



**PRAYER WARRIOR: DAILY ARMOR**



*This devotion is dedicated to one of the greatest prayer warriors,  
Duane Mersino.*

*Thank you for your unyielding support, example, and prayers, brother.*



Thanks for picking this up!

Here are some things we want you to know:

1. This is all about Jesus.
2. This is for everyone. No experience needed. If you have experience, take some time to walk with someone who's just getting started.
3. Any journey has guides along the way. Whether its people, a map, trail makers, a compass, or the North Star, these guides give a sense of location and direction. They help us know what to look for and where we are. We've designed these devotions in a similar way.

There is a rhythmic format to help you focus. There are 3 of them per devotion:

- **Pray** - Talking to God. He invites you to speak with Him. He'll even teach you how. (See Luke 11:1-4, and also that's the point of this study!)
- **Read** - a verse or verses from the Bible, and some stories by our writers related to that section from the Bible. Through the word n the Bible, God guarantees this is how He speaks to you.
- **Live** - There are questions here to help you consider what was written for that day. Use these questions, come up with your own questions, or use both. :)

These are simple moves inspired by ancient spiritual habits: oratio (pray) - meditatio (meditate) - tentatio (tension, struggle). Pray to God for what is on your heart, Reflect on what He says in His Word, and struggle. Struggle? Did we lose you there? Life is a gift, yet one filled with struggle. That's when praying to ask God for help, and reading and reflecting on God's Word (the Bible) comes in.

These are simple enough all on their own, but simple rhythms typically point to profound realities. Pray, Read, Live are also rhythms we see in our lives. We experience God's Word, we call out to Him, especially as we face trials and temptations. That is what is at the heart of being a Prayer Warrior.

You are not doing this alone. One person walking by themselves is easy to miss or ignore. A group of people walking in step? That's a band, an army, a community. You are invited to be in step with us, as Jesus leads us to be Prayer Warriors.

Sharing Christ's story with love - Trinity Utica Staff

## Week 1 Sunday – God’s identity

### PRAY

Jesus, you show us the Father. You help us get a clearer, even grander picture of who you are and your mighty love that conquers all things. Keep sending your Spirit to us to breathe life and faith into us. Keep stirring your mission within us. Because you forgive us, help to forgive and love others. Amen.

### READ

Jesus showed us many things through his life and his teachings, but perhaps the greatest truth that he proclaimed in His teachings and His life was that of our Everlasting Father. Today as we begin, “Prayer Warrior – empowered by God” we begin by receiving the truth of Our Father in Heaven. Let me say it this way, your Heavenly Father the one who created you, knows you by name, and has a plan for you, loves you. He loves you. He is full of compassion for you and longs for you to experience the confidence that comes from knowing whose you are. You are the apple of His eye. Our Heavenly Father exactly like the Father Jesus speaks of in Luke 15. He is a Father of relentless and resilient love. He has run to you and is running to you now.

As you read Luke 15:11-32 I pray you get a fuller understanding of your Father’s love for you. As you pray “Our Father in Heaven,” I hope that you are able to not just proclaim who your Father is, but even more so that you hear your Father speaking back to you, “You are my child.”

This is not just where we begin or even end in the arms of the Father, but it is where we are called to live and to breathe each and every moment of every day. You are a child of God may you be empowered by Him.

*“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.” – Ephesians 3:14-21*

### LIVE

How do you see God at work right now?

Sometimes it takes someone else to point out what we miss. If you struggle to see God working, who is in your life that can help see what you can’t see right now?

## **Week 1 Monday - God's Identity**

### **PRAY**

God, you know and form all things, even me. You came for me even before I asked. Forgive me for the times I forget about trusting you in all things, large, small, or in between. Keep showing me your power in this world. Amen.

### **READ**

Stop me if you have heard this story before... A little boy simply loved playing outside in his sandbox. He would spend long moments creating his own small worlds as used his hands and toy trucks to move sand. Hills and valleys would appear along with roads and even structures. Each day presented a new canvas to build a brand new landscape. On one day, a large stone appeared in his sandbox. The stone stood as an obstacle to the path of a road that the boy wanted to build. The boy could not budge the stone. It was too heavy to lift. He tried to push it out of the way with all the strength he could muster. Even his best toy bulldozer was no match for the immovable rock. Finally, in frustration and tears he collapsed into the sandbox.

The boy's father had watched the episode unfold from the kitchen window. His shadow covered the little boy as he walked toward the sandbox. His son looked up with a tear stained face. "Daddy, I give up. I have tried everything. I cannot move this stone."

"I am sorry son. But, you did not try everything. You did not ask me." He bent down and moved the rock out of the sandbox with one hand.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, Our Father. He created all of the heavens and the earth. He certainly has the power to reach down and help us move the stones in our lives. His desire is for us to seek Him in time of need.

### **LIVE**

When you think of God displaying his power, what pops into your mind?

What are some ways God promises to show us his power? (Hint: it involves water, and bread and wine)

## **Week 1 Tuesday - God's Identity**

### **Pray**

God please help me truly rely on your strength. Remind me that you are in control and nothing is impossible with you. Help me to acknowledge your almighty power, even in my darkest moments. Help me to trust in your plan and to carry out your will in my daily living. Thank you for always listening to me when I pray. Amen.

### **Read**

**Luke 1:37 "For nothing is impossible with God."**

We have all seen the beautiful home décor, bumper stickers, and even sports gear that mention how nothing is impossible with God. Yes, this is of course a lovely sentiment, but is it something we just put on display or is it something we truly believe? This is where the terms Display Christian and Action Christian come into play. It is easy to have this displayed on the outside, loud and proud when things are going well but how about those times when things are not going well? How do we truly put this belief into action in times like these? Sickness, trials, layoffs, political unrest, death...these are things that seem absolutely impossible and these are the situations that can make us forget what God is capable of.

Living as an Action Christian rather than a Display Christian can be a daunting task! It is hard to put yourself and your faith out there, especially when things are not exactly going well. This specific verse can be difficult to grasp in dark times because we think, "if God can do anything, why didn't he \_\_\_\_" (fill in the blank with your desired outcome.) As an Action Christian, we need to live out the belief that, even in a dark moment, what is possible at that time is finding strength and love from our Father.

This is God's identity. He is our almighty Father, capable of anything. As we begin our prayers by acknowledging who He is, we prepare our hearts and remind ourselves of His true identity. As our Father, He does not promise that this life will be easy, or even that life will always make sense...but He does promise to love us and hold us through it all. It is this love and strength that we need to harness as an Action Christian to act out in our daily lives and share with others.

### **Live**

What are some ways you can be an Action Christian today? How can you truly live out your belief that nothing is impossible with God? How can you use this belief to help others in times of joy and in times of struggle?



## Week 1 Wednesday - God's Identity

### PRAY

Jesus, you show me the Father. Father you sent your Son not just to rescue, but to daily give me faith and a new life. Help me to believe. Thank you for empowering me today. Amen.

### READ

**Acts 17:24: The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man**

Being a parent can be stressful. Don't get me wrong: I love my kids! But the way they pepper my wife (their mother) with questions, the way they look to her to be the source of all knowledge, nourishment, needs, wants, hopes, and dreams - it makes me tired just typing it.

It can be overwhelming, though, especially during seasons when we feel like we have depleted our own measures of time and energy.

God is not that kind of father. He never runs out. He never tires, never slumbers, never sleeps, never turns away. Nor does he *need* us to respond. He does not need anything from us. He is the best parent: he always has enough, always listens, always understands, always grace and faith. He invites you, calls you, promises you, hears you, provides for you. He does this because he knows your need. When it seems like you don't have enough, do not be distracted by the financials, the schedule, expectations, the wind and the waves: believe your Father sees you, knows, and will provide. That's just the kind of Father he is.

### LIVE

Does God not needing anything from you give you a sense of freedom, or does it offend you?

While not everyone is a parent, everyone has parents. While no human parent is perfect, how does God being your Father help give you hope as a parent? If you're not a parent, how does being your Father give you a refreshed heart towards your parents?

## **Week 1 Thursday - God's Identity**

### **PRAY**

Father God, your love defines us. There's nothing like it. You provide for all things and keep them going. You give special blessings to those called by your name. Guide me in love for you and others. Amen.

### **READ**

#### **1 John 3:1**

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are! What is it that makes His love so great? Great love is offered expecting nothing in return. The Father loves us, no matter what. That love is called "Agape" love.

And we are His children. He has adopted us and as His adopted ones we are heirs to the Kingdom. As His heirs we receive His gifts which include forgiveness of sins, redemption from the evil one, and Holy Spirit faith all offered by His lavish grace.

When Jesus was asked by His disciples to teach them how to pray, He began with "Our Father". Through the Holy Spirit we praise our Father as "my Father". We are intimately connected to His great love showered upon us. One of the most significant spiritual supports I have received in the last few years is the realization that when I am struggling with anxiety, hopelessness, or loneliness I can call out to my Father for support, but also to thank and praise Him for His bountiful blessings.

### **LIVE**

In the small catechism, Martin Luther writes in the meaning of the 2nd commandment , "You should call upon the name of the Lord in every trouble; pray, praise, and give thanks."

PRAY - Abba Father ( our dearest Father)

PRAISE - Psalm 103:1&2 - " Praise the Lord, O my soul all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul and forget not all His benefits."

GIVE THANKS - Thank Him for all your blessings and in all circumstances.

Do not be anxious about anything, but call out to your Father in Heaven who is always there to listen and shower us with His love.

Use these as a guide to write your own prayer right now in the space below:

## Week 1: Day 6 :: Word of the Week

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them.*

*I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.”*

[Matthew 6:5](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you’ll see it often.

We want to be a community that is intentional about scripture memorization. Will you join us?

## **Week 1: Day 7 :: Day of Kairos**

All time belongs to God. Set aside this day to remind your soul of that truth, that His time is enough, and just what you need. Use this time as a moment to catch up on your reading, pray, and rest in the presence of the Lord. Pray this Word for yourself and your community:

*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

## Week 2 Sunday - God's Name

### PRAY

Lord, your name is holy, powerful, and present. Keep teaching me how to use, guard, and share your name so that your power, presence, and peace comfort and encourage my heart, and those hearts in this world in need of the same thing. Amen.

