

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Lord, lead me as I reflect on your Word. Enable me to see these passages through your eyes."

MEDITATE

Read the passage twice, taking your time to focus on each phrase.

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

2 Jesus said, "This is how you should pray:

"Father, may your name be kept holy.

May your Kingdom come soon.

3 Give us each day the food we need,

4 and forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

And don't let us yield to temptation."

[Luke 11:1-4]

REFLECT

Have you ever been around someone that you knew had a deeper connection with God than you ever thought possible? At sixth grade camp I was walking past the chapel and I began to hear someone crying. It was different than anything I had ever heard before. It was not just a whimper, but loud guttural sobs calling out to God in desperation. I knew I had entered a holy space, something powerful was happening. I also knew this was a private space, but I could barely make myself move on. I was captivated by this abandonment of the soul. It was messy. It was painful. It was holy.

As a young person just beginning to explore the things of faith, this moved me deeply and I never forgot that moment. I later found out that this beautiful young woman, one of the camp leaders, was dying of leukemia. I watched her the rest of the week. I wanted to know this God the way she did, and I hoped to learn from her every move.

The Disciples were captivated by a depth in Jesus as He prayed. They were moved by the power that poured forth from His life. They wanted what He had. Lord....teach us to pray.

If we were to ask Jesus how to pray today, it would be the same answer. So if you have ever asked, "How do I pray?" here are the directions!

Read over the passage again and make note of anything that is catching your attention.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Take a moment to ask the Lord to take these forty days to teach and expand your experience with prayer. Take this time to write down any questions you have about prayer asking the Lord to meet you in this journey.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Lord, please reveal yourself to me in new ways. Give me a deeper sense of awe and wonder as I approach you. Allow me to get a glimpse into your greatness that I may become a true worshipper."

MEDITATE

Jesus began teaching the Disciples about prayer with the theme of *worship*.

He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name."

--OR--

"May your name be kept holy."

[Luke 11:2]

"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

[John 4:23-24]

REFLECT

It is a painful thing to be in a situation where you are slandered or your character is questioned. It is even more painful when it is a close friend that knows us well. Am I allowing people to see the true Father through my life or am I slandering His character? To know God is to know who He is. The world has it's view of this God we claim to serve and worship. Many believe He is a tyrant, a control freak, definitely not fair and doesn't do anything about all of the struggles in our world. I am sure you can add to the list. Who do the people in your extended circle believe about God's character? How would you describe Him?

What we believe and know God to be will be our "character reference" to the world on His behalf. The more we know the real Jesus, the more our witness of Him will be accurate and glorifying to Him.

Jesus is a direct representation of the Father. To see Jesus in action is to see the heart of the Father. Jesus is compassionate, a healer, one who restores, as is the Father. To honor His Name, to keep it Holy, will be defined by our own perspective unless we allow the Word and the Spirit to reveal the truth of God's character to us.

Are we willing to lay down our opinions of God and pray dangerously to know the true Jesus and His true character? Will we pray dangerously and ask for opportunities to be a character witness for Jesus in our circles of influence? This is to "hallow", "honor", and "keep holy" His name.

Worship puts God in the highest position in our lives. To worship Him is to honor Him in all that we say and do. It is an act of worship to live a life worthy of the calling we have as Christ followers. If God is holy our calling is holy. To the degree that we grasp the vastness of God, it directly impacts our worship and the way we live our lives. The more we experience the greatness of God's love, His mercy, His tenderness, His peace, His patience, and His Holiness the more we stand in awe of Him. The more we are met with His character the more our character is impacted and challenged to become one with Him. To know God is to love God. To know God is to represent Him well.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Father, I ask that your Holy Spirit lead me daily with conviction of how my life does or does not reflect that of a true worshipper of Christ. Empower me to become authentic and reflecting your character to my community that they may see the true Jesus. Heal anything in me that is obstructing my understanding of who you truly are.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | THE LORD'S PRAYER**PRAYER OF INVITATION**

"Lord, awaken in me your Kingdom calling. Give me your passion and urgency to extend your Kingdom here on this earth in my life today. Teach me, lead me, that I may understand what Jesus instructed the Disciples to pray."

