



40 DAYS OF **PRAYER**

Give heed to the voice of my cry,
my King and my God, for to You I will pray.

Psalm 5:2

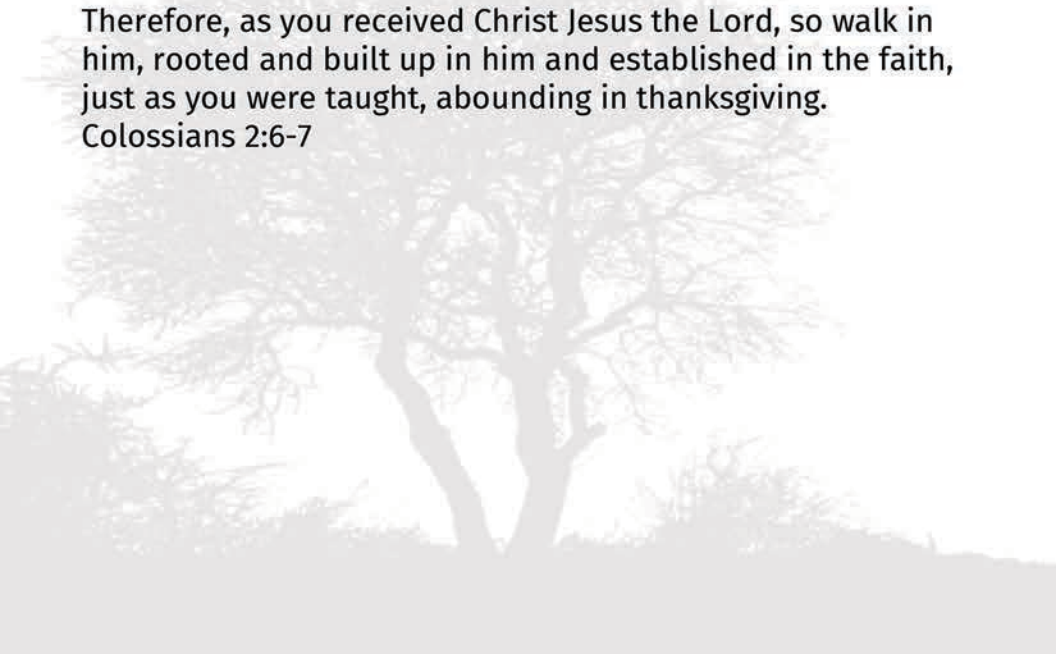
INTRODUCTION

Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls..." Jeremiah 6:16

At Perry Hall Baptist Church, we are a family of believers. The heartbeat of this family is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who together lovingly instruct us on how to live, correct our sinful nature, and empower us to spread the good news of Jesus Christ whether it is down the hallway of our homes, in our neighborhoods, or across the nations.

As we strive to follow the ancient paths laid before us, we find comfort, instruction, and rest in the Scriptures. We are a people who love God supremely, love one another passionately, and love others intentionally. We are a praying church that is committed to teaching and equipping everyone who comes through our doors so that we may be a church of disciples who make disciples for the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
Colossians 2:6-7



We cannot be more excited to set out on this journey of **40 Days of Prayer** with you. Our prayer is that the Lord will reveal Himself to us as a church family and as individuals. We want to go to the throne with one voice, praying together, asking our good and gracious Father to help His children hold His Word in our hands each day, delighting in His truth.

We ask that you join us in making this journey part of your daily routine for the next 40 days. Spend some time with the Lord, soaking in His Word, meditating on His truths, and reflecting on what our brothers and sisters at Perry Hall Baptist have so thoughtfully and lovingly prepared.

Thank you to the 40 members of our church body who contributed to this project. Many were reluctant at first, but answered, "with the Lord's help, I will try". May this endeavor bless each person who participates as much as it has blessed our team.

We pray for how the Lord will use this project to reach His people and that it will honor and glorify Him.





DAY 1 - 2/19: KNOWING GOD

READ: PSALM 145:3 / PSALM 19 / JEREMIAH 9:23-24

“... my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Isaiah 6:5

Like Isaiah, we long to see God and reflect His character and beauty in our lives. The ancient catechism asks, “What is the chief end of man?”. We respond, “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever”. But to glorify and enjoy Him, we must first know Him. This becomes the life-long journey and delight of the follower of Jesus.

Scripture gives many examples of lives forever changed by God-visions. A few examples are Moses, when God passes by the cleft in the rock (Exodus 34); Isaiah, in the heavenly throne room (Isaiah 6); and Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9), a vision that led to an ever-growing desire to know Christ more deeply (Phil. 3:10).

God wants us to know Him, who He really is, and He has given us everything we need to know about Him in His Word. While the creation *screams loudly* of His “eternal power and divine nature” (Psalm 19; Romans 1), it is only through His Word that we come to know Him and His character.

A.W. Tozer said, “*What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. ...*”. We want to think rightly about Him! Scripture clearly teaches that God is incomprehensible (Psalm 145:3), expressing our creatureliness and limited knowledge and yet, it also says that He is knowable (Jeremiah 9:23-24). We pursue God through His ordained means of revelation – His Word – and we ask for the Spirit’s help in illuminating the word and helping us see Him “high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1).