### READ

**Luke 19:1-9** [Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." 6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.

How in the world is this story about God's holy name? In what we call the "first petition" of the Lord's Prayer, it's all about how God's name is holy and we're asking God that his name not be used in any empty way by us or in our gatherings. How does this relate to Zaccheus? Look through those verses again, looking for Zaccheus' attitude toward Jesus. Zaccheus sought Jesus. When he couldn't see Jesus, he moved, driven by faith to see one who gives faith. Tax collectors were among the worst of the worst, swindling their neighbors in order to get rich. Why would Zaccheus do this?

He heard the stories of Jesus. Everyone was hearing about him. So much so that a crowd was gathering to the point that Zaccheus' only way of seeing Jesus was from a tree. Jesus saw him, invited himself to Zaccheus' house. Here Zaccheus confessed the change Jesus was already making in his heart and his house. Jesus declares "salvation has come to this house" not because Zaccheus made these changes, but because Jesus, salvation incarnate, is inside Zaccheus' home. Jesus calls him a "son of Abraham" because Zaccheus believes, like Abraham believed. The faith God gives Abraham and Zaccheus and you is what makes us family. That faith brings salvation to your home and your heart. Where there is faith, God's holiness breaks in: transforming moments and habits and actions because that is the fruit of faith. God's holiness is the fruit of salvation in Zaccheus' story, and in yours. That is what we pray God will do in this prayer. That's what Jesus teaches his disciples - his prayer warriors - to do.

### LIVE

God's name is holy all on its own. From Zaccheus' story, what's one thing God has changed in your life?

How do changes like that help you see God's holiness in your life?

## Week 2 Monday - God's Name

### PRAY

Jesus, your name is saving, powerful, and comforting. Keep teaching my heart to veer away from the empty ways your name is used. Move me in faith and hope to use your name in ways that share your story with love. Amen.

### READ

What's in a name? Think of some of the most significant people in history: Martin Luther King Jr., Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Billy Graham, and so on. Whenever those people are mentioned, it is almost always with respect. They are figures that people admire, and with good reason. Not only have these people influenced history in important ways, their character has inspired people throughout generations. Their names have weight, and that weight is earned.

**Exodus 20:7** has the Second Commandment: **"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."** Clearly, God's name is to be respected. But why? I think the answer is obvious: God the Father, all-powerful and all-loving, through the power of the Holy Spirit, works faith in us so the redemptive work of Jesus gives us eternal life.

God's name is not always used with the respect it deserves. It's misused in casual conversation so frequently most people don't give it a second thought. I encourage you to honor God's name because of what he has done for us. More than any human through history, God's name carries weight, and that weight is earned through his love.

### LIVE

What does God's name bring to you?

How do you struggle to honor God's name?

What gives you peace, despite the ways we all fall short?

## Week 2 Tuesday - God's Name

### PRAY

Jesus, you give us all things. You always meet needs and go beyond. Forgive me when I resent you or get caught up in looking to anything else. Give me faith to follow and believe. Amen.

### READ

**Bible Verse: Psalm 103:1 – Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his *HOLY* name!**

To paraphrase Martin Luther's statement in the Small Catechism, 'the Lord's Prayer should be taught by the head of the family in a *simple way* to his/her household'. Continuing on with the explanation of the First Petition, *Hallowed be Thy (Your) Name*, what does this mean individually - to you and me?

The term, hallowed, simply means, ***HOLY***. Each and every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we declare that God's name is ***HOLY*** and that we show reverence to His name. God is holy and He is certainly worthy of our most sincere praise. It is only God's name that is set apart from all other names and we honor Him in all that we say, think, and do every day. It is as simple as that – **God's Name is *HOLY*!**

A song immediately came to mind when I started thinking about the meaning of God's name being ***HOLY***. It is beautifully expressed in the words of a well-known and traditional hymn, *Holy, Holy, Holy*. You can easily hear the melody of this hymn as you read these wonderful words:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,  
Though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,  
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside thee,  
Perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!



## **LIVE**

Think about God's holiness. Consider how God calls us to "be holy as I am holy." How is our holiness different from his?

What promise does he give for our comfort and courage when we realize our holiness won't be enough?

## **Week 2 Wednesday - God's Name**

### **PRAY**

Jesus, when your word hits me like a ton of bricks, even when I'm broken, help me believe. Don't delay to bring your promises that in you alone, in your name, you give me shelter. Do your work in me as you send me to work in this world. Amen.

### **READ**

The message that Jeremiah was to preach to the Israelites wasn't going to be an easy one for them to hear. As a result of their persistent idolatry they were going to be conquered by the empire of Babylon. At the same time there were other prophets telling the people a different message. Their messages may have been more popular. They may have tested better with focus groups. They made the people feel better about themselves. But these messages didn't come from the Lord. They were false messages coming from false prophets.

The truth God's word shares with us isn't always easy to hear. God's law shows our sin. It shows us that we, like his Old Testament people, deserve to be removed from his presence. It's tempting to want to hear some other message about ourselves. We want to hear a message that we are okay. A message that we can find salvation in our own actions or efforts. These messages would be just as false. Any message that would point us to ourselves as the solution to our sin problem doesn't point us to Christ.

The message of exile was not the end of the words God had chosen Jeremiah to deliver to his people. Despite their exile God had a plan to prosper them and not to harm them. A plan to give them "a hope and a future." The exile in Babylon brought them to repent of their idolatry and God returned them to their land and sent his son as their savior as he had promised. When God shows us our sin he always has the same plan in mind. He wants to bring us to repentance and back to faith in his gospel promises that save us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We pray that he would continue to put pastors and teachers in our midst that would preach those words of Law and Gospel faithfully, just as he sent faithful prophets like Jeremiah to his Old Testament people.

### **LIVE**

Jeremiah is known as the "iron prophet". Just like metal tools can tear down and build up, to uproot or to plant, that's what God does through Jeremiah: he's a weapon and a garden tool. Where is your walk in faith today? Is God uprooting some things that need to go? Is he planting some truths that need to take root and flourish?

## Week 2 Thursday - God's Name

### PRAY

Spirit of truth, you bring and plant holiness within me. Forgive me when I try to conjure that holiness on my own. Keep building me up on your promises. Thank you for being faithful. Amen.

### READ

John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."

Jesus prays this prayer just before he's betrayed. John 17 is a whole chapter of Jesus praying for those who follow him: the ones in the garden with him and the ones who come later in time, like you and me. Jesus prays that God the Father would "sanctify", set them apart, remove their sin and give them a holy purpose. This exactly what God does in us. How does that happen?

God brings this about through his word. His word says that "Your sins are forgiven", and "pray...and it will be done for you", and "never will I leave you, never will I forsake you", and "I will take you to be with me, that you may be where I am." Through God's word, faith is planted and nourished. God sends us preachers to speak these truths and promises over us so that his word does its work: causes faith, encourages faith, and sanctifies us. Now none of us are perfectly holy; we're still sinners. Yet God who chooses to call you his own child, to set up his temple within you, is making you holy.

In God's holiness, we see his faithfulness: Jesus teaches us how to pray and trust the Father, and God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - is faithful. Lord, help us believe!

### LIVE

How does Jesus praying this *before* he's betrayed give you a deeper understanding of Jesus knowing exactly who he's praying for?

How does this impact the hope you have?

## Week 2: Day 6 :: Word of the Week

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*But when you pray, go away by yourself,  
shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private.  
Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

[Matthew 6:6](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you'll see it often.

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## **Week 2: Day 7 :: Day of Kairos**

All time belongs to God. Set aside this day to remind your soul of that truth, that His time is enough, and just what you need. Use this time as a moment to catch up on your reading, pray, and rest in the presence of the Lord. Pray this Word for yourself and your community:

*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

## Week 3 Sunday - God's Kingdom

### PRAY

"Dear God, we ask you first to give us your word, so that the gospel may be properly preached throughout the world and then that it may also be received in faith and may work and dwell in us, so that your kingdom may pervade among us through the word and the power of the Holy Spirit and the devil's kingdom may be destroyed so that it may have no right or power over us until finally its kingdom is utterly eradicated and sin, death, and hell wiped out, that we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness.<sup>1</sup> Amen."

### READ

**Mark 4:26-29 (ESV)** <sup>26</sup>And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup> He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. <sup>28</sup> The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. <sup>29</sup> But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

What is the Kingdom of God? Is it here on Earth or is it in Heaven? Is it an active force today or something that is to come? When you read the Gospels and come across Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God, these questions pop into our head. To add to the mystery, many instances where Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, he is speaking in parables, which require a person to understand how parables communicate differently than simple narrative texts.

This week, we will see different aspects of this Kingdom discussed in Scripture. As we pray, "*Thy Kingdom Come*," we are reminded by our education in Luther's Small Catechism how it comes, "God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity." Our devotion text witnesses to that truth: God's Word is the seed; God is the sower. The fertile soil through which God the Holy Spirit works the mysterious growth of faith is the Kingdom of God. It is His true people who confess their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior; the communion of saints. The result? We are prepared to be harvested on the Last Day and gathered into Heaven! Dr. Luther explained it this way in the Large Catechism, "The coming of God's kingdom to us

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<sup>1</sup> Stjerna, K. I. (2015). [The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther](#). In H. J. Hillerbrand, K. I. Stjerna, & T. J. Wengert (Eds.), *Word and Faith* (Vol. 2, pp. 375–376). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

takes place in two ways: first, it comes here, in time, through the word and faith, and second, in eternity, it comes through the final revelation (at Jesus' return)."<sup>2</sup>

## **LIVE**

God gives us eternal blessings of his kingdom now without running out of eternal blessings at the end of all things. How does that affect you right now today?

How does that affect how you view the future?

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<sup>2</sup> Stjerna, K. I. (2015). [The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther](#). In H. J. Hillerbrand, K. I. Stjerna, & T. J. Wengert (Eds.), *Word and Faith* (Vol. 2, p. 375). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

## **Week 3 Monday – God’s Kingdom**

### **PRAY**

Jesus, you continually bring the kingdom in this world and in my life. Forgive me for trying to build any other kind of kingdom. Keep filling me with with good things, like righteousness, joy, and peace. Amen.

