BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Live Victoriously! Romans 8:1-2, 12-28, 38-39

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a <u>Unit</u> of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The <u>weekly session</u> "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

- 1. The Gathering Time Leader will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
- **2.** The Bible Study Leader will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
- 3. <u>The Worship Time Leader</u> has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the <u>Worship Time</u> that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

If it is easy to obtain a pair of toy handcuffs or even a chain and padlock (or even a picture of handcuffs, you might consider using that as a visual aid during the presentation of the "Gathering Time".

Note: However, if someone in your group has someone they care about in jail or prison, and depending on their attitude regarding that situation, you may want to completely change the story to be told during the "Gathering Time". You might use a personal story about getting out of a difficult or stressful situation, or escaping from physical

danger that you experienced. The purpose of this Gathering Time to emphasize the feeling of being released from danger, and be restored to safety of whatever kind.

Always be sensitive to the realities and situations of your congregation.

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

Well in advance of this coming service, ask someone to think about the needs of leaders in your area, nation, and the world for God's wisdom and guidance. Ask them to pray for those leaders during the time in Worship set aside for praying for the world.

Music Sources:

- "O How He Loves You and Me" Baptist Hymnal, #146
- "Victory in Jesus" Baptist Hymnal, #426
- "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" Baptist Hymnal, #8

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Live Victoriously!

Focal Text

Romans 8:1-2, 12-28, 38-39

Background Text

Romans 7-8

Main Idea

As we allow ourselves to live under the control of God's Spirit, we become victorious in the struggles of life.

Question to Explore

How can we live victoriously in the difficulties of life?

Teaching Aim

To help participants identify benefits that come from living under the control of God's Spirit and decide on ways they will allow themselves to live in that way.

Gathering together:

Sing "O How He Loves You and Me" Hymns for the Family of God, #622

First thoughts:

Inside a Prison

It is difficult, if not impossible, to even imagine what life in prison is like. A young man was stopped for speeding down a street in a small city. After the patrolman had given him a citation, the young man gunned the motor of his pick-up truck and spun the wheels as he left. This was the wrong thing to do; especially with a policeman on the scene. The officer caught up with him again, and immediately took him to the city jail. The first his mother and father knew about it was when he called from the city jail – he had been given his one phone call! He had spent several hours in jail and the first thing he said to his father on the phone was: "Dad, come and get me out of jail!" He said later

that he never wanted to see the inside of a jail again! His description of the experience made others shudder just from the thought of being in jail.

We cannot imagine what life is like at a major prison such as San Quentin Prison in California, USA. The inmates call it "The Rock" because it sits on a huge rock island in the ocean bay. When people visit San Francisco they often go up Telegraph Hill just to look out across the bay at that famous "Rock". The scene inside that place can be multiplied many times to get the total picture of life in prison in many nations.

"Prison" is the key word in Romans, chapter seven, immediately preceding our text: "...making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work in my members." As we search hymnals for songs or poetry to describe that experience and release from it, we are suddenly struck with the realization that many hymns say something about the terrible condition of being a prisoner! Today, our text talks about the life of victory that releases us from the prison of sin.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Close with the congregation singing "Victory in Jesus" Hymns for the Family of God, #82

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the "<u>Teacher Preparation</u>" for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the "<u>Bible Study Plan</u>" for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Live Victoriously!

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Introduction to your personal study:

Struggle with Sin Romans 7

Often our times of strongest temptation follow on the heels of a spiritually significant experience. Perhaps, the closer we are to Jesus, the more determined Satan is to trip us up. It is so frustrating to find ourselves doing the very things we have determined not to do. Yet, we must be on the alert or that will happen. Our adversary prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). As we strive to resist him, it is some comfort to know that we are joined by fellow believers on this journey. By far the most comfort comes in knowing that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study", found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Paul graphically describes the universal struggle with sin in Romans 7:7-24. He presents the law as a gift from God then paints a vivid picture of the hopelessness of obtaining righteousness by obeying that law. God gave us the law to teach us what sin is (Romans 7:7). The purpose of the law is to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). However, sin twists the law, so that knowledge of the law can stir up the desire to sin resulting in death (Romans 7:7-13).