As we learn more about what God is like and who He is through our study of His Word, we begin to see His love, holiness, goodness, and sovereignty, along with many other aspects of His character. And because God made us in His image, His nature is also directly reflected through us, and others catch glimpses of God by watching us.

Two of the most important benefits and blessings of an accurate vision and knowledge of God are God-centered worship and frequent cries of repentance. In the first case, our worship rises proportionately with our growing comprehension of His character and second, our sinfulness and smallness are exposed, leading to humility and repentance. These are both wonderful gifts of grace to us and we pray God would give us ever-increasing glimpses of His greatness and beauty!

PRAYER

Lord, help us to see You - who You really are - in all Your Glory and majesty and may You grant us a fresh and transforming vision of Your character.

REFLECTION

- (1) What would you say to a friend who asks, "What is God like"?
- (2) What might hinder us from seeing God for who He really is?
- (3) How does a growing knowledge of God transform my daily walk?

"Your thoughts always precede and determine your activity."

~ Paul Tripp

SUBMITTED BY: PASTOR DAVE MOYER

DAY 2 - 2/20: GOD REVEALS HIS GLORY

READ: PSALM 118 / EXODUS 33:18 / JOHN 11:40

My wife, as a new Christian, was really struggling with how her heavenly Father could love her when she believed her earthly father did not. She kept praying and asking God to help her to understand.

One night while we were asleep, my wife was awakened to a loud noise and bright lights. Strangely the radio was playing as loud as it could and every light in the house was on. The radio program on 95.1 FM alluded to Psalm 118 and the announcer said these words, "If you think your earthly father doesn't love you, let me tell you how much our heavenly Father loves you. His steadfast love endures forever." They kept repeating the lines. My wife was shaking and crying at this point because she knew it was God that was speaking to her.

She woke me up and I saw the lights on and heard the program as well. I figured we had a power outage only to realize when we went to bed everything was turned off. The next day as we were riding to church the program played again on the radio and the car in front of us had Psalm 118 on his license plate. God showed his glory that weekend in a mighty way.

While God may not reveal Himself in this way to everyone, He does love to demonstrate His glory to His people in other ways. Repeatedly, He has displayed it through dreams or visions, dry blankets, donkeys, and through prison guards. God is active all around us, we just need to pray and ask Him to show us His glory just as Moses did.

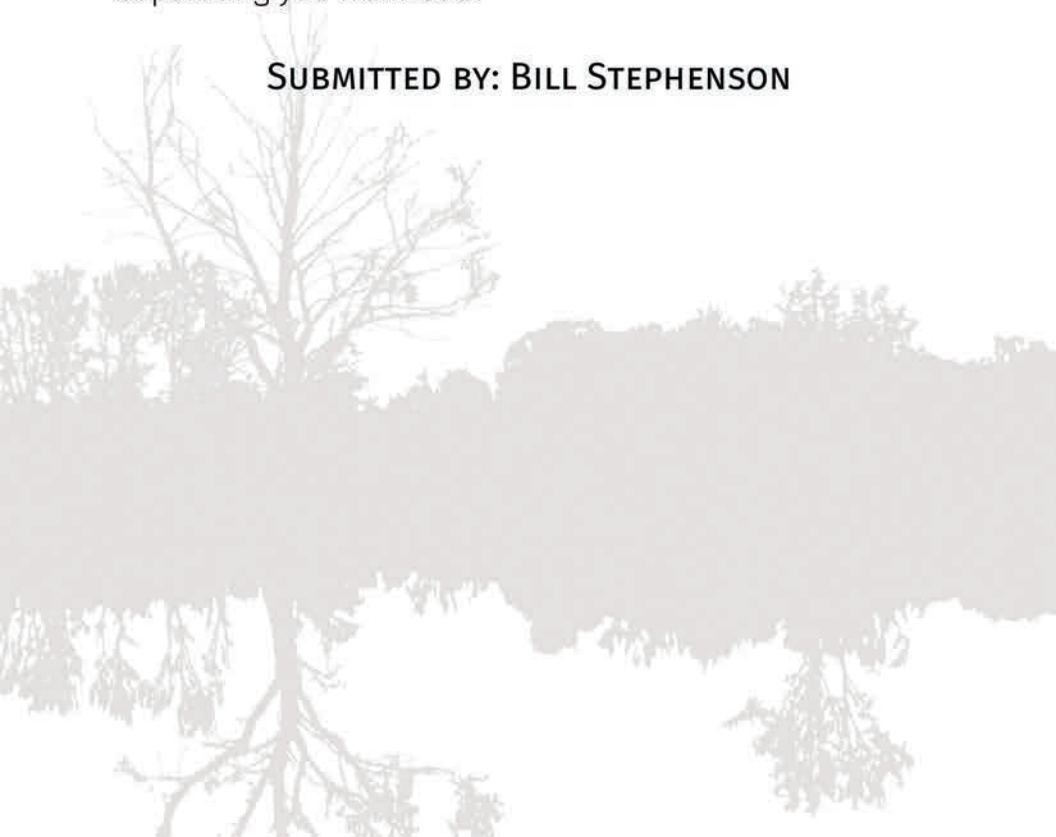
PRAYER

God, we ask, You, as a church and individually to reveal Your glory to us over the next 40 days. Let Your steadfast love protect us and Your healing hand be upon us as we walk in Your light. Amen

REFLECTION

- (1) How has God revealed His glory to you?
- (2) Are there any barriers you have in your life that are separating you from God?