MEDITATE

*9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*

[Matthew 6:9-11]

"Heal the sick who are there and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you.""

[Luke 10:9]

"But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

[Luke 11:20]

"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God."

[Luke 13:29]

REFLECT

Google was once just an idea. Its mission statement is "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful," but also has an unofficial statement - "Don't be evil" which now is "Do the right thing". Its first office was a garage in Menlo Park California with a garage door opener as it's "key". This idea and this mission has now become a world wide influencer, household name, and tool utilized by the majority of online users.

When we think of God's Kingdom principles here on earth as it is in heaven, it seems a bit intangible. God's Kingdom is more than an idea, it is a culture that emanates the presence, principles, and power of God. We are the agents disseminating the Kingdom throughout the world. Not unlike Google, The Good News, the Gospel of Jesus began small. Jesus shared, lived, and taught twelve men. As of 2010 it has reached 2.168 billion!

It is an impressive number if we consider how the mission of Jesus began. It is, however, only 1/3 of the world's population. The Kingdom power, principles, and presence of God are still not known by almost 5 billion people.

We, as Christ followers, have this Kingdom living within us. Will we share it? Will we be the Kingdom Come people to the 5 billion people that have not experienced the tangible presence of God? It truly does depend on us. Jesus gave us as Disciples a mission statement, "16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:16-20.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Father, I am humbled by the gift of your Kingdom in my heart and life. I ask you to forgive me for my lack of zeal and urgency to share your love with those around me. I ask you to give me your heart, and your passion for your Kingdom and those you bring into my path. Give me boldness, Lord, and empower me to represent your Kingdom principles, power, and presence of the Holy Spirit. May your Kingdom come in and through me as it did through you and your Disciples.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Lord, I thank you for every good and perfect gift you have brought into my life. Reveal to me the goodness and kindness of your daily provision. Deepen my faith as I trust you each day."

MEDITATE

*2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: ...3 Give us each day our daily bread."
[Luke 11:2-3]*

22-24 He continued this subject with his disciples. "Don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or if the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your inner life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the ravens, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, carefree in the care of God. And you count far more."

25-28 "Has anyone by fussing before the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? If fussing can't even do that, why fuss at all? Walk into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They don't fuss with their appearance—but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them. If God gives such attention to the wildflowers, most of them never even seen, don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you?"

*29-32 "What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don't be afraid of missing out. You're my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.
[Luke 12:22-32]*

REFLECT

There were days when I feared making it to the next paycheck. I was a stay at home mom, working part time, and my husband worked nights. One day the fear overtook me and in prayer I cried out to the Lord, "We can't even afford to buy the girls the socks they need!" It was only an hour later that there was a knock on the door. Our neighbor had cleaned out her grand-daughter's dresser drawers and came over with a bag of socks the exact two sizes of our girls! She could have come over with dresses or other items, but the sock message was clear. God answered a specific need. Whenever I fear God meeting our needs or the needs of others, I remember the sock story.

God did not provide all our needs in that one moment. There were still things we needed to walk in obedience to see God's promises fulfilled. We needed to seek His wisdom when making decisions. And we needed to believe. But God!

Jesus did not promise that we would not need, He promised that God would meet our need. Jesus did not promise we would not experience loss, but not to spend our life in worry because God was the ultimate provider. As we enter a new year, many have experienced hardship, loss, and struggle. May we be agents of God's provision to others and may we grow in our trust in the One who provides our daily need.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Lord, I ask for your strength as I waver at times in trusting you. I ask that you reveal to me how I can be that provision you desire to use in our church and in the lives of those around me. Give me courage and boldness to step out in generosity and faith.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Father, I am so aware of my need for your forgiveness. I am so grateful for your continued grace and love as you patiently forgive me daily. Please awaken my heart to what pleases you."

MEDITATE

*2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: ... and forgive us our sins"
[Luke 11:2-3]*

2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

*9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."
[John 8:2-11]*

*11b May you be filled with joy, 12 always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. 13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.
[Colossians 1:11-14]*

REFLECT

Not a hidden sin but caught in the act of sinning. Not corrected privately but paraded in shame and humiliation. Not for her good and restoration, but for the sport of those that were setting a trap for Jesus.