### **READ**

ROMANS 14:17 “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

According to Luther’s Small Catechism, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Petition states...

Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean? The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does God’s kingdom come? God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

In a Bible commentary, today’s passage is described thus:

“The Gospel, which gives an account both of the kingdom of grace and of glory, reveals the righteousness of Christ, and teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly , in this present evil world.”

We must strive to live in peace and joy provided by the Holy Spirit. It’s hard, though, isn’t it? How can we possibly have peace and joy when we see what is happening in the world today, when we hear the news, when we see injustice and poverty and evil around us?

That is why we absolutely need the Holy Spirit and the guidance He provides. Wouldn’t it be something if even 5 out of 10 people managed to live with peace and joy for an entire day? The world would certainly be a different place. There is a beautiful choir anthem, “E’en So Lord Jesus, Quickly Come” by Paul Manz that sums up our devotion today. If you would like to hear it, you can easily find it on YouTube. I recommend hearing The Georgia Boy’s Choir singing this special anthem. You will be blessed.

### **LIVE**

How would you explain righteousness to someone?

What brings peace to your mind?



What restores joy to your soul?

## **Week 3 Tuesday - God's Kingdom**

### **PRAY**

Father, thank you for giving me Jesus. When you give me him, you give me everything. Forgive me when I get tangled up again in the domain of darkness. You are the one thing, the main thing, everything this world needs. Help me to believe and follow. Amen.

### **READ**

Colossians 1:13–14: He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Everyone is looking for the one thing: the one thing that will improve my life and the lives of people around me. Life in God's church is full of experiences: good, bad, mediocre, life-changing. Some of us seem to experience enough of the bad or mediocre, we can't see the good and the life-changing. Many of us, when we get to this point, find it easier to walk away from God's church entirely than stay. We look for our "one thing" somewhere else. Some of us move on to other churches, without resolving anything. To dig into it could be too intimidating, too painful, too embarrassing, or all of the above. We look for our "one thing" at a different church, ignoring the pain until time and distance numb the hurt. Some people stay in God's church in order to control it. If we could just find or unlock this "one thing", then hurts would be resolved, communities would come back and we'd see revival. When we try to find our "one thing" on our own terms either inside or outside God's church, we see the short distance our best efforts take us. We live in God's church, God's world, God's kingdom as though there's something more or better than the simple things God reveals to us.

God's kingdom is Jesus. God's kingdom is forgiveness. When forgiveness is healing, restoring, and rescuing, then we're all about it. When forgiving another who has caused deep hurt and pain seems impossible, then forgiveness is offensive, out-of-touch, and avoidable. Similar for the one who caused such pain when they consider seeking forgiveness. The words from Colossians breathe relief into all of us. God does not wait for us to get it right. He does not wait for us to grasp the "one thing" - he brings the one thing: himself. He holds onto you and me and delivers us from the domain of darkness. He gives us the kingdom of redemption and forgiveness; he gives us Jesus. This kingdom does not end all sin, but it endures, outlasts all sin. Today Jesus brings you the power to forgive, to heal, and to endure. When we fail, he won't. Live in the faithful power and grace of God's kingdom.

### **LIVE**

What are some other things that distract you from Jesus being your one thing?

What is one habit, word, or phrase you can include in your prayer during this series to remind you what the real season is?

## **Week 3 Wednesday - God's Kingdom**

### **PRAY**

Lord, you develop that times and places for all things to grow. Continue to grow and send men and women to serve in your kingdom, in your world. Amen.

### **READ**

**Matthew 9:38** "...therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Have you ever had the opportunity to be at a volunteer booth for an event? Picture this: an event where a mass of people are coming with a need and expecting service but there are so few volunteers compared to attendees. This is the same situation that the disciples find themselves in Matthew Chapter 9. Jesus and the disciples help as many as they can, but there are only so many to do the work.

In the very next verse Jesus says to the disciples to "pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Wherever there is a struggle, God has an answer. His answer is Jesus. One thing Jesus teaches us to do? Pray. We pray to help the next person and the one after that. Pray also to provide more laborers. But where do these laborers come from? Discipleship; A group of individuals changed by Jesus who brings God's will into the world and their lives. God's Kingdom grows on Earth as more disciples join the task-force.

Through prayer, God always provides. I've had many opportunities to observe people being served and people serving; my favorite thing is seeing those who receive assistance turn around and serve others in return. Through prayer, God provides the laborers. It is our job as a disciple to share the Love of Jesus, the word of God; to PRAY for those that we serve to become disciples themselves so they too become and create more laborers in the Kingdom of God.

### **LIVE**

Who are people you know that need to know Jesus?

Whether you've started sharing Christ story yet or not, a potent step to take is praying for them. Direct God's attention to those souls in need of it. Make a list of those names here:

## Week 3 Thursday - God's Kingdom

### PRAY

Dear God, thank you for forgiving me. Help me to lead others around me towards Your kingdom in a way that exemplifies Christ. Amen

### READ

**1 Peter 2:12: "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."**

Many of you don't know me, or where I'm from, but I'm Janis the intern here at Trinity! I was a senior in college last year and spent a better part of my junior year at home with my now-husband and his family before coming back home to my parents in Indiana for the ending part of last summer. This past year was, as everyone knows, very difficult. With COVID-19, the presidential election, and even things as simple as the countless social media "cancellations," I think everyone has seen some gray emotions wherever they go. Unlike a lot of people around me I know, I am an introvert. I love sitting by my kitchen table, sipping a cup of coffee or tea, and being away from the world. So, COVID-19 was wonderful for me! I finally got to have a break from people. Plus, I had been way more concerned about the effects of the pandemic and how it'd change my school career. I didn't struggle with school being online, and quite frankly with my husband going to school in Kentucky while I did school in Nebraska, I didn't want to go back in person. But God had a different plan for me.

During my senior year, I learned a lot about the people around me and how different opinions can truly shift the dynamic of friendships. Opinions can make the world sinful, and a key learning that I had from the past year was that opinions are valid even if we think the people around us aren't right. Their emotions, feelings, and concerns are valid. I think to today's verse from 1 Peter 2:12, which does not talk about how I feel. It talks about how we conduct ourselves as good Christians of Christ with other, even with those who we may feel are wrong. Social media often tells us that our facts are right. It's "my way or the highway," and I think of a quote from a Dr. Phil episode I watched on a react channel from YouTube, another social media platform. The episode was about a well-meaning mother pushing her opinion and beliefs on her son. It's a bit crass, but it gets the job done. "Even if you're right, you're going about it the wrong way. And if you're wrong, you're really going about it the wrong way." Now, in this situation we may not be the overbearing mother who may be right in why she's treating her son and his wife with disrespect, but we can really learn about how we act when faced with what we consider adversity.

Christ is a great example of this statement. Christ never went about how he treated other people "the wrong way." He disagreed with how people acted, and rightfully so, but instead of pushing them away by throwing hateful words and statements, Christ embraced them with love. In fact, we're all sinners, and He embraces us with love and forgiveness every single day. That doesn't mean He doesn't correct us and teach us how we are not following His Law. He does, but He doesn't do it with hate or envy. Instead, God treats us with kindness and a

discipling hand as our Father so that we can further His kingdom in every way. We can still correct the “Gentiles” around us, but we can do it honorably rather than the wrong way.

## **LIVE**

How does God's patience and love with you instruct you in passing those same gifts to others?

How does that paint a picture of God's kingdom?

## Week 3: Friday :: Word of the Week

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*“The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant.  
They’re full of formulas and programs and advice,  
peddling techniques for getting what you want from God.*

[Matthew 6:7](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you’ll see it often.

We want to be a community that is intentional about scripture memorization. Will you join us?

## **Week 3: Saturday :: Day of Kairos**

All time belongs to God. Set aside this day to remind your soul of that truth, that His time is enough, and just what you need. Use this time as a moment to catch up on your reading, pray, and rest in the presence of the Lord. Pray this Word for yourself and your community:

*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

## Week 4 Sunday - God's Will

### PRAY

O God, you give understanding. You help me and so many others see the cross and empty tomb. Through those, you reassure us that you do forgive, you are alive, and you will return. Help me to trust your work and your will. Amen.

### READ

Genesis 50:15–25: When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you." ' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Joseph's brothers thought they understood, and in a way they did. They understood humans. They understood how humans can say one thing in one moment, and then turn against their word and their neighbors the next moment. Clearly, they still battled guilt and fear because they betrayed Joseph decades earlier. Even though Joseph declared them forgiven, stated God brought something incredible out of their betrayal, even though these brothers and their families and their father moved into Egypt to be with Joseph, in the midst of grief at Jacob's death, their doubt and guilt gave fear a foothold.

God reassured them through Joseph. God reassures us through his people still now: through pastors speaking and teaching God's forgiveness and grace, teachers helping us explore and grow faith and how to live out this powerful extravagant new life through Jesus, and each one of us encouraging the other to believe in God's mercy as his Spirit teaches us believe and follow. God forgives you. God sets you free. What evil you and I brought about, Jesus took with himself to the cross. He lives. By faith we do, too. This is God's will for Joseph, for the brothers, for God's people then, and for God's people now.

### LIVE

Joseph's brother didn't trust that Joseph would still treat them fairly. How does the depth and extravagance of God's grace surprise you?

Where does fear threaten to gain traction in your life? How can prayer impact the situation?



## Week 4 Monday - God's Will

### PRAY

Jesus, you are the light that shines God's will. You are the lamb that works God's will into real life. Forgive me for the ways I forget or ignore you and your will. Open my eyes both to what you have done and still do to accomplish your will in this world. Amen.