SUBMITTED BY: BILL STEPHENSON



DAY 3 - 2/21: DAILY SCRIPTURE READING

**READ: PSALM 19:7-11 / PSALM 119 / MATTHEW 4:4
LUKE 10:38-42 / JOHN 15:1-17 / ACTS 17:11**

My daughter, Madilyn, who is on a 9-month mission trip around the world, recently shared a story with me about a woman that she met while in Granada, Nicaragua. Madilyn wrote, "During our last time prayer walking in Granada, we visited an older woman whom we had visited several times before. She is losing her vision but has such a great desire to read the word of God. Every time we have visited her, she asks us to bring her a Spanish Bible with very large print. On this day, we brought her one. When we handed her the Bible, she began to weep and give all glory and praise to God and thanked Him. She had been earnestly praying for it, and she said, 'I've asked everyone I know to bring me one, and I didn't think God would give it to me through American girls.' I stood there with my Bible in hand realizing how often I take it for granted... The many times I have kept it closed or rushed through my reading... Or sat with the Lord and soaked in the words on the page but did not take a moment to thank and praise Him for His Word in a language and size I can read...."

Two things struck me about Madilyn's story. First, how right Madilyn is about how our thoughts and actions toward the Word of God are often dismissive, and we take the privilege of access to the Scriptures for granted. And second, this woman is so wise. She knows her deep need for the Lord and longs to hear from Him through His Word. Her heart-posture is beautiful and full of gratitude. This woman craves the Scriptures and knows they're perfect, sure, right, pure, true, and "more to be desired... than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb" (Ps 19:10). She understands that time spent with Jesus revives the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, and enlightens the eyes.

The world will tell us that we are to be self-sufficient beings, able to do life daily on our own, and certainly, we do not need the Bible. But Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, says something altogether different: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

Unlike the Nicaraguan woman, we have His Word at our fingertips. And our God implores us to choose the good portion like Mary – to sit at His feet and listen to His teaching. He wants us to know Him and seek His character. The reading of God's Word is transformative because it is living and active. It is practical and serves as a light for our paths.

Spend time with the Lord daily. May we be like the Nicaraguan woman, hungry to spend time with Jesus in His Word. Like the prophet Jeremiah, may our heart-posture also say, "Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart" (Jer. 15:16).

PRAYER

Lord, create in me a hunger and thirst for You. Impress upon my heart my great need for You daily. Stir in my heart gratitude for Your written word that I would return to it again and again. May I know You more and more through Your Word. May time with You become a delight to me. And as I read the very words of God, open my eyes to 'behold wondrous things out of Your law' (Psalm 119:18). Help me to be faithful to You through time spent daily in Your Word. Thank you, Lord, for this privilege.

REFLECTION

- (1) Are you hungry to spend time with the Lord daily?
- (2) If you are not studying the Word of God daily, what is preventing you from doing so? What habits might you change or obstacles do you need to eliminate to make spending time with the Lord a priority?

SUBMITTED BY: JODIE KELLY

DAY 4 - 2/22: GREATER OBEDIENCE TO SCRIPTURE

READ: PSALM 1

Our son probably plays video games too much (in fact a game about teenage squids, ink, and something called the Splat Master Pro is keeping him occupied right now so I can write this devotional...judge me later). But he struggles with them. At five years old, his ability to read is in its very early stages and many games require him to read short, but vital, instructions to know what he should do. Because he can't read very well yet, he often ignores the instructions and fumbles around, typically missing his intended objectives because he couldn't read to know what they were. Sometimes, I sit with him to guide him through the game so that he doesn't fall into some of the snares in the game. However, at five years old, he is headstrong and determined to "figure it out" on his own. Ignoring my instructions, he fumbles around until he gets frustrated to tears or stumbles into a success. He needs to both read the directions and do what they say to be successful.

Psalm 1 teaches us about the way of the blessed man. In verse one, we see that he is committed to following the law of God by avoiding any company that would hinder or oppose him acting in a way that accords with Scripture. We see in verse two that he finds pleasure and joy in knowing the law of the Lord, so much so, that he allows it to consume his thoughts at all times. So, he both reads God's law and does what it says. Therefore, "[the blessed man] is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither." Furthermore, "In all that he does, he prospers." That sounds like an attractive existence: stability, success, sustenance.

He is not fumbling, he is fruitful.

