

Would you rather float **DOWN**stream on an inner tube with the current, or swim **UP**stream **against the current**?

A mission trip can be like swimming **UP**stream. Someone might say, “You’re doing what? Going where? You must be out of your mind! Is it safe?”

Not everyone thinks it’s a great idea to go on a short-term mission trip. *Why would you give a week of vacation from school or work to go to a strange place, when you could be sunning yourself somewhere on a beach? You could be making more money at your job? This trip is costing you how much???* And you can find yourself going against the current of what someone thinks is acceptable—like swimming **UP**stream!

I’m not a very experienced swimmer, but I have enough experience to know that going against the current is a lot harder than going with it. It’s that way with life, too. There are always voices telling us to go with the flow, be current, and conform: “Buy this, wear that, go here, go there. Do this, do that! Just do it! Look like this, act this way, eat this, drink this and then you’ll be accepted.” These are the voices that invite us to go with the flow, **DOWN**stream. Take the easy way!

But there is another voice we need to hear. It’s the Apostle Paul writing to the Christians living in Rome. In writing he knows that the Romans are immersed in the culture of the Roman empire demanding that they conform even when it goes against what God wants for them—tempting them to compromise their beliefs and values. Paul loves them and encourages them with these words:

*Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. (Romans 12:2)*

To the one who asks, “This trip is costing you how much???” know that swimming **UP**stream on a mission trip is worth it. In fact, many return after serving others with this message, “*The trip was one of the best things I’ve ever done—a lot better than sunning myself on a beach.*”

As you embark on this new experience, I pray that you will take on the challenge of swimming **UP**stream. Instead of being well-adjusted to your culture, prepare for the swim of your life! Get in the water and be refreshed! Be energized as you exercise your servant muscles. Breathe deeply the Spirit of God and trust that God will always hold you up in the water. Fix your attention on God and believe that God will bring the best out of you, and even create you into a well-formed, mature swimmer!

Get ready to dive in, and have a great swim!

**REV. DR. FRANKLIN W. NELSON, AUTHOR**

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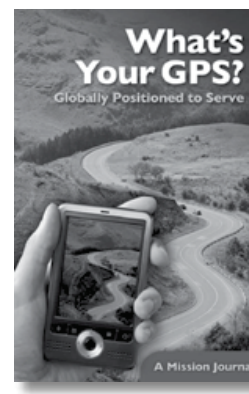
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TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# WE TRAVEL IN 7 DAYS CHOOSE TO SWIM!

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## COME TO THE WATER!

With your eyes closed, breathe deeply. Continue to relax as you let God's Spirit flow like a river into your life. Pray...  
*Dear God, as I prepare for this mission trip, I need the power of your Spirit and love. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Your Word teaches that I need to trust in your invisible presence, especially as I take this dive into service and mission.*

*Today, I thank you especially for...*

*Forgive me for...*

*Help me to...*

*I praise you for...*



## GET READY TO JUMP IN!

Underline a word or phrase that speaks to you from this scripture:

*But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15 NIV*

This is God's message to me:



## DIVE IN!

**(Q) QUESTIONS:** Why did you choose to go on this mission trip? Why did God choose you?

**KEY VERSE:** *In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is, destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal. If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me.*

*Then you'll be where I am, ready to serve at a moment's notice. The Father will honor and reward anyone who serves me. John 12:25-26 The Message*

Give 1 or 2 of your reasons for saying "yes" to this mission trip...

Give 1 or 2 reasons God might be choosing you to go...

**If you have more time,** reflect on 1 Peter 2:4-12. Find an "Open Water" page to take some notes as you read and reflect.



## SWIM!

- Tell a friend or family member about the mission trip and some of your reasons for going. Invite him/her to pray for you during the trip.
- Think of someone who could use your help, and during the next 24 hours, offer him/her your help.

# MISSION DAY 2

## CONCEIT OR HUMILITY?

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



**WEATHER**  
(CIRCLE ONE)



**MY MOOD**  
(CIRCLE ONE)



### COME TO THE WATER!

With your eyes closed, breathe deeply. Continue to relax as you let God's Spirit flow like a river into your life. Pray...  
*Dear God, fill me with your love today. I want to be able to see/notice/love the people who cross my path and make friends of everyone I meet. Forgive me when I judge others as less important, attractive or acceptable. I want to swim with Jesus by becoming less conceited and focused on myself, and much more humbly focused on serving others.*

Today, I thank you especially for...

Forgive me for...

Help me to...

I praise you for...



### REFLECT ON THE PAST 24 HOURS...

I felt good when...

A few of the new people I've met here include...

I've learned that...

I felt humble when...

Someone helped me when he/she...

An emotional high point for me was when...

A low point/hard time for me was when...

I think God has helped me to...



### GET READY TO JUMP IN!

**(Q) During this mission trip will I float with the current of CONCEIT or swim UPstream toward HUMILITY?**

**KEY VERSE:** *Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody (do not be conceited).* Romans 12:16

Here's my own description of what it means to be **CONCEITED**:

Here's what I think it means to be **HUMBLE**:



### DIVE IN!

**REFLECT ON THE STORY OF HOW SAUL BECAME PAUL (ACTS 8:1-3 AND 9:1-18).** (Take notes in the space below.) Record some of the important points of the story, especially the way that Saul was humbled by the presence of Christ.

**TRAINING MANUAL FOR SWIMMERS #2:** If you are tempted to think that you are better than others, remember the humility of Jesus Christ. Try to welcome, befriend and love everyone in the way Jesus would want you to.

**If you have more time,** read about the humility of Jesus in Philippians 2:1-11 and take notes on an "Open Water" page.



### SWIM!

Use an "Open Water" page to list two or more of the new people you've met, and write a wish or prayer for them next to their names.

# OPEN WATER!



TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**BACK HOME: DAY 1**

**CONTINUE TO GIVE THANKS!**

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**COME TO THE WATER!**

With your eyes closed, breathe deeply. Continue to relax as you let God's Spirit flow like a river into your life. Pray...  
*Dear God, I'm home again, dripping wet from the experience of swimming UPstream. I pray that your love will continue to flow through me to my family, friends, church and community.*

(Complete each "thank you for..." with a word or phrase):

Thank you for _____	Thank you for _____
Thank you for _____	Thank you for _____
Thank you for _____	Thank you for _____



**GET READY TO JUMP IN!**

Underline a word or phrase that stands out to you:

*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Psalm 118:1 NIV*

*I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me...God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him. Romans 12:3 The Message*

*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV

This is God's message to me:



**DIVE IN!**

**(Q)** Do I float DOWNstream with the current of ANXIOUSNESS or swim UPstream in the direction of THANKSGIVING?

**KEY VERSE:** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 NIV*

**If you have more time,** read Psalm 118; Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 3:12-17 and take notes on an "Open Water" page.



**SWIM!**

- Express thanks in a note or email to a friend or family member who helped to make it possible for you to go on the mission trip. Include your "Elevator Speech" from page 48. You may also want to send a thank-you email/note to someone you met during the mission trip.
- If you haven't completed "Telling My Story" on pages 45-47, continue to work on it.