Paul then depicts the frustration of living as a slave to sin while struggling to obey the law (Romans 7:14-24). We can all identify with the struggle of failing to do what we want to do and doing the very things we hate! Apart from God's power at work in our lives, we can do no good thing (John 15:5). Like Paul we cry out in despair for our wretchedness. Our sinful nature continues to clash with the Spirit.

Yet if we live by the Spirit we will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature; if we are led by the Spirit we are not under the law (Galatians 5:16-18). What a liberating promise of triumph for the believer facing daily struggles! Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7:25)!

Focusing on the Meaning:

No Condemnation Romans 8:1-2

Paul begins chapter eight with the confident, incredible declaration: there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. No condemnation! The guilty are freed from guilt; the slaves are set free from the power of sin. The complete and irreversible justification of the ungodly has been achieved "in Christ" (Romans 6:23). Through Christ the law of the Spirit of life sets us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

Jesus, the Living Word of God, is the author of life. In Him is life and this life is the light of men (John 1:4). His Spirit's regulating power and authority, the "law of the Spirit", operates in us to deliver us from the power of sin that results in death. We can appreciate this deliverance even more because we can identify so closely with the power of sin and the impotency of a person to overcome the law of sin and death in his or her own power.

What a lie of the devil that we can do it on our own! Yet until we acknowledge our absolute dependency on Christ we cannot understand the Gift He offers.

Privileges and Obligations of God's Children Romans 8:12-17

The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace (Romans 8:6). We are under a debt to the life of holiness. We have been delivered by the Spirit from the law of sin and death. We are indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God. How could we then offer ourselves to the very power of sin from which we have been saved? We now have a new status as God's children and a new quality of life in the Spirit (Romans 8:14-16). By the Spirit we have new life and by that Spirit we can put to death the deeds of the flesh. God calls us to actively and consciously put to death the misdeeds of the body that we may live (Romans 8:13).

No evidence of our relationship with the Father surpasses this: that we are led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14). This leading is an on-going day by day, moment by moment response to the Spirit. God liberated us from sin (Romans 6:6), death (Romans 6:9-10), and from slavery to fear (Romans 8:2,15). He lavished His Spirit on us - the Spirit of adoption that allows us to address the God of the Universe as "Abba." This intimate and endearing term was used by Jewish children in Jesus' day. Perhaps this was the very title Jesus used to refer to Joseph, "Abba" or "Daddy."

The Holy Spirit of God testifies with our spirit assuring that we are God's children (Romans 8:16). What a transition from a slave to sin to children of God! Our status as God's children is a guarantee of our eternal life. As joint-heirs with Christ we share in His sufferings and in His glory (Romans 8:17). Jesus prayed that God would grant that those He had given Jesus would be with Him and see His glory (John 17:24). We are called to share in both Jesus' sufferings and His glory. Could it be that we cannot experience His glory unless we have first been prepared through His sufferings? Recall our discussion of Romans 5 from Session Five. The journey to spiritual maturity seems to require times of testing and suffering.

Jesus explained His parable of the Sower to His disciples in Luke 8. In that parable some seed fell on rock and when it came up the plants withered because they had no moisture (Luke 8:6). He explained that those on the rock are the ones who receive the word of God with joy when they hear it, but they have no roots (Luke 8:13). They believe for a while, but in times of testing they fall away (Luke 8:14). What a tragedy! God allows times of testing for us to grow in our trust in Him, yet often the result of suffering is to turn away from God. Pray that we will see the times of testing in our lives and times for rejoicing (Romans 5:3-5) as times for Him to do a mighty work in our lives.

Sharing in God's Future Glory Romans 8:18-28

Paul continues to explore the place of suffering in our journey with Christ. Are you getting the impression that suffering is not an optional aspect of this walk? Our present sufferings fade into insignificance when compared to the future glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18). This is not glory revealed to us, but revealed in us. We cannot even conceive of all God wants to do with our lives (1 Corinthians 2:9). We can only understand what God has given us through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12). What a wonder, what a lifeline is the Spirit of God for us. No wonder Paul tells us that

our status as God's children is evidenced most by our constant dependency on the Spirit's leading (Romans 8:14).