### READ

**1 Timothy 2:4 [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

I love the way that Paul is always seeking to build up, strengthen, and encourage the church. We see this in his first letter to Timothy, a young pastor, with how Paul urges him to stay grounded in the word and to pray. This truth echoes and speaks the same thing to us today. We need to be a people, a church, the bride of Christ, who are committed to praying any and every way we know how for everyone we can think of, all the time. By praying and staying connected to Jesus (just like He modeled for us during His earthly ministry here by the way) through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are used to help usher in the kingdom of God, so that people might know Jesus and be saved. That is our Father's heart, will, and desire, just as this verse points out, that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth found alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

So who has God placed in your midst lately? What opportunities has Jesus laid at your doorstep to share Him with those around you? May we be on the look out for ways to encourage and cheer one another on to be so connected to Jesus through His word and prayer that the world would ultimately know Him because of you.

### LIVE

Who pours into you as a mentor or coach?

With whom do you have an opportunity to coach in faith or other areas of life?

Thank God for both, and make a list of the ones you can begin coaching in the next week?

## Week 4 Tuesday - God's Will

### PRAY

God help me to be alert. Help my eyes and my heart be open and ready to receive your love. Help my actions display your love. Guard my soul from temptations and give me the strength to live this life as you intend. Help me to carry out your will in my own life and to inspire the lives of others.

### READ

**1 Peter 5: 8 "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."** "Bring you're A-Game!" How many times have we heard this? I think most of us have heard this from a coach or friend at one point in our lives. As a Christian, we really need to be on our A-Game at all times. The devil has a huge target on our backs. He wants to see us fail, he wants to see us question God, and above all, he wants to see us turn away from our beliefs and not carry out God's will. The devil does not run around with a pitchfork and bright red horns like the Halloween costume depicts. He discretely hides in the everyday, the mundane, and in plain sight, waiting to devour our faith. This is why we need to be on alert...the ways of the evil one are sneaky.

So, what does bringing our A-Game look like? Start off your day with prayer, this is your warmup. Get into His Word, this is your stretching. Listen to Christian music, this is your conditioning. Live out your faith, this is your daily work-out. Reach out to others, talk about your faith with them, pray with them (not just for them). This is the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter with 2 minutes left on the clock. You are on God's team; you are a mighty warrior and irreplaceable teammate. You have a perfectly designed role and God knows you can perform your duties perfectly, that's why He chose you to be you. No one else is exactly like you, so God needs YOU to be on you're A-Game to further His kingdom.

This is God's will for us. He wants us to walk with Him daily. He wants us to live our lives in a way that not only shines His light to others, it inspires them to start a relationship with Him too. God wants to love on everyone you come in contact with, from your family and friends to your coworkers and even strangers you pass on the street. His will is for you to love everyone as He loves them, (yes, even the guy that cut you off in traffic this morning). When we pray "thy will be done," we acknowledge that His plans are greater than ours, and that we need His help to be on our A-Game to carry out that will here on earth.

### LIVE

How can you bring you're A-Game today? How can you inspire others to do the same? What are some ways you can start incorporating faith work-outs into you daily life?

## **Week 4 Wednesday - God's Will**

### **PRAY**

Our Father, we always want your will to be done, but it is hard when our journey may have pain and loss. Send your Holy Spirit to help us believe with every fiber of our being that your will is good, not only for us here on earth, but for us in heaven. In the midst of our sinful doubting, help us remember not only the suffering of your Son for our salvation, but the promise that You do understand our pain and will be with us every step of the way. Thy will be done. Amen.

### **READ**

I'll be honest, this is probably the part of The Lord's Prayer that I struggle with the most. If you are like my family and me, the last 18 months have been something that we won't forget anytime soon. But, if I'm honest, we have had in the midst of all of the daily turmoil our own share of some pretty awful grief and loss, to the point that I would say as I'm writing this, others in my family and I are in the midst of a winter season. Unfortunately, I know too many of you reading this are probably feeling much of the same.

So, I have found myself having some pretty frank conversations with my Lord, which I know is alright to do. Thanks be to God that my wrestling has led me to dig deeper into His Word, to seek out the wisdom of pastors and trusted family and friends, and to be led to some amazing podcasts, books, and devotions by other Christians who have experienced grief. Finally, I have had to take this all to God in prayer.

"And we 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. When you are in the midst of grief and loss, I don't know about you, but seeing the good is very difficult and knowing that it is God's will is even harder. Here are some wise thoughts that others have bestowed upon me:

1. We know that God's ultimate will is that as many as possible will have eternal life with Him. This is the truth, and we have to hold onto that at all costs. 1 Timothy 2:4 – "God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
2. God sees and knows all, and therefore He sees good so much differently than we do. I know what I want and I believe it is good; God knows what I want but knows exactly what is good not only for me now, but in the past, present, and future. We have to trust in the midst of loss that His will is doing good not only for us, but for the others involved in ways that we can't even imagine.
3. God's will is opposed to the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature. Again, God is good and His concept of good is so much different than what I see; the devil is not good; I am not good; the world is not good. We have to trust that what we think is good may not be, and God knows exactly what is good for all involved.

## **LIVE**

What do you experience in pain and loss?

How does knowing God's will for all to be saved challenge what we experience in pain and loss? How does it give you hope?

## **Week 4 Thursday - God's Will**

### **PRAY**

God, thank you for guiding me. You send your Spirit to fill me with life, to strengthen my faith, to remind me of joy, and to send me onward. Do that work right now through your Word and your Spirit again. Forgive me when I falter, forget, and fail. Help me believe your word that bring light, truth, and forgiveness. Amen.

### **READ**

Psalm 43:3 Send out your light and your truth;  
let them lead me;  
let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your dwelling!

Have you ever known or befriended a sherpa? Sherpas live in the Himalayas between Nepal and Tibet and are renowned for skill in traversing mountains. For outsiders and others with less skill they provide safety and a way forward through dangerous and deadly terrain. The psalmist describes light and truth a lot like sherpas.

Look at the way the writer depends on God and his light and truth. They lead, they bring or deliver to a holy, safe, good place. That sounds like this person is in a dark, dangerous, deadly spot. They need a sherpa, a guide to bring them through to terrain that is more safe.

Consider your own life now. Are you in a season or location in life that looks bright and good, or dark and dangerous? God sends you light and truth. We ultimately see this in Jesus. Jesus goes through darkness, danger, and death not just to get you through. He brings you back: back to life, back into God's family, back to this moment, this location so that you can believe and have confidence that he is with you. He brings his light and his peace to lead you, to move forward with you. God has sent me people throughout my life to speak those words of truth and light to me. Perhaps I do know some sherpa-type people. Perhaps you do, too. Perhaps God is sending you, one who is being filled with his light and truth, to someone else who needs a guide through this moment.

### **LIVE**

Have you ever thought about light and truth doing work like that?

How have you seen light and truth at work in you?

Who else might need to see or hear God's light and truth today?

## **Week 4: Friday :: Word of the Week**

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*“Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need  
even before you ask him!”*

[Matthew 6:8](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you’ll see it often.

We want to be a community that is intentional about scripture memorization. Will you join us?

## **Week 4: Saturday :: Day of Kairos**

All time belongs to God. Set aside this day to remind your soul of that truth, that His time is enough, and just what you need. Use this time as a moment to catch up on your reading, pray, and rest in the presence of the Lord. Pray this Word for yourself and your community:

*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

## **Week 5 – Sunday - God Provides**

### **PRAY**

Father, everything good comes from you. Thank you for faithfully and graciously filling our lives with what we need to live. When I overlook that, forget, or take it for granted, forgive. As you forgive, give me a heart and words ready to share for all the good you give me. Amen.

### **READ**

When we talk with God about our daily bread what is it that you hear him saying back to you? One of the things that I have consistently heard Him say to me when I request my daily bread is that He will provide for me. He tells me that I will have enough. When I heard I am going to have enough not just for today, but each day it allows my heart to open up more to share.

So, maybe today God is asking us to share. To share out of the confidence that tomorrow He will provide. Share because the possessions that we receive here through work ethic and gifts are not coming with us into eternity. Share because He wants to use us His children to provide for our neighbors.

As you read Jesus' teaching from Luke 12:15-21 and as you talk with God through the power of prayer today I pray that you are empowered by God to share.

### **LIVE**

What is holding you back from sharing with your neighbors?

As God provides, how does inspire your own generosity?



## **Week 5 Monday - God Provides**

### **PRAY**

Father, you goodness and faithfulness call our hearts to yours over and over. Forgive us when we doubt or despair. Thank you for working through the kindness of others to show us your heart. Amen.

### **READ**

Psalm 145:15-16

15 The eyes of all look to you,  
and you give them their food in due season.

16 You open your hand  
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

In February of 2016, life looked a little different for my husband and me. We had been married for six months, fresh out of college, and we're contemplating my very first Call as a Church worker to move 350 miles away from home. However, we found ourselves having an extended, month-long stay at St. Joe's hospital in Ann Arbor, MI. Long story short, I received my MS diagnosis and was excited to finally sleep in my own bed. Although there was still a long road ahead as I continued outpatient rehab for three additional months and was unable to drive due to the symptoms of my condition, the point in sharing this piece of my story is more about what happened post-rehab.

As I mentioned, a week before I was hospitalized, my husband and I had just returned from visiting the church I had interviewed at in Illinois and the very morning I was having a biopsy done, the congregation officially extended a call to me. God has some pretty interesting timing. Because I was not in a place to fully speak for myself, my husband was able to be in communication with the Senior Pastor to inform him what was happening back here in Michigan.

As I continued to heal, we held onto God's promises and saw Him move in incredible ways. We truly saw how God provides for us. First and foremost, God called us to a patient congregation. It would have been completely understandable for the congregation to rescind the Call as we were unaware of the severity of my condition. However, they gave us the space, freedom, and literal months to heal and see where God was leading us. Secondly, a parsonage was included as part of accepting the call. Finding a house is stressful and can be even more challenging as newlyweds, fresh out of college in an affluent area, but God provided. Thirdly, the parsonage sat on church property about 500 feet from our front door making my inability to drive a non-issue.

Although the process of me receiving my first Call began long before my MS diagnosis, we had no idea what God was orchestrating, truly providing for every one of our needs that was a result of my diagnosis. Perhaps not everyone has had as tangible of a story as what has played out in my life, but God is constantly providing for us and it's important to take the time to really sit in that and reflect on the bounty of provisions He has given us. Not only does He provide for our physical needs, but He also has

provided for our spiritual needs as He abundantly and sacrificially gives Himself to us. God so intimately knows every need and desire of our hearts and loves us so deeply, constantly providing for us in ways we may not even realize. God provides, trust in Him, and cling to His promises.