Family, do you wonder how much time we waste fumbling through life, exhausting ourselves because we are determined to “figure it out” on our own? How many treasures of the Christian walk we are neglecting by not obeying the instruction manual for fruitful, prosperous living? The blessed man is intentional about knowing and obeying the Word of God and the results are undeniably positive. These same promises are available to us today as we submit ourselves to obeying the living Scriptures this year.

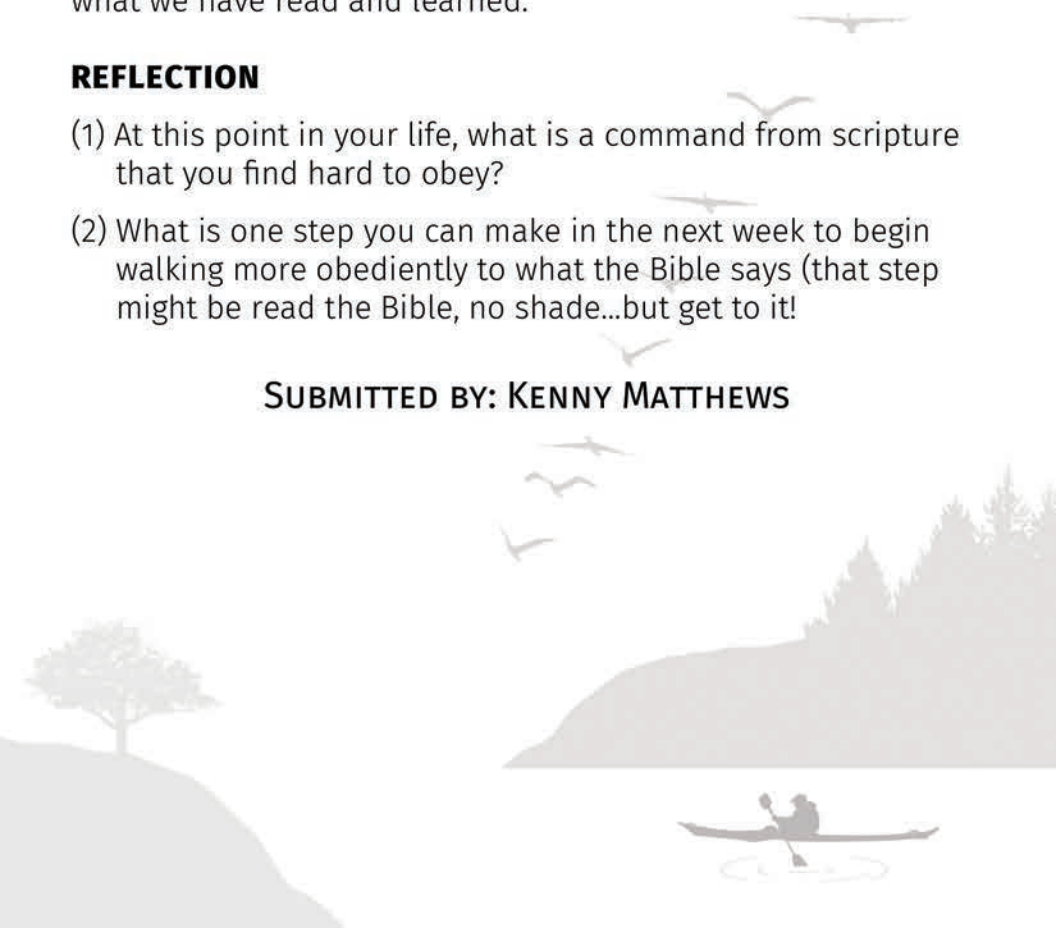
PRAYER

Father, we come to You and ask that with Your help, we may be like the blessed man, and not like an ignorant child. Please help us to again revive our excitement for the life-giving water of Your law and give us the humility to act in obedience to what we have read and learned.

REFLECTION

- (1) At this point in your life, what is a command from scripture that you find hard to obey?
- (2) What is one step you can make in the next week to begin walking more obediently to what the Bible says (that step might be read the Bible, no shade...but get to it!

SUBMITTED BY: KENNY MATTHEWS



DAY 5 - 2/23: A RELATIONSHIP WITH YAHWEH

READ: PSALM 8 / COLOSSIANS 1:15-23

God provided a personal name for himself to the Hebrew people (see Exodus 3:14-15). In the Hebrew text, this name is YHWH (יהוה), called the tetragrammaton. God intended for it to be both intimately personal and infinitely sacred. We do not know how to pronounce this name because Hebrew people consider it so personal and holy that they do not say it out loud. When they encounter the word, they generally substitute it with Adoni, which means “Lord.” In our English Bibles, YHWH has been rendered with all caps, as LORD or GOD, to distinguish it from Lord (Adoni) and God (Elohim). *See the Preface to your Bible translation for more details.* In common language, people have inserted vowels to come up with Yahweh or Jehovah.

We struggle with the concept of something being both personal and sacred. We tend to be either personal such as “Hey, Bob,” formal such as “Mr. President,” or somewhere in between. Sometimes we compartmentalize a relationship with one person with different titles for different circumstances.