Creation itself eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God, for it too will be liberated from decay (Romans 8:19-21). Creation joins the children of God in looking toward the future hope of redemption (Romans 8:22-23).

We have received the down payment, or first fruits of the Spirit, yet we eagerly anticipate the complete redemption. (See Leviticus 23:15-21) Indeed God made us for this very purpose – that the mortal may be swallowed up by life (Galatians 5:1-5). He gave us the Holy Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Not only is the Spirit our guarantee, but a very active Guide leading us along this journey. He helps us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26). He intercedes for us with a depth of understanding we cannot express. He is our promised Counsellor, the Spirit of truth (John 14:16). We are called to pray in the Spirit at all times (Ephesians 6:18) and He both intercedes for us and assists us in prayer (Romans 8:26-27). What would our prayer life be like if we only caught a glimpse of what this Powerful Counsellor is eagerly awaiting to do though us?

The Spirit can work through even the toughest times of testing. Paul clearly instructs his readers that suffering is an integral part of this journey of faith. Yet we can know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him who have been called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Not all things are good, but God can work all things for good. Where lives are open to Him and hearts are teachable, He will work to conform us to the image of His Son in spite of, or perhaps because of, our situations. It is interesting to note that Paul only speaks of the "called" and the "disobedient", not the "uncalled." Jesus declared, "Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me" (John 14:21). We who are called to be children of God are called to obedience.

Paul ends his discussion of the testing and suffering that face believers with his triumphant declaration in Romans 8:38-39. His confidence rests in the goodness of God whose grace was made manifest on the cross. The love of God is more than a match for anything that can be set against us and nothing can separate us from that love (Romans 8:38-39).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

We have journeyed with Paul through his discussions of the power of God to save us from the bondage of sin, death, and fear. We have seen the power of God's love that conquers our sinfulness and brings us on a river of grace to the very embrace of our Abba Father. God Himself is love (1 John 4:8). His Spirit of love ministers within us and intercedes for us (Romans 8:26). With absolute assurance, Paul proclaims the impossibility of separation from the love of God. May we, too, be convinced. As the

guiding leader or teacher for this session, may you enable all those who participate to also be convinced.

For Personal Reflection:

- 1. What have I learned from this study?
- 2. What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?
- 3. What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Live Victoriously!

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the <u>Focal Text</u> in their Bibles. Also, share with them the <u>Main Idea</u> to be learned from the Scriptures, and the <u>Questions to be</u> <u>Explored</u> by the group.

Focal Text

Romans 8:1-2, 12-28, 38-39

Background Text

Romans 7-8

Main Idea

As we allow ourselves to live under the control of God's Spirit, we become victorious in the struggles of life.

Question to Explore

How can we live victoriously in the difficulties of life?

Teaching Aim

To help participants identify benefits that come from living under the control of God's Spirit and decide on ways they will allow themselves to live in that way.

Connect with Life:

Begin with this statement: <u>Cartoonists sometimes depict the struggle with sin by drawing a person with an angel whispering in one ear and a devil whispering in the other.</u>

Read Romans 7:15-18. Note the pull Paul describes of wanting to do what is right with his mind but struggling to make his body follow along.

Present this thought: We can all recognize Paul's struggle. Let's focus today on the victory we can enjoy.

Guide the Study:

Share the background information regarding the Struggle with Sin in Romans 7 from the "Teacher Preparation" material.

Comment: <u>Paul announces a liberating promise of triumph for our daily struggles in</u> Romans 8.

Ask a volunteer to read Romans 8:1-2.

Discuss the law of the Spirit using the background material from the Romans Bible Study Session 7. Note the importance of relying on the Spirit's power.

Ask a volunteer to read Romans 8:12-17.

Look to someone to <u>define the obligation</u> referred to in this passage.

Encourage participation in this: <u>Our relationship with the Father is evidenced by the fact</u> that we are led by the Spirit.

Have members share the titles of intimacy they use for their fathers.

Present this provoking thought: What does it mean for you to have the privilege of calling the God of all creation, "Abba?". This was the term that children of that time and place used. It means "Daddy".

Discuss the reference to sharing in His sufferings in Romans 8:17 using the background material from the Romans Bible study session 7.