## **LIVE**

Recall the story of your life so far. Who has God worked through to give you hope and provide for your needs?

Consider your community. Who might need to know or see how God provides? What are few simple things you can do to share that with them?

## Week 5 Tuesday - God Provides

### PRAY

Heavenly Father, I thank and praise you for your eternal mercy and grace. When I feel overwhelmed, grant me the peace to know you are my constant. When I feel hurt or angry at others, remind me they are your children and loved by you, too. In your name, Amen.

### READ

Kindness, forgiveness, patience... all common buzz words now. We seem to need to give and receive these now more than ever. People are a little more tense lately and yes, a little more mean. And yet, we are all God's children. Jesus reminds us in **Matthew 6:45**, "...He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." No matter what we have done or failed to do, in God's eyes we are all his children. He loves the righteous and the unrighteous in the same unconditional way and provides for all of his children.

God loves us all, provides for us all, and wants us to do the same. This is not always an easy task. Our feelings get hurt. Our patience wears out. It's easier to just walk away and ignore the problem. However, even when we are filled with anger, God reminds us in Micah 7:18, "You do not stay angry forever, but delight to show mercy." We clearly do not have the strength and grace of our Heavenly Father, but Jesus provides an example of perfect forgiveness and love. When we feel lost and in need of patience and rest, we need to turn to the Great Provider.

### LIVE

What do you think holds you back on forgiveness?

What are some ways you can use what God has provided for us as a call to forgive others?

## **Week 5 Wednesday - God Provides**

### **PRAY**

Jesus, you give insight and understanding. As you teach people to pray, you instruct our hearts in awareness of what you are already doing. Forgive me when my senses are clouded and I fail to see or remember you. Restore all that I need for life and faith. Thank you for hearing me even before I speak, and supplying all I need and more. Amen.

### **READ**

“Come Lord Jesus, be our guest...” How many of you automatically finished that prayer? If you are anything like me, sometimes you say that prayer before you eat because it’s your tradition, and it’s just something you do. Maybe the same thing happens in church during the Lord’s Prayer, or Apostle’s Creed, or anything that we repeat over and over. When we pray like this, we are not really praying!

**1 Timothy 4:4** says, “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.” Here Paul talks about receiving God’s gifts with thanksgiving. Students often learn different acronyms for prayer, including CHAT or ACTS, both of which have a “T” for “Thanksgiving.” Thanksgiving is important! If we are truly thankful for the blessings we have, and everyone is truly blessed by God through Christ, then we should never simply go through the motions of prayer. We have life! We have salvation! We are blessed! It might not always seem like it, but we really do owe God our thanks. With this in mind, prayer can and should always be meaningful and an expression of our faith that is worked in us by the Holy Spirit.

### **LIVE**

What are some other tools, like ACTS or CHAT, that help you learn how to pray?

How can these also help you grow in comfort in praying out loud with others?

## **Week 5 Thursday - God Provides**

### **PRAY**

God, you are faithful and true. Thank you for seeing to all our daily needs. Give me faith to see them as signs that point me to Jesus, providing for everything I need and forever. Amen.

### **READ**

**Psalm 104:14**

***You cause the grass to grow for the livestock  
and plants for man to cultivate,  
that he may bring forth food from the earth.***

We have all experienced a situation where other people have promised us something and failed to deliver. Maybe it was something as simple as a package arrived late or a meal wasn't delivered within the promised time. Or maybe it was a coworker who didn't follow through with a project, or a friend who never showed up to help. It can be difficult to trust others, especially after they have let us down time and time again.

In a sinful world filled with unkept promises and broken commitments, how wonderful it is that we can put our trust in God and know that He will never fail! When we trust Him, we know that God will see to it. He is Yahweh Yireh, "the God who Provides." As we read in Psalm 104:14, the Lord provides for our physical needs like food, clothing, and shelter. Beyond that, He blesses us with jobs, families, health, church, the beauty of nature, answered prayers, and so much more.

But God's greatest provision of all is found in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus redeemed all sinners and paid for all of our sins, the last and final sacrifice. Jesus is God's perfect and complete provision, the answer to every person's deepest desires and the fulfillment of their deepest needs. We know the Lord will provide when we look to the cross. Philippians 4:19-20 says, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."

### **LIVE**

What are some ways you need God to provide today, or even right now?

How does his faithfulness give you courage in the midst of your need?

## **Week 5: Friday :: Word of the Week**

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*Pray like this:  
Our Father in heaven,  
may your name be kept holy.*

[Matthew 6:9](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you'll see it often.

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All time belongs to God. Set aside this day to remind your soul of that truth, that His time is enough, and just what you need. Use this time as a moment to catch up on your reading, pray, and rest in the presence of the Lord. Pray this Word for yourself and your community:

*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

## Week 6 Sunday - God's Grace

### PRAY

Gracious Father, I come to you asking for Your forgiveness, not because I can make up for my sins. I cannot. Forgive me because Jesus died for all my sins and You have promised to always forgive me for His sake. Help me also, by Your Grace and Holy Spirit, to forgive those who have sinned against me. When safe and possible, help me also point them to Jesus as their hope. Amen.

### READ

**Matthew 18:23-35** <sup>23</sup> “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup> So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup> So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup> He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup> Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup> And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. <sup>35</sup> So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

This world is broken. Humans are broken. As I write this, record heat temperatures, devastating flooding, and acts of violence fill the weekly headlines. We have no power to bring about a utopia here on Earth. It will never happen. We are the king's horses and king's men who couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again. We are broken.

In our devotion text, dubbed *the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant*, we see the mercy of the Master who forgives a debt to the servant which he would never have been able to repay. Forgiveness was the servant's only hope. So it is for us. God forgives us because Jesus took our brokenness to the cross and empty tomb to make us whole and to make us holy. He forgives all our sins and gives us His holiness. That is grace – God's undeserved love for sinners.

The parable teaches us that God's grace frees us to forgive. Don't miss that point. We forgive because God in His grace forgives us. Is it easy? Not always. Is it necessary? Absolutely! We pray that God gives us a happy and cheerful conscience so that we can stand before Him in prayer and even ask for help to forgive those who have sinned against us. We cannot forgive without God's grace! But look! With God's grace, we can forgive as God has forgiven us in Christ. Sometimes that may lead to restoration if the ones who sin against us are repentant and desire true reconciliation. Sometimes, they may never apologize or be sorry for their sins. We can still



forgive in our hearts and keep safe boundaries with them if or until they are repentant. That too is in God's hands.

## **LIVE**

Considering the wide world's brokenness and our own condition, what gives you hope?

Where is your heart? Is it rock-hard right now, open to consider the shoes another walks in, or somewhere between?

What can you do to nurture a heart of mercy and forgiveness?

## Week 6 Devotion – God’s Grace

### PRAY

Lord, thank you for the gift of grace. I know that I can never earn it, but that I can count on you to supply it nonetheless. Help me to be more like you and give grace to others in Jesus name. Amen.

### READ

*Ps 51:1-2*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!*

This Psalm was written by David asking forgiveness and confessing his sin with Bathsheba. Daily, like David I sin against God. I often marvel that God will forgive me again and again. It can be comforting to know that God will show me Grace just like David, but most of the time I tend to think from a worldly perspective that He must eventually tire of my failure.

God does not just show grace – he is the source of all grace and gives it away.

*Jn 1:16-17*

*And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

I like to imagine that God is a wealthy friend who owns a car dealership. This friend does not just show me a beautiful new car or maybe let me borrow it for the weekend if I bring it back washed and with a full tank. No. He freely gives me a new car...as often as I ask. Even after I crash the cars one after the other. Sometimes by accident, sometimes while being reckless and even occasionally on purpose. And further, he would be even happier to give me a car just so that I could give it to someone else!

### LIVE

What keeps the wonder of God’s faithful grace from becoming entitlement or ambivalence?

What is one tangible way you can show that grace to another person today?

## Week 6 Tuesday - God's Grace

### PRAY

Father God, I ask you to take control of how I see myself and how I think about my sin. Help me to understand that the ground is level at the cross. And help me to recognize the hard truth of who I am so that I am able to better reflect *who you are* to those hurting around me. Thank you for your amazing grace! In your name, Amen.

### READ

**Luke 18:13 "...God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"**

I think most of us think of ourselves as pretty good people, right? I mean, we know we're not perfect, but at least we're better than... . We tend to compare. Comparison is possibly the primary barrier to truly recognizing the depth of our own depravity. When we compare ourselves to those we see as the "worst", we set the bar extremely low. We look at the ten commandments and think, "Well, at least I haven't killed anybody". However, God gave us the ten commandments not as our highest standard, but rather as our lowest. And if we're honest, we cannot even fully live up to those. Instead, we should be comparing ourselves to the perfection of Christ. When we compare ourselves to Jesus, we recognize that the ground is level at the cross and that even our best efforts fall short. And when we fully recognize the depth of our own depravity, that's when God's grace steps in, and we are able to fully recognize the depth of God's love for us.

This full recognition of one's own depravity is what the tax collector in today's verse was feeling. Notice, he stands back, feeling unworthy to even approach the tabernacle. His head is down. He beats his chest. It is evident he was sincerely grieving his own sin. Then he said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I'm reminded of one of my children when she was young. When she became aware of a wrongdoing, I can still hear her sobbing cries, "I'm sorry! I'm so sorry! I'm so, so sorry! Will you forgive me?" What is Jesus' response to this kind of humility? He says to the tax collector in v.14, "I tell you this man went to his house justified rather than the other one." In his humility, he was ready to receive God's forgiveness and grace.

What about us? What about the things we *do*, the words we *say* and even the things we *think* that hurt the heart of God? When Jesus taught his followers to pray, he taught us to ask forgiveness for these things. Praise be to God, his grace is not dependent upon how serious our offense is. Although we may sometimes struggle to forgive those who hurt our hearts, when we sincerely grieve and humble ourselves regarding our sin, we *receive* forgiveness, just as the tax collector did.

