other side of our disconnection from the Word of God. So the diagnostic question is not whether the Bible is in your life — it is whether the Word infiltrates your life or merely occupies a slot in it. A part of your life can be set down when the schedule gets full. Something that has infiltrated you goes wherever you go.

And consider what disconnection does to the relationship itself. If you had someone in your life who only called you when things went bad, eventually you would say it out loud: you are using me. I am not getting anything out of this. You drop your troubles on me and drop off. Now turn that around. How does God experience a people called by His purpose who only reach for a scripture when the bottom falls out — who have no other conversation with Him than the emergency one? He is not looking for a crisis contact. He is looking for a relationship, and He is inviting us back into it today.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *How long can I go without the Word before I notice something is off in me — a day, a week, an entire season? What does my honest answer reveal about how connected I really am?*

2. *What is the mirror in my life — the place where I look at myself and lose sight of my purpose? A title, a platform, an appearance, an accomplishment, or an old wound?*

3. *When was my last real conversation with God that was not a request for rescue? What would it look like this week to come to Him with nothing to ask?*

4. *What is the specific pattern of interruption I need to name and break — the hour, the app, the habit, or the mood that consistently disconnects me from God's Word?*

DAY 6 · CONTINUALLY CONNECTED: BLESSED IN THE DOING

SCRIPTURE READING

JAMES 1:25; JOSHUA 1:8 (NIV)

“But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it — not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it — they will be blessed in what they do.” — “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Pastor Goines closed Sunday with an assignment rather than a rebuke: make a plan for staying continually connected. James shows us why. He finally turns the corner and puts the person who does not forget in front of us. Watch the three verbs: he looks intently, he continues in it, and he does it. The blessing is not attached to hearing. It is attached to continuing. Joshua was given the same charge on the edge of the promise. Continual connection has always been the condition, because that is where the blessing lives.

That kind of connection never happens by accident. It requires a plan. It is why this church keeps building on-ramps — Bible study on Wednesday, small groups, book studies, this six-day devotional at cfbckc.org, and quiet time with the Book open and the phone face down. Pastor Goines admitted his partner nearly gets on his nerves sending sermons and studies from every direction — but that is exactly what staying continually connected looks like. What you hear in Bible study on Wednesday is connected to what you hear from this pulpit on Sunday, on purpose.

“You say you do not know the voice of God — but He wrote you a book. Spend enough time with someone and you can hear them in a message with no name attached to it.”

We live in a constantly connected age, so we all understand algorithms: give your attention to something long enough and the feed hands you more of it. Now imagine the Word of God becoming part of your algorithm — so that no matter what is happening, a scripture surfaces, a prayer rises, a text arrives from someone saying, “God put you on my heart and I am praying for you.” That is not coincidence; that is what a life shaped by sustained attention to God produces.

When somebody says, “I just don’t know the voice of God,” there is a gentle answer: He wrote you a book. Sixty-six of them — one Author, many writers, one message that holds together when you lay one passage beside another. Pastor Goines described the pastoral group text: strip the names off and the staff could still tell you who wrote each one. Two pastors can say the same thing about a lawn that needs cutting — one with a thoughtful word about rain and responsibility to the neighborhood, the other with “if I have to cut the grass, you don’t need to be staying here” — and those who know them hear both.

And remember what we were taught coming up: when a grown person spoke to you, a response was required — yes, sir; yes, ma’am. God has spoken this week. A response is required.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *If the Word already stored in me were all I had, how many days would I make it before I ran out? What does that number tell me about my current connection?*

2. *What has really kept me from making an actual plan — time, discipline, discouragement, or a quiet belief that spiritual life should be spontaneous rather than scheduled?*

3. *Write the plan now: which days, what time, what I will read, and who will hold me accountable. What is the very first entry, and when does it begin?*

4. *God has spoken to me clearly this week, and a response is required. What is my “yes, sir — yes, ma’am” this week, and what single step will prove it by next Sunday?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we confess that we have let too many voices sit in a seat that belongs only to You. The internet says. He said. She said. And they said — and we have arranged our lives around voices we could not even name if someone asked us to. Today we take them out of the seat. You are God. What You say, we will do. What You have not said, we will not do. And we will not let anything or anybody place themselves in Your seat again.

Father, make us teachable. Slow our words and slow our anger. Teach us to listen in order to learn instead of listening in order to answer. We have defended ourselves when we should have received correction. We have wanted a Savior without a Lord, inspiration without rebuke, encouragement without accountability. Forgive us. Give us the humility of children who are still discovering, still learning, still willing to be shown something we did not already know.

Lord, we surrender the areas we have kept off limits. You said all — and we have been offering You most. Search the private hours, the late nights, the words that come out of us when we are provoked, the rooms where we have set our salvation down for a minute. Break up the hard ground in us. Pull out what chokes. Make us good soil, so that the seed You have planted takes root and the harvest You are preparing is not lost on ground that was never tended.

Teach us to do what Your Word says. Forgive us for the void places we have complained about and never brought to Your Word — the marriage, the money, the temper, the pattern we keep repeating. You are the final authority who addresses every issue, and we have moved through whole seasons as if You had no opinion. Do not let us leave another Sunday, another study, another retreat entertained and unchanged.

Guard us at the mirror, Lord. We have seen ourselves clearly in Your Word and forgotten within the hour. We have disconnected for a moment and paid for it for a season. Keep us from the pride that forgets its purpose, and forgive us for the times we have come to You only when things went bad. We do not want to use You. We want to know You.

So make us a continually connected people. Put Your Word into the rhythm of our days until it is no longer part of our lives but has infiltrated them — in our homes, our groups, our conversations, our work, our children. And when You speak, let our answer come quickly, without argument and without delay: Yes, Lord. Here we are. Speak, for Your servants are listening. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

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