Yahweh exists in both places simultaneously. God is completely other from us. He is holy. He is omniscient. He is perfect. He is sovereign over everything. All things are made by Him and for His glory. Yet God created us to be in a relationship with Him on a very personal level. God Himself called out the Hebrew people and established His covenant with them. God Himself sent His own Son to redeem mankind to Himself. God Himself indwells believers in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He never intended for these realities to be separated, but embraced together.

In Psalm 8, David reflects on this dichotomy. He opens with YHWH and Adoni separated with the incredibly personal “our”. He goes on to meditate on the grandeur of God, shifts to His relationship with mankind and what He has done for mankind,

and closes with a return to the nature of God as a moment of worship.

Likewise, in Colossians 1:15-23, Paul provides a similar contemplation. Some scholars believe this passage is an early church hymn. The passage relates Christ and the gospel of redemption to the sovereign-yet-personal YHWH of the Old Testament.

Learning to embrace God's sovereign holiness and personal care simultaneously can be an incredible source of joy, comfort, and confidence. Our sin and God's holiness are in direct opposition to each other and prevent us from experiencing a relationship with Him. However, God's love provided Jesus' blood as a sacrifice to cleanse us from all sin and to place on us the holiness of Jesus, making us not only friends of God but fellow heirs – children of God! Oh, how intensely holy! Oh, how humbly personal!

PRAYER

Ask Yahweh to help you grasp His sovereign holiness along with His desire to draw you individually to Himself. Ask Him to draw you closer as a child of God.

REFLECTION

- (1) Do you find your relationship with God leaning toward His "otherness" and struggle with the "personal" part, or do you find the "personal" part easier to grasp and tend to overlook His "otherness?" What in your personal history contributes to this tendency?
- (2) How does connecting God's holiness and personal nature together simultaneously affect your faith and your outlook on life?
- (3) How can understanding this nature of our relationship with God help you share your faith with people around you?

SUBMITTED BY: ANDREW P. KULP



DAY 6 - 2/24: DISCIPLE-MAKING

**READ: MATTHEW 4:19 / MATTHEW 5:14-16 / JOHN 13:34-35
JOHN 15:8 / COLOSSIANS 1:28**

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus tells His followers to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” We know this to be the Great Commission, but just exactly what does that mean?

To make disciples we need to “go” (be on the move - not sit around), “tell” (the Good News that Jesus is our Savior), and “baptize” (outward sign of an inward change), but that doesn’t “make” disciples - that is evangelism.

While evangelism is linked, it is only the first step; a disciple is a follower. The making of disciples is an ongoing, maturing process of a follower. It is for the new believer an invitation to follow us (those more mature in faith) as we model what living for Christ is about so as they learn and grow, we can step aside, and they can be the model living for Christ. Paul tells the church in Corinth to “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

I hear you saying, “Imitate me?” Yes! You are the example of Christ to the world. Disciple-making is different than mentoring. When one mentors someone, it is to help the mentee become more like the mentor. When you disciple someone, it is to help someone become more like Jesus. Through you others come to know who Jesus is and how to live as a Christian. We come alongside each other to encourage each other, to grow spiritually in God’s Holy Word, to pray together and for each other, to serve together, and to live lives committed to Christ. Discipleship is developing each other, strengthening each other, and deepening our walk together.

We, the church body, are to make disciples. We are to help those around us to grow in their faith. How do we do that? We read and study God's word in study groups, attend worship, give generously of our time and talents, share our faith, and care for each other. We come together young and old, weak and strong, new believers and mature believers, to model what it means to be a Jesus follower. We are to live as He has commanded - Go, tell, and make disciples!