Seek a volunteer to read Romans 8:18-25.

Get responses to this: <u>Have you noticed how often we hear the theme of suffering in this letter?</u>

Comment on this: Apparently suffering is an integral part of this journey of faith.

Have volunteers share any new insight on the place of suffering in our spiritual maturity that God has taught them so far during this study of Romans.

Request someone read Romans 8:26-27.

Ask: <u>How often do we pray "in the Spirit"?</u> Explore what roles the Spirit wants to play in our prayer life using the materials from Romans Bible study Session 7.

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Call for a volunteer to read Romans 8:35-39.

Discuss the security this passage gives believers in the storms of life.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the <u>Youth!!! Take Ten</u> page and allow them to go away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Close by stating: <u>It appears that the difficulties we often face are a part of our earthly life.</u>

Encourage several of the group to share their thoughts on this: What have you learned about how we can live victoriously in the difficulties of life? If no one else suggests it, emphasize the importance of walking in the Spirit.

Conclude by asking a volunteer to pray for each of you as you seek to follow the Holy Spirit more closely each day.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Live Victoriously! Romans 8:1-2, 12-28, 38-39

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

The Right Stuff

John B. is a tall, handsome young man who is active in his church. He is also a cyclist with a number of medals to his credit. He participates internationally in bicycle competitions. He enjoys children and helps in the Friday night children's outreach program at his church. Sometimes, he baby sits with the pastor's children. They are always happy when they know he is coming to their house.

John B. has overcome the physical handicap of having cerebral palsy. If you meet him, you won't think about his physical problems; but about his huge enthusiasm for life. Wise parents have helped him know what is important in life. One very important thing is his growing faith.

Most of us will not cope with the physical handicap that faces John B. But everyone will face disappointment, loss, pain, and fear. In those times, God's grace can sustain us and help us grow.

It's important for young people to confirm their beliefs about God's care and protection before hard times come. If you wait until tragedy strikes, you may not be able to feel God's love and care. But if you decide with a deep internal "knowing" that God will always want the best for you and will see you through the hard times of life, you will be prepared for what life brings down the road. Read Romans 8:28 and consider how it can help you "know" that God wants the best for you.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Live Victoriously! Romans 8:1-2, 12-28, 38-39

Beginning the Service:

"A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (Since this is a strong and mighty hymn – and not easy to sing without good accompaniment, consider whether to read the words, play a recording of the song or sing it as a small group. This hymn of faith written by Martin Luther is one that Christians everywhere thrill to hear.)

Offering:

Remind the congregation that living victoriously includes a commitment of all of ourselves to the expansion of God's Kingdom on earth. This must include the material blessings that God has given us. No matter how small or large a person's income may be, the victorious Christian will participate with his or her resources for the salvation of the world.

Praying for the World:

Pray today for political leaders around the world that they may govern wisely and with compassion. Pray for leaders in your own country by name.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Live Victoriously!

If the key idea of Romans 7 is "prisoner," describing the impossible condition of the natural man, the man without Christ in his life, then the key word in chapter 8 is "free." Chapter 7 vividly portrays the condition of the prisoner of sin and death; chapter 8 describes the victorious situation in the life of a Believer.

After taking his readers through all the evidence that man is alienated from God and needs reconciliation in chapters 1-7, Paul sings a new tune in chapter 8. He cries out in 7:24, "What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death?" It is a rescue that chapter 8 describes, and it is a rescue that cannot be imagined!

The 50th anniversary of the ending of the World War II was portrayed in news events and documentaries around the world. We cherish stories of those remaining veterans who were mostly very young men when they were involved in the war. One of those veterans remembers:

"One day on the Island of Saipan, in the western Pacific, I had gone with several of my friends to the north end of the Island to watch our company team play for the island softball championship. It was late as we loaded on the truck to head back to the company area. As we drove through a gap in the mountain range, we were suddenly awash with the rays of sun, slowly sinking into the blue waters of the Pacific. I don't recall any other sunset being so beautiful and awe inspiring. I was a new Christian at the time, and it never occurred to me that this was just another phenomenon of nature because my heart filled with a sense of the glory of God and of the new life I was experiencing thousands of miles from my home in the U.S.A. It seemed to me that I was twice blessed on that day: once by a beautiful sunset and another time by the victory I was experiencing in God's love.