## **LIVE**

Let's imagine for a moment. Who does the tax collector represent in our world today? Who is it in our society that is despised? Ask yourself honestly, "Am I living like I think I am better than that person? Or a group of people? Do I justify my own sin because I think it's not *as* bad as other sins? Am I humble enough to recognize that the ground is level at the cross? What needs to change in my heart so that I am able to sincerely grieve over my sins?

## Week 6 Wednesday - God's Grace

### PRAY

Holy Spirit, you breathe grace into us everyday. Forgive me when I miss those moments. Help me believe your grace is enough, and so much more. Amen.

### READ

**Matthew 18:21–22** Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

When we read these verses above, it is important to know that in Judaism, forgiving someone three times was sufficient to show a forgiving spirit, thus Peter believes he has shown generosity when he is talking to Jesus. It is almost as if Peter was hoping Jesus would see his good actions to get a pat on the back and hear him say “good job” for going above and beyond to extend grace, forgiveness, love, compassion, and kindness to those around him. Peter probably doesn’t get the response he was hoping for as Jesus once again turns his world and expectations upside down saying there is no limit to how many times we should forgive someone. Jesus ultimately models this heart of grace and forgiveness that we need to constantly exhibit towards one another by taking our place on the cross.

Take a moment right now to thank God that Jesus didn’t validate Peter’s thoughts and actions in that moment. Take a moment to thank God that Jesus doesn’t have limits to His grace, love, and forgiveness towards us. Take a moment to realize that God desires that the world would know and experience His grace, love, and forgiveness firsthand - from us. May we not be stingy today, but seek to live generously with how we extend the same grace we have been shown and given to those around us.

### LIVE

Reread that last paragraph. If you haven’t already, reflect on the moments described there. Try to give each prompt 1-2 minutes of reflection.

- A moment to thank God that Jesus didn’t validate Peter’s thoughts and actions in that moment
- a moment to thank God that Jesus doesn’t have limits to His grace, love, and forgiveness towards us
- a moment to realize that God desires that the world would know and experience His grace, love, and forgiveness firsthand - from us

## Week 6 Thursday - God's Grace

### PRAY

*Dear God, teach me to forgive through your work in my life. Amen.*

### READ

***Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."***

Forgiveness. We hear that word a lot. We're told to forgive one another blamelessly, as Christ does for us. It's taught to us as a simple action. I can literally hear the words, "once you say it, you already mean it" in my head, taught to me by past teachers, pastors, and other adults in my life. If I was unable to automatically forgive, I was told to go through a reconciliation process and automatically have conversations with people who hurt me. Newsflash, I couldn't. At least, not right away. Forgiveness takes a while for some people and some situations. While going through processes of forgiveness, I often ask myself what makes it so hard.

Part of my family's past involves a lot of sticky situations that I probably shouldn't say in a devotional like this. The other half has other situations that I know for a fact some members are not ready for me to share. I am pretty estranged from other family members because of both situations on either side of my family tree. I'd often say that I have a very different family structure compared to that of the "nuclear family." Yes, even though my parents are still together and never got divorced. I also didn't have any siblings, which means that I often was the messenger for information about my family. As I've gotten older, the information has become more readily available to me about the toxicity of my family. I, truthfully, didn't have good models of forgiveness growing up. After giving some background on my family, you can probably now see why I struggle with forgiveness in other aspects of my life. But do you know who was a great example of forgiveness to me? Christ.

The first story which comes to mind is the Woman at The Well, or the Good Samaritan Woman. An individual with such an inappropriate past that she had to get water at the hottest point of the day, away from the other women. The second story is that of King David, and not because of his victorious past. Instead, I'm reminded of his story after Bathsheba and the sinful nature of man. Finally, I am reminded of Peter, who denied Christ three times. All these stories showcase times in the Bible, and times that I sometimes feel are synonymous to modern life, where forgiveness is instantly given by God. Forgiveness is the first step in reconciliation, and that reminder gives me a lot of hope. But those stories also show that forgiveness is not easy. It is for God because He is **God**. Instead, I look at the reactions of man while reading about God's forgiveness. Immediately, I think to myself, "How? How can God forgive people like that?" God then reveals – **He will work through us to forgive**. It's not supposed to be easy, there's a process that happens that God works through us and in our hearts to overcome. And, **it can take some time**. But if our hearts are open to God (through the Spirit in our lives), forgiveness is so much easier to obtain. Take comfort in God's forgiveness through His Word and use it in your life as a reminder of His love.

## **LIVE**

God promises to work in and through us in terms of grace, peace, and touching the lives of others. How does that reassure you when it comes to faith?

How does that encourage you when it comes to sharing your faith?

## Week 6: Friday :: Word of the Week

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*May your Kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.*  
[Matthew 6:10](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you'll see it often.

We want to be a community that is intentional about scripture memorization. Will you join us?



## **Week 6: Saturday :: Day of Kairos**

All time belongs to God. Set aside this day to remind your soul of that truth, that His time is enough, and just what you need. Use this time as a moment to catch up on your reading, pray, and rest in the presence of the Lord. Pray this Word for yourself and your community:

*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

## **Week 7 Sunday - God's Power**

### **PRAY**

Jesus, when temptation rises in me or around me, hold me in your truth. Help me remember what's real, where those temptations lead, and believe in your promise that there is something better you are doing. When I sin, forgive me, set me free again. Thank you for your love and faithfulness that moves me to follow you. Amen.

### **READ**

**Genesis 39:1–2, 6–12: Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master...So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.**

**Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.**

**But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men were there in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.**

Joseph has been through so much already: betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, lost to his family and his home. Yet God didn't forget about Joseph, and Joseph held onto the promise God gave him. We know what God is working on in this case because we've already reflected on the conclusion of the story on Week 4 Sunday, but Joseph didn't know that just yet. Still he believed, was faithful in work and life, and used the opportunities God gave him to resist temptation.

When you are tempted, God gives you a way to endure it without falling. Joseph is a sorry sinner just like you and me. He needs the same Messiah Jesus you do. This one part of his story where he resists temptation exists 1) to tell you his story, 2) to give you encouragement in your struggle against sin that God does give you ways to resist it. When you and I fall, call sin what it is, confess it, and believe that you are forgiven for the sake of Jesus. Continue to grow in faith and forgiveness as God builds you up in faith to resist the sin coming after you. God remembered Joseph and was present with him, giving him his promises and power. God remembers you; he's present with you giving you his promises and power. God does not and will not lead you into temptation. He's with you.

### **LIVE**

Are there particular temptations that usually bring you down?

When you are tempted in those situations, can you leave, or find another way to change what you are hearing or seeing?

Make a plan with simple steps to put in place to guard your heart the next time you are tempted. Joseph left his cloak. What can you leave behind?

## Week 7 Monday - God's Power

### PRAY

Jesus, you are the name that stops our enemies in their tracks. You teach me that your name has power. Forgive me when I forget whose power is greater. Restore my heart, my mind, my energy. Give this so that I may grow in faith, alert and aware of my enemies, my frailties, and that you are greater than all of it, and you are for me. Amen.

### READ

**Mark 14:38**

**"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

These are the words shared by Jesus to the disciples that accompanied him to the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of his arrest. He had asked the disciples to keep watch. Instead, they gave into the temptation of weariness and fell asleep – more than once! It is easy to fall asleep when we are tired. It is easy to turn from God when we are weak and do not remain in His word or speak to Him in prayer.

Jesus was repeating words written by the Psalmist David when he spoke to the disciples. David implored God to "restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant a willing spirit to sustain me". This portion of Psalm 51 is often used in churches as part of the worship liturgy. It is a prayer. God, we need your help. The devil is real. Temptation is real. The devil knows and preys on our weaknesses. He is not successful when there are temptations that we ignore or those in which we have no interest. His evil success comes as he knows where we are vulnerable and exploits that to his advantage and our demise. "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith." (1 Peter 5). Our sinful self is easy prey for the evil plans of the devil. He is defeated when we drop to our knees and pray to Our Father to deliver us from temptation.

### LIVE

When or how often are you tempted to think that the devil isn't real?

What convinces you that he is?

What give you hope and courage in this life as you face him?

## **Week 7 Tuesday - God's Power**

### **PRAY**

Lord Jesus, you endured temptation for me. You do not lead me into it, nor do you completely end it in this life. I do not understand that, but bring me comfort and courage as you lead me through this. Forgive me when I fall prey to fear, doubt, and temptation. Restore to me the joy of you as you work to rescue, restore, and heal me moving forward. Give me awareness to help others in their "4th quarters", humility to accept help from them when I'm in a 4th quarter of my own. Amen.

### **READ**

Every Detroit sports fan knows the feeling well. It's 3:30 on a Sunday afternoon. The Lions have been playing well all day. They have a lead that seems like it should be safe. But the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter is about to start. We've been here before. We'd love to be confident, but in the back of every Lions fan's mind is, "How will they find a way to lose this time?"

1 Peter Chapter 5 compares the Devil to a roaring lion who wants to devour us. Our opponent is formidable and in many ways. Sometimes it looks to us like he is going to win. It looks like he's winning when church pews seem to be emptier and emptier all around the country. It seems like he's winning when the world around us finds new ways to deny the truth of his word. Most concerning, he seems to be winning when we struggle with the same temptations that have had us asking God for forgiveness time and time again. But we already know he's going to lose.

Scripture warns Christians to be alert and on guard against the Devil and his temptations, and so we should! He is real. He is against us, and he desires to separate us from God and his word. But knowing this we should not be afraid. God's power is greater. His power has raised Jesus from the dead. The power of his spirit keeps us in the true faith and guards us from the Devil's lies. His power will raise us to new life on the last day. And so, we fight the Devil with confidence, knowing that In Christ we do not fight alone.

### **LIVE**

List some of the tools God gives you to stand firm in your faith during temptation:

What thwarts your best efforts?

Where is there hope and healing greater than you falls?

## **Week 7 Wednesday - God's Power**

### **PRAY**

Holy Spirit, you bring your power to us through your word. I look for it in so many other ways, help me not to ignore the place your guarantee that you will be. When obstacles seek to distract and block me, or when my own heart wants something other than you, lead me back. Give me a new heart, and lead me forward. Amen.