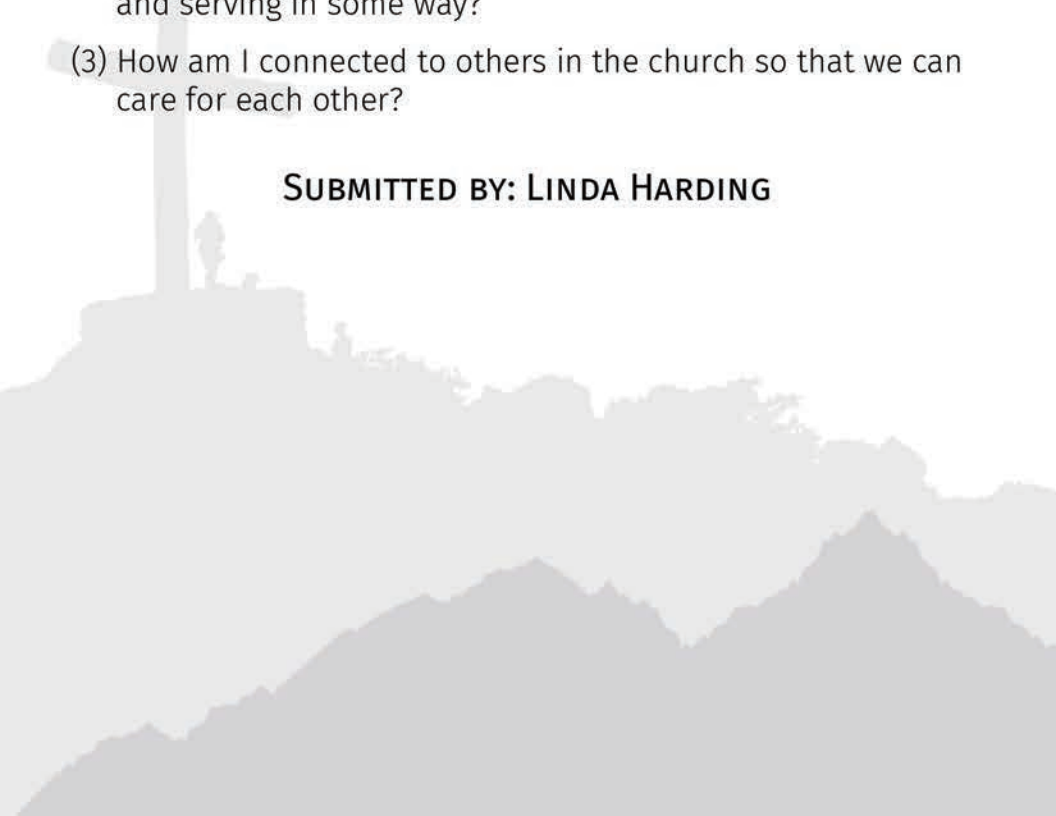
PRAYER

Father, please help us to be a disciple-making church. Let our lives be imitators of You so that the world will know that salvation has come through You!

REFLECTION

- (1) How does my life show that I am a disciple of Jesus?
- (2) Am I involved in a study group, attending worship regularly, and serving in some way?
- (3) How am I connected to others in the church so that we can care for each other?

SUBMITTED BY: LINDA HARDING



DAY 7 - 2/25: GODLY MEN RAISING GODLY MEN

**READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 16:13 / 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 / PHIL 4:6-7
2 TIM 2:2 / PROVERBS 27:17 / 1 CORINTHIANS 16:14**

On Sunday mornings as a young child, my dad would drop my mother, sister, and me off at church, leaving us to go about his morning. More than 50 years later, I can still recall the feeling of abandonment as I could not process why my dad would not join us for church. Further fueling those feelings, was the long wait in the parking lot anticipating his return. My mom would turn away many church members offering a ride home, always saying "my husband will be here soon." This scenario continued weekly for about 5 years. What my dad failed to realize or recognize was that I was watching and observing him. Since he was not taking God seriously (1 Cor. 2:14), I was not taking God seriously. I viewed Sunday mornings as playtime with my friends and just another ordinary day.

After many years of my mom's faithful prayers (Phil. 4:6-7) and obedience to God's plan, my dad's heart began to soften. As he began to read the Bible, attend church, and pray, I noticed a change in my dad. Yet, he still did not know quite how to connect with me. As my dad began to connect with God, a faithful man was watching and observing. Unbeknownst to me, Mr. Ozzie took an interest in our family, especially me. On a hot summer night, he took the time to visit with a young 12-year-old, sharing the Gospel with me (which would be a first for me). While I did not receive the Holy Spirit that night, a seed was planted. A seed that would be watered by many strong men of courage who stood firm in their faith.

One of those strong, faithful (2 Tim. 2:2) men was Tim; he and his wife, Fon, led our youth group. God had gifted Tim with the ability to bring the words of the Bible to life. Tim and Fon's fun and energetic outlook on life caused me to seek God. By this time, I had been observing my dad for three years, praying and reading the Bible earnestly.

To this day, I can picture my dad in his chair, with his Bible in hand. As I observed my dad seeking God, I began listening earnestly to Tim and his presentation of the Gospel. On a cold winter evening alone in my room, this young 15-year-old made a profession of faith to trust in Jesus, receiving the Holy Spirit. I literally felt a warmth come over me. The following Sunday, I answered the altar call from Pastor Anderson, rushing down the aisle - I could not wait to make a public proclamation of my faith in Jesus. As I knelt at the front altar, I felt a hand being placed on my back and it was my dad's. God had been working in my dad's heart also and that Sunday morning, my father placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ!

God has placed Godly men in my life who were not fearful of raising Godly men. Godly men who were bold and courageous, standing firm in the faith of Christ. Do *you* wish to be the man dropping off his child relying on someone else to speak into his life or do you want to be the watchful man, standing firm in the faith, being courageous and strong like God has intended?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to be a man of God. Help me to be a leader in my own family and to those around me that need Your word spoken into their lives. May Your Spirit guide me in being a strong, courageous, and loving man of God standing ready to do Your will.

REFLECTION

- (1) How can you equip yourself to be a Godly man? How can you stand firm in your faith?
- (2) When you hear "act like men", or be courageous, what does that mean to you?
- (3) Have you surrounded yourself with Godly men? If not, why?

SUBMITTED BY: RON SCHLICHT

DAY 8 - 2/26: DYNAMIC EVANGELISM

READ: ACTS 1:8 / 1 PETER 3:15 / LUKE 12:11-12

Evangelism is a team activity!