I feared for my life the first night on the island, but the next morning I was a new person, untroubled with the thought of dying because I now realized that Jesus had already died for me. When the chaplain baptized me in the waters of the Pacific, I was giving my first testimony to the fact that I had victory in Jesus. I did not realize how much this meant, and fifty-years later I still don't know it all. The book of Romans, Chapter 8 comes as near to putting that experience in words as can be found in scripture."

There are many strong words in Romans 8 that describe some facet of the victory the Christian has because of God's great rescue from the prison of sin. We rejoice because there is:

- ♣ No condemnation (v. 1)
- ♣ True emancipation (v. 2)
- Cause for real meditation (v. 5 and following)
- ♣ A new obligation (v.12)
- Energizing illumination (v. 18)
- A lasting determination

Romans 8, verse 1 says that believers are released from condemnation. All have experienced the feeling, if not the fact, that they have been condemned for some infraction of the rules, the laws, and the restrictions under which we live. Even young people, like the young soldier in the opening story live in this atmosphere. He came to the realization that God did not approve of his way of life, and consequently he was under condemnation. That is the condition that is described in chapter 7, causing the Apostle Paul to cry out in anguish, "I am a wretched man! Who shall deliver me from this death-dealing body?"

Scripture says that "those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires" (Romans 8:5a). Were it not for what God has done through the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, everyone would still be living according to what the sinful nature desires. Scripture says that ". . . those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires" (Romans 8:5b). The law of the Spirit emancipates from the law of sin and death, and for that we are victorious. The one qualification is that a man be "IN" Christ Being "in" Christ means that God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. We can sing, we can shout, we can announce to the world, "Free from the law, oh happy condition, Jesus has bled and there is redemption: cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall, Grace hath redeemed us once for all." ("Free from the Law, O Happy Condition", by Philip P. Bliss).

That's only the beginning! There is a new meditation for the one who has been emancipated, for whom there is no condemnation: there then comes a new way of thinking, according to verses 5 and following. The Scripture speaks of the kind of mind one has as a Christian. It is a mind that is set on what the Spirit desires, not what the flesh desires. The Apostle Paul advises the people in the church at Philippi to think on certain things: whatever is true, noble; lovely, right, pure, and admirable (Philippians 4:8ff). Proverbs 23:7 tells us "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." There is a new meditation — a meditating on those beautiful thoughts and noble ideas for which we were created.

But there is more! When one becomes a new person in Christ he devotes himself to meeting certain obligations. Scripture describes it in this manner: "Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it," (Romans 8:12). The one who trusts Christ is the one who is led by the Spirit. So our obligation as Christians is to think the thoughts of Jesus and to live a life like Jesus lived.

Once again! The Christian should shout with joy because there is an energizing illumination (v.18) that opens up the vistas of life that we have never seen before. Even the different parts of nature are waiting to join when the time comes. "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (v.19). Think about the wonderful things that God has planned. Nature itself is waiting for us to become the true sons and daughters of God! Then nature will be released from its bondage, as are men and women.

But there are other reasons for living victoriously that appear in Romans 8. Almost every sentence describes some facet of the new life in Christ, the life that can be lived victoriously. A lasting determination (v.22-25) speaks of the hope we have for those things we do not see. We are promised the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit (vv. 26-27).

Verse 28 "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" is a marvellous promise – one that we must hide in our hearts in good times and remember in the difficult times when all seems dark and without hope.

Verse 31 continues this triumphant passage of Scripture with the words "If God is for us, who is against us" (Romans 8:31b)?

No condemnation – true emancipation – cause for real meditation – a new obligation – energizing illumination – a lasting determination

Freedom – pure and noble thinking – responsibility to God and others – understanding and hope for the future – these we are promised.

Is there any wonder that we sing with such great feeling, "Victory in Jesus?"

Call to Commitment:

May we rejoice in the freedom we have from the bondage to sin even as we commit to living this week in such a way that God will be honoured.

Concluding the Service:

Sing "Victory in Jesus".