### **READ**

**Proverbs 1:10 My son, if sinners entice you,  
do not consent.**

Really Proverbs??? That's what you have for me? That's what I've been trying to do. If it were that easy, I would do this all the time. Everyone would! When I read a little more of Proverbs 1, I see that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Simple words can be easy to understand, but difficult to follow. Maybe that's why it's there, in a collection of writings that have endured the ravages of time, persecution, ignorance, and violence, God's Word still stands. Proverbs 1:10 stands, and is something God brought through all of that so that many generations, including me (and you!) have it to reflect on today. I need this reminder. Sinners are out there; there's a sinner typing this, another sinner reading this. God in his mercy helps me understand sin, and by his grace, something from which he turns me. He turns me from sin and toward himself. God's power brings me and you his word to keep changing us one day at a time.

### **LIVE**

What is something that makes God's Word hard to read or hear?

How does God's power recall and remind you that His Word is for you?

## **Week 7 Thursday - God's Power**

### **PRAY**

Father, you give life to all and keep it going. You give particular gifts to your people to bring blessing and encouragement as you lead us from death to life. Forgive me for the times where I forget or reject the gifts you give. Empower me to believe your promises, care for those around me, and endure darkness as you lead us to light. Amen.

### **READ**

Ephesians 6:11: Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

This week's focus has been on God's power, especially as we focus on the "lead us not into temptation" part of prayer. We've unpacked truths like God tempts no one, that he helps us during temptation, holds us accountable for our choices, and brings grace when we fail for the sake of Jesus. So if God doesn't tempt us, but helps us instead, how does that work?. In a word: armor.

The devil is one who is opposed to God and anything he does. This means that he's also opposed to you living by faith and attempts to twist everything good God does into something that threatens, offends, or discourages us from following and believing in Christ. Yet the name of Jesus is powerful and it puts our enemy on his heels. The Word of God flows from the Name of God, and through God's Word he gives you power and protection against temptation, against our enemy who seeks your downfall. The armor of God is not just poster art or metaphorical. God covers you in salvation, righteousness, truth, gospel readiness, and faith. These gifts, this armor, this power from God fuels our resistance when tempted. May God's gifts and presence continue to teach you how to stand firm in his love for you in Christ.

### **LIVE**

What keeps you from "wearing" your "spiritual armor"?

One simple step you can take to wear the armor God provides is what you are doing now. This moment you're taking, the simple habits you are doing (pray, read, live) God is working through these to clothe you with his power. What is another simple step you can take to stay clothed with these truths?

## Week 7: Friday :: Word of the Week

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*Give us today the food we need,  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.*

[Matthew 6:11-12](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you'll see it often.

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## **Week 7: Saturday :: Day of Kairos**

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*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

## **Week 8 Sunday – God’s rescue**

### **PRAY**

Jesus, you are my rescue. You come through, you are faithful, you win. When I am defeated by doubt or other darkness, when I am shackled in arrogance, forgive and rescue all over again. When I am surrounded, teach my heart to trust, even to worship. You win, you are able, and you are with me. Help me believe. Amen.

### **READ**

Daniel 3 (*Look up the whole story! Here’s a teaser:*) Daniel 3:14–15 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?”

A few years back one of God’s children was inspired to write “Another in the Fire” based on their request in asking God to deliver them from evil. They were inspired by Daniel 3. As we read Daniel 3 I cannot help but wonder how evil is attacking you. What I do not have to wonder about is that I know Jesus is with you in your fiery furnace and that He will win.

In our conversation with God when we ask Him to deliver us from evil, what is He saying? Perhaps He is saying, “Listen up, greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world.” Maybe you hear Him saying, “The gates of Hell will not prevail against you.” Maybe, “Nothing will separate you from my love.” Maybe, “Receive my strength to stand strong and courageous in the storm.” What I clearly hear is that He is with you and me in the fire.

May you walk by faith as He delivers you from evil. There is no other name but the name of Jesus and the evil one cannot. I repeat, cannot stand up against Him. He is able!

### **LIVE**

What threatens you today, what forces of darkness are stacked against right now?

Knowing Jesus, his promises, his presence, how does that give you courage to believe, move forward, and pray?

## **Week 8 Monday - God's Rescue**

### **PRAY**

Lord, I need you. I need you all the time. You defend me, bring me to your side, comfort my soul, and restore me. Do it again, Lord. Because of your love and faithfulness, keep defending, bringing, comforting, and restoring. Forgive me for when I doubt or become consumed by something else. Remind of the joy of following you. Amen.

### **READ**

Psalm 121:7–8 The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.  
The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.

These words wrap up the beginning of the psalm that guides us this year, Psalm 121:1 - "I lift my eye to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from you..."

Why would someone lift their eyes to the hills? Because the situation around them is going bad rapidly. They look to the hills for assistance, for rescue, for the arrival of allies. They look for this rescue, these allies from somewhere outside themselves. Why would they count on rescue from out there?

They know the LORD. He keeps you from all evil, even though it surrounds you and even comes from within you. He keeps your life in his hands, your coming and going. The LORD does not fail, he is faithful. The one who makes all things makes promises to you and to all his people. When you're surrounded or broken or at the end of your everything, look to the hills. Look in hope. God is faithful. He will bring your rescue.

### **LIVE**

What darkens your thoughts on today or outlook for tomorrow?

Do you believe God is your help, your rescue, the one who keeps your life?

What kind of hope does that give you for what you are facing today, tonight, and tomorrow?

## Week 8 Tuesday - God's Rescue

### PRAY

Dear Lord, bless us this week as we remind ourselves of your guidance and guard against the evil one and his temptations. Guide us to you through the Spirit always. Amen.

### READ

2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

Working at a summer camp, I've always found lifeguarding to be one of the most anxiety-ridden tasks. This was especially true because, I, myself, acted as a counselor and not as a lifeguard. You see, I quit swimming after 3rd grade when I decided that I could hold myself over water and swim across a pool just fine. As an adult, quite frankly I'm very disappointed in my lack of want or need for continued swimming experience - especially because without that experience, there is no way I could get lifeguard training without heavy, remedial classes. This whole story compiled into my first year on staff at a summer camp down in southern Indiana, where we had one lifeguard on site and two counselors to watch campers during free swim periods throughout the weeks. Now, I'm someone who loves to have my hands in everything - I'm highly detail oriented and love compiling different pieces to fit together "just right" into one difficult puzzle. My summer camp personality was similar, so you can obviously see where I might have problems watching someone else safeguard my campers because of my incapability to complete that task due to my lack of lifeguarding certification. And you know what? I absolutely hated it. I hated that when we did the safe water counselor certification part of camp, I was one of the counselors who took the longest to swim the fastest up and down the lakeside to help retrieve our fake camper. I hated that the lifeguards and few other counselors who had training similar to lifeguarding could dive deep underwater to retrieve our scenario "porker" ceramic pig acting as our drowning camper. I hated feeling weak, like I was somehow letting my campers down.

As Christians, we can sometimes feel like we're letting ourselves down. We feel like we need to have our hands in the world, multitasking into every single task that we possibly can throughout our lives. We feel like we can sometimes take the place of God, that we can handle the hard parts of our lives we actually aren't certified to be taking care of because somehow we're stronger than the temptations in our lives that we still succumb to. But, quite frankly, we can't. We aren't the certified lifeguard in the scenario, and that is okay. Why? Because we have the love, forgiveness, and salvation that comes from God's rescue in our lives. The verse for today speaks more about this "rescue," and about how God is our ultimate lifeguard. The beatings of the world were too real in the lives of Christians living in Thessalonica. They felt those temptations and sinful behaviors around them, and the influence that those sins had on their lives. But Paul had words of encouragement to say to them: God will guard you. He will be that guide to light the path to glory and honor and all of those things we aren't certified to lead ourselves to. When we trust in Him, and His Word, and His love, we are guarded against all of the temptations of the evil one and brought to lives of peace and tranquility.

## **LIVE**

The previous thought brings up a question that I encourage you to wrestle with this week: How is God guarding me in ways I may not realize?

How can I shift my mindset to be less about how I guard and more about how God guards me?

## Week 8 Wednesday - God's Rescue

### PRAY

Heavenly Father, remind me of your compassion and heart that hurts with us. I lift up my hurt for you to wipe away. Amen.

### READ

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

When you think of things that soak, what are some common items you come up with? The first that comes to mind is a sponge, then probably paper towels, napkins, so on and so forth. However, one of the most important things I also tend to think of are band-aids. Band-aids are so important. Band-aids soak up the hurt we have and help us to heal. When we get cuts or scrapes, we generally use band-aids to cover our hurt and allow the wound to heal. In more extreme cases, we also use gauze. While I love band-aids, I also get really frustrated with them. They get the job done - meaning, the job is done, even if it isn't done in the best way. Why do I believe this problem with band-aids? Because if I could get a nickel for every time I have had to reapply a band-aid because of water getting into the adhesive, duct tape not helping it stick onto the wound correctly, or because a child or camper I was taking care of lost the one they had due to friction, I would be a very rich person. It's similar to buckets of water. From an article I read a few days ago, did you know that in one person's average lifetime, they can cry up to almost 5,000 moments? Yearly it can be around 15-30 gallons. That's a lot of buckets, and not many we usually have on hand. Human hurt and sadness is a real thing, and while we have temporary healing methods on earth such as band-aids or surrounding ourselves in bubble wrap, we generally can't comfort ourselves or keep ourselves away from sadness and other emotions that cause negative emotions. It's sort of human emotion wrapped up into one package. However, we do have God, and Revelation discusses this exact gift.

We tend to think of God as this giant, massive being who smites all who disobey. We also think of Him as the epitome of love, shown in the care and forgiveness He gives His people. We hear all the time that Christ dined with sinners who were broken, that He was gracious in His fellowship with others. What we tend to bypass, however, is that not only is God the epitome of love, He is the epitome of a Comforter. God hurts when we hurt. We hear this generally during the season of Lent, when Christ takes all of our sins on the cross and dies for us. However, there are so many other moments in the Bible where God comforts His people, and Revelation discusses one of many moments. 2 Corinthians 1:3 says that God "comforts us in all of our troubles." We hear that God is "the God of Compassion" in Isaiah 40. Even in the book of Lamentations, which is generally more dreary and broken-sounding, 3:22-23 says that, "The steadfast love of God never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning..." God hurts when we hurt, so He wraps us in blankets of warm love and compassion and wipes all 5,000 moments of tears in our lives. He loves us so much that He doesn't just sympathize with us - He's not some far away God that watches us cry and pats our back - He **empathizes** with us. He gets down on our

level, truly coming to a point where He understands our pain and suffering and hurt and hears our struggles, hurt, and anxieties. In fact, He felt all of it in the fullest, realest way when He died on the cross and took that pain upon Himself.

God's not just a band-aid, He's the healer and rescuer of our suffering.

## **LIVE**

We tend to fall into the trap of God only being able to sympathize with us. This week, think about how you know that God is empathizing with you during your struggles.

List some of those ways here:

## **Week 8 Thursday - God's Rescue**

### **PRAY**

Jesus, you are the one who rescues, the one who brings the kingdom here. Break everything that seeks to distract or sow doubt so that your promise comforts my heart, wakes up my heart, and opens my mouth to speak these same words of love and life to someone else lost in darkness. Amen.

### **READ**

**2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

A van is careening out of control. The brakes are out, and there are only obstacles ahead. What can be done? Pain and suffering exist in this world. Some spend their lives trying to understand why. Why do we do that? Is the hope that if we understand why evil exists we can control it or stop it?

Paul's words here to a young pastor deliver relief to a hope-parched soul. It also addresses the reality of living by faith as a sinner in a sinful world. The question is not: "Will I face evil in this world?", nor is it "why does the Lord allow evil?" The question is: where do you look when evil deeds happen?

Paul looks to Jesus. In one sentence he calls pain and suffering what it is and confesses the power of God that gives him the faith to confess this truth. When we are on a collision course, Jesus speaks to you to teach you that he is present in the midst of the emotions and the actions. Paul teaches us that while evil exists in this life, while God does not answer all of our questions, he does give us promises and the power that demonstrates he is faithful. The Lord will rescue you from every evil, and bring you safely to be with him.

### **LIVE**

From what do you need rescue?

How has God brought you rescue in the past?

How does that give you comfort for tomorrow?



## **Week 8: Friday :: Word of the Week**

Memorizing scripture can be intimidating, a hard internal struggle, a joy, a blessing, and a tool to fight darkness and worry with light and peace. During these 6 weeks, make the step to memorize one verse a week, and by the end you will have the whole passage of Matthew 6:5-13 written in your mind, and by His grace, on your heart.

*And don't let us yield to temptation,  
but rescue us from the evil one.*

[Matthew 6:13](#)

Write this verse down and post it on your mirror or at your desk, in your car or on the fridge—anywhere you'll see it often.

We want to be a community that is intentional about scripture memorization. Will you join us?

## **Week 8: Saturday :: Day of Kairos**

All time belongs to God. Set aside this day to remind your soul of that truth, that His time is enough, and just what you need. Use this time as a moment to catch up on your reading, pray, and rest in the presence of the Lord. Pray this Word for yourself and your community:

*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.”*

[Luke 11:1](#)

# The Last Day: At The End

**“For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.”**

## PRAY

God, all of this is yours. Help me to believe it. Work in my life to reflect that belief, that love, that power from you. Bring me peace and rest through that power. At the same time, give me energy and opportunity to see you at work in this world, and join you in the work helping others see your kingdom of grace, your power of love, and your glory that leads us on in faith. Amen.

## READ

The end of the prayer. The end of the day, The end of a life. The end of all things. This statement at the end of the Lord's Prayer is the battle cry of the prayer warrior. It is the truth and bold confession of faith, yet it also contradicts some of what we truly want. As humans, we like the idea of a higher power that's on our side, even one greater than us, but we struggle with one that is all-powerful. This reminds me of Superman. Superman is my favorite superhero, but more and more people seem to dislike him because he's too powerful, he's over-powered. It's too much. I think people have this same critique of the Trinity. Since God does all this, what do I do? Believe, thank, praise, serve, and obey?

Yes. That may sound dull, it may even sound like that's what we do all time. That is the point. We want the smallest amount of mightiness or kingdom or power or glory because deep down we're still trying to be God. So what seems dull is actually a dynamic struggle between your God-given faith and your sin. So we struggle with doubt and sin because our identity as a prayer warrior usually falls short of who we long to be.

Being a prayer warrior does not mean you are free from doubt, although there will be moments or seasons where doubts will not plague you. Being a prayer warrior does not mean you won't sin or be tempted, although you will experience moments or seasons of strength in Jesus and some victories over temptation. Being a prayer warrior means you pray, especially when you doubt. You pray, even when tempted. You pray God's kingdom, power, and glory are *his* to instruct your own soul; they are *not yours*. You pray, even when you aren't feeling it because you are teaching your own heart what God gives to you as truth: **The Father hears your prayers:** “You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father”, John 14:13. **Jesus prays for you:** “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us”, Romans 8:34. **The Holy Spirit prays along with you:** “And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words”, Romans 8:26.

These truths empower prayer warriors because as you pray, it is a moment you interact with the Trinity! Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are actively listening and praying alongside you. This is to give you confidence as you pray, to grow in your comfort and experience in prayer because you are actively involved in God's kingdom, power, and glory, as he brings into this time and place. You don't have to wonder if you did it right or enough - all God calls you to do is believe and follow him. So let's step up, prayer warriors. Let's declare the truths over our doubts. Let's speak God's forgiveness over sin. Let's pray: God, yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory! Amen!

## **LIVE**

What is key learning or what are some key learnings for you from these past 8 weeks?

What new habits did you begin or restart?

What are some of God's promises that give you the most encouragement?

Please find ways to share what God has done and is doing within you! One way you can do this is to share these stories with neighbors. Another way is to share these stories with God's people. We love people, and are encouraged by their stories.

We'd love to hear yours! Contact Pastor Chris Troxel [ctroxel@trinityutica.com](mailto:ctroxel@trinityutica.com) if you would like to share this with your Trinity family.

God bless you and keep you, prayer warrior.

Prayer Warrior: Daily Armor Schedule, Texts, and Authors

Week 1	God's Identity			Week 6	God's grace	
Sunday	Luke 15:11-32	Pastor Justin		Sunday	Matthew 18:23-35	Pastor Chad
Monday	Psalm 124:8	Bruce Volkert		Monday	Psalm 51: 1-2	Ted Meinka
Tuesday	Luke 1:37	Chelsea Swistock		Tuesday	Luke 18:13	Michelle Vermuelen
Wednesday	Acts 17:24			Wednesday	Matthew 18:21-22	Josh Britton
Thursday	1 John 3:1	Dave Sheldon		Thursday	Ephesians 4:32	Janis Buelow
Friday	Word of the week			Friday	Word of the week	
Saturday	Day of Kairos			Saturday	Day of Kairos	
Week 2	God's Name			Week 7	God's Power	
Sunday	Luke 19:1-9	Pastor Chris		Sunday	Genesis 39:1-20	Pastor Chris
Monday	Exodus 20:7	John Lukas		Monday	Mark 14:38	Bruce Volkert
Tuesday	Psalm 103:1	Jane Strybis		Tuesday	1 Peter 5:8-9	Mark Felten
Wednesday	Jeremiah 23:28	Mark Felten		Wednesday	Proverbs 1:10	
Thursday	John 17:17			Thursday	Ephesians 6:11	
Friday	Word of the week			Friday	Word of the week	
Saturday	Day of Kairos			Saturday	Day of Kairos	
Week 3	God's Kingdom			Week 8	God's rescue	
Sunday	Mark 4:26-29	Pastor Chad		Sunday	Daniel 3	Pastor Justin
Monday	Romans 14:17	Carla		Monday	Psalm 121:7-8	
Tuesday	Colossians 1:13-14			Tuesday	2 Thessalonians 3:3	
Wednesday	Matthew 9:38	Jenny Jaroneski		Wednesday	Revelation 21:4	
Thursday	1 Peter 2:12	Janis Buelow		Thursday	2 Timothy 4:18	
Friday	Word of the week			Friday	Word of the week	
Saturday	Day of Kairos			Saturday	Day of Kairos	
Week 4	God's Will			Prayer Warrior's Battle Cry	For Yours is the Kingdom...	Pastor Chris
Sunday	Genesis 50:15-21	PastorChris				
Monday	1 Timothy 2:4	Josh Britton				
Tuesday	1 Peter 5:8	Chelsea Swistock				
Wednesday	Romans 7:18	Amy Kosmatka				
Thursday	Psalm 43:3					
Friday	Word of the week					
Saturday	Day of Kairos					
Week 5	God provides					
Sunday	Luke 12:15-21	Pastor Justin				
Monday	Psalm 145:15-16	Allie Carr				
Tuesday	Matthew 5:45	Patti Kuppe				
Wednesday	1 Timothy 4:4-5	John Lukas				
Thursday	Psalm 104:14	Michele Grupe				
Friday	Word of the week					
Saturday	Day of Kairos					
					Edited by Pastor Chris Troxel	

Here's a simple collection of prayers to use for yourself and shareable with others. Blessings as you pray and grow in faith!

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

### **Morning Prayer**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

### **CHAT** Prayer acrostic:

**C** - Confess sins to God

**H** - Honor God for his promises, grace, presence with you and for you

**A** - Ask him for whatever is on your mind or heart

**T** - Thank God for anything or everything he's given

An example:

God, you know my sin. Because of Jesus, forgive me. (If there is a particular sin on your mind, you can say: Please forgive me for \_\_\_\_\_.) You are the one who saved me and all you people. Your power fills the skies and fills my soul. I trust in your promise to hear me. I need \_\_\_\_\_. I want \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you forgiving me, helping me to grow in faith, hearing me, and answering my prayers. In your name, amen.

"Amen" means "yes, yes, it shall be so, I believe this!"