How many of us approach this blessed opportunity as a solo effort? I am completely convinced that all the anxiety and most of the ineffective witnessing can be attributed to this approach to evangelism.

Jesus tells His disciples in Acts 1:8 that they will receive power from the Holy Spirit to witness. The Greek word translated as power here is *dynamis*. While we get the word "dynamite" from this root word, Strong's dictionary defines it as force (literally or figuratively); specially, miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself): — ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle(-s), power, strength, a mighty (wonderful) work. Does any of that definition sound even remotely like uncertainty, scary, lacking confidence, worry, or fearfulness? Of course not.

So how do these anti-biblical traits sneak into our witness? Answer - "When we seek to do without the Holy Spirit, we do without the Power." If you think you can know the Bible well enough, and the world well enough, and the specific will of God in every situation well enough to take away your anxiety, you are miserably mistaken. In fact, what is needed in the moment is beyond you.

You need the Holy Spirit. Every conversion is *dynamis* or miraculous in nature. You and I cannot raise a dead man to everlasting life as surely as we cannot change a person's heart to switch from the love of the world to love the things of the LORD. This is God's work.

Our work is to speak of the things He has done for us personally (1 Peter 3:15) - our hope, our love, our experiences, our "Witness". In these things we are the unimpeachable authority. No one knows better what God has done, and is doing, in your life than YOU. You can be completely confident in sharing directly from your heart and letting the Holy Spirit do the rest.

This Dynamic Duo of you following God is POWERFUL and effective. When it comes to evangelism, let us resolve to spend less time worrying and more time counting our blessings and counting on the Holy Spirit (Luke 12:11-12). Look for those opportunities where the LORD leads us. Speak boldly, powerfully, and with respect and the gentleness of the living and loving Christ.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, create in me a sensitivity to your Holy Spirit working in the lives of unbelievers. When called on, strengthen my resolve and readiness to speak of my hope in You as an effective witness.

REFLECTION

- (1) What things do you worry about when evangelizing?
- (2) How does relying on the Holy Spirit address each of your items?
- (3) With whom in your life do you want God to give you an opportunity to share your witness?

SUBMITTED BY: BILL HEIDEL

DAY 9 - 2/27: SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH YOUR CHILDREN

READ: PSALMS 127:3-4 / PROVERBS 22:6 / EPHESIANS 6:4

Sharing the Gospel with your children can be an exciting and fun thing to do. Children, and quite frankly most people, learn best by having their senses engaged - seeing with their eyes, touching, etc.

I think we can all agree that if we had the choice to read about a cool science experiment, or to actually see a cool science experiment, we would choose to see one rather than just read about it!

There are several ways we can teach our children, but we must first know the Gospel ourselves, believe it, live it! Our children's image of God can be influenced mostly by what they see in their parents. While it can be intimidating at first, you can be confident that the Holy Spirit will work through you when you spend time with the Lord in prayer and meditate on Scripture.

Kids thrive on repetition and routine. If you reinforce key concepts, you will teach your children a root understanding of the overall message of salvation. Help them to learn:

- God is the Creator and created all things perfectly.
- Sin entered the world, separating us from God when Adam and Eve disobeyed God.
- Sin was passed down to us, and we are born sinners.
- Jesus was offered as a sacrifice for our sin, and all who accept His sacrifice for their sins are saved to eternal life.

Hearing these concepts is great but showing them is so much more fun and easier to understand!

Here are a few practical ways to share the Gospel with your children:

- Use an object lesson. Illustrate the concept of sin and its effect on our lives, and our relationship with God. I often like to use dirt to represent sin, and that we all have sinned (Yes, even kids sin!) Think about how you don't have to teach a toddler to snatch a toy away from another toddler. We're born sinners from the beginning (Romans 3:23).
- Use difficult situations to be teaching moments. Think about when Jesus taught His disciples in the storm (Mark 4:35-41).
- Act out a Bible story, and include your children in the role play, get them involved.
- Use magic tricks or puppets. Online resources help with ideas for ways to make learning fun.
- Keep it simple and to the point – remember, they have a short attention span.
- Finally, YOU will be the lesson they see the most!

Let your love for Christ be evident to your children by the love you show for His Word, your prayer life, loving and serving those around you, and most importantly, the love you show the people that you live with. We have moments when we're very spiritual, and moments when our flesh shows its ugly head, and it's all on display right before your children's eyes.

Let's not be afraid to say, "Sorry, I was wrong" so your children can learn what confession and genuine repentance looks like. Trust God's grace to fill in those gaps we leave open with our moments of imperfection!

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we as parents need Your help with leading our children to You in faith. We are imperfect and we sometimes fail to demonstrate Your holiness in our lives to those closest to us. Thank you, Father, for giving us the Holy Spirit to strengthen us to be faithful daily, and we trust You to fill the gaps that we may leave with Your grace. Help us to know how to teach Your Word effectively and demonstrate it to our children, as we offer them back to You with love, and entrust their lives to You for their salvation and for Your glory! Amen

REFLECTION

- (1) What observations might your children make about your relationship with the Lord?
- (2) How can you share the Gospel with your children to make it fun and engaging?

SUBMITTED BY: JEFF MYERS

DAY 10 - 2/28: MAKING MISSIONS PERSONAL

READ: MATTHEW 28:18-20

A few years ago, our youngest daughter, Anna, informed her mother and me that she would like to take a short-term mission trip to Bogota, Colombia, and would like one of us to accompany her. Anna and her mom had done mission trips to New York City with the youth group. Much to my shame, I hoped that Anna would choose her mother, as street evangelism like what is done in Colombia was not my cup of tea. Long story short, Anna picked me. I have to admit that my anxiety about the trip was high, but preparations for the trip continued.

When we arrived in Colombia, we met with the church we would be outreaching with, practiced our presentations, and got to know the individuals who would be taking us out the next day.

The day of reckoning had finally arrived! The day was a national holiday in Colombia, so several streets were closed for biking and many more people than usual were on the streets. My interpreter, named Blanca, took me up to a person and asked them if they would talk to her friend Tom from the U.S. It is at times like this that we need to rely totally on the Holy Spirit. We were using the Evangecube to explain the Gospel and what God has done in our lives. It was amazing! Person after person agreed to talk with us and the majority accepted an invitation to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. People were usually very friendly.

Back at the hotel, we all shared our experiences of the day, and they were remarkably similar. Hundreds heard the Gospel and we were able to communicate through our interpreters even though we could not speak Spanish. We did street evangelism for four days, and saw God work mightily. Everyone I know that has gone to Colombia for street evangelism comes home changed forever and has a better perspective about missions.

I would like you to consider going to Colombia, or to participate in a similar program, and see how God will provide. Christianity is not about giving God things or various treasures. It is all about relationships. A personal, loving God loves us so much that He sent his Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for our sin, so that we can have an intimate love relationship with Him. What God wants is not our things, but our individual hearts.

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Most of us are familiar with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). God has given us all authority to make disciples. Perry Hall Baptist Church has over 20 missionaries serving all over the globe. I urge you to get involved personally with them. Make it a point to invite them over for meals when they are home. You will find that they are normal people like you and like me. You could also write or email them. It's a great opportunity to find out how God is using them to make a difference in the world. Get involved personally!

PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Your Son to live among us and teach us about You. We pray for all the people across the globe who have been called to share the Gospel with others. We pray for their continued strength, endurance, and protection as they seek to bring others to You, Lord. Amen.

REFLECTION

- (1) What missionaries from our church would I like to get to know personally? (You can check with the church office or member of the Mission Team for missionary contacts.)
- (2) What do I feel God calling me to regarding missions?
- (3) Can you commit to praying for at least one missionary every day?

SUBMITTED BY: TOM LEWIS

A decorative background illustration at the bottom of the page. It features a range of mountains in shades of light purple and grey. Several birds are depicted in flight, scattered across the sky above the mountains. The overall style is soft and artistic.

DAY 11 - 3/1: HOW GOD USES US TO REACH YOUNG PEOPLE

READ: DEUTERONOMY 6:5-7

Scripture not only commands us to love the Lord with all our hearts, soul, and mind but also to teach those things diligently to our children. In today's topic we explore how God will use us to reach young people.

One of those ways is Perry Hall Christian School. Every weekday approximately 450 students walk through the doors of PHCS. Students from preschool through senior year in high school are coming onto the Perry Hall Baptist Church campus for intellectual development, Christian discipleship, and Christ-like character formation.

The mere fact that Perry Hall Baptist Church has had this ministry for 50+ years now, is a testimony that our church is already committed to reaching young people. As a teacher in my 12th year at PHCS, I have had the privilege of seeing that commitment up close, as well as the depth of its benefit in the lives of so many young people. I am grateful for the work of the church through PHCS.

Young people are being bombarded on all fronts with challenges to developing a strong and rooted faith. They need the witness of those who love the Lord with all their hearts to lead the way and encourage them. Their teachers are doing a lot to that end, but what more could we do as a church or as individuals to support and facilitate reaching those students?

PRAYER

Will you join in praying for those young people who are on the campus every weekday? *Read Colossians 1:9-12 as a guide for prayer.*

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PRAYER

Father, as we pray, may we expand our prayers not only for those at PHCS but for young people in general who need the gospel and discipleship. We ask that they may:

- be filled with knowledge of Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding;
- walk in a manner worthy of You;
- increase in their knowledge of You and Your ways; and
- be strengthened according to Your glorious might.

REFLECTION

- (1) How might the Lord use you specifically to reach young people through the ministry of PHCS?
- (2) Is there a way to be involved more directly?
- (3) Are there needs that you might be able to fill?
- (4) What are some other ways the Lord might use our church and individuals to reach out to young people?

SUBMITTED BY: DEBBIE SEIBERT

DAY 12 - 3/2: A CALL TO MANHOOD

**READ: GENESIS 3:6 / JAMES 1:22-25 / COLOSSIANS 3:