To be forgiven is to receive God's gift of Jesus and His sacrifice. To be forgiven is to believe that He has done what He says He will do and forgive you. To be forgiven is to reject the shame and the guilt, to choose by faith to walk in freedom. To be forgiven is to grow in love with Jesus and to be changed. To be forgiven is to desire to live a holy life.

As we stand on the seashore and watch as the waves sweep in and wash away the footprints and markings of the day, so the love and grace of the Father washes away our sin. Just as we cannot find tracings of the markings in the sand the Father also has removed the reminders of that sin from His sight. They are gone.

It is hard to accept this gift. It is harder to believe it. Our freedom only comes when we approach God with humility, acknowledging our failings, and receive His forgiveness in return. It is a simple exchange, but not without great cost to provide it. Let us not reject the beautiful gift of freedom by hanging on to guilt and shame. He does not condemn you.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

I pray that you would teach me what it means to truly walk in freedom and forgiveness. Grow me in my faith to receive this amazing gift. Wash me Lord, cleanse me, fill me, and lead me into your holiness.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Father, I want to be as giving and forgiving as you are. I desire to have my heart enlarged to be a grace giver."

MEDITATE

"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us."

[Luke 11:4]

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

[Colossians 3:12-14]

37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

[Luke 6:37-38]

REFLECT

God takes forgiveness seriously. It required His Son being separated from Him, bearing the sin and darkness of the world, and conquering death the penalty for sin. Because it cost Him a great deal to save us, He has an expectation that we would extend the same kindness to someone who sins against us.

Jesus uses a parable of a man that owed millions of dollars. The man begged that his debt be cancelled and be given mercy. The King gave him mercy and cancelled his debt. Another person owed the first man twenty dollars and begged for mercy. The man whose great debt was cancelled would not cancel the small debt owed to him. The King found out about this ungrateful man and put him in jail.

Jesus goes on to say the same will be done to us! We seem to skip over these verses and don't internalize the seriousness of what Jesus is saying. If we do not understand the great debt that Jesus cancelled for us, we will not forgive those that have sinned against us. It truly is in our understanding the depth of mercy given to us that we will have mercy on others.

Our ability to love others as God has loved us through mercy and forgiveness speaks loudly to a world where bitterness and hatred often rule. God is not asking more of you than He gave, He is actually asking less. He has given up His life for the person that has sinned against you already. Will you be willing to extend this costly mercy?

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Lord, I ask that you change my heart. Forgive me for not truly grasping the great debt you have forgiven me. Father, I ask for your love to permeate my heart and give me the compassion and love for others that you have given me. Please show me who I have not forgiven and lead me to release them as you have released me. Teach me Lord to be more like you.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Father, I am so aware of the spiritual war around us. I ask for your guidance in standing firm in my faith. Give me your wisdom and understanding that I might be victorious in my struggles."

MEDITATE

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

[Matthew 6:13]

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

[1Corinthians 10:13]

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. 16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

[James 1:12-17]

REFLECT

Jesus leads us into praying something that we often neglect or even consider....Lord, please protect me from even facing a temptation. We try to battle sin in our own strength. Our flesh often screams louder than our will. Instant gratification often wins over commitment to Kingdom principles. If you have ever truly faced real temptation and have fallen, then you know the need for grace and protection from even facing a temptation.

Paul continues teaching on temptation by giving us another principle...look for a way out! Satan's tactics are reruns. Nothing you have faced is original when it comes to temptation to sin. God is very aware of the devil's strategies and has the power to overcome every angle. We often try to resist when faced with a temptation, but Paul tells us to look for the escape route.

In a theatre the exit signs are clearly marked so that in case of an emergency in the darkness we can find our way out to safety. Look for the Lord's clearly marked exit...even in the midst of darkness He will lead you out.

James gives us the real secret to falling to temptation, our own desires. James also gives us a guiding principle, God does not tempt us to sin. Only good and perfect gifts can come from Him.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Lord, Thank you for promising to provide an escape route when faced with temptation. Holy Spirit, search my heart and reveal the hidden desires in me that the enemy wants to exploit. Heal me and strengthen me that I may stand as Jesus stood when tempted. I ask for your passion for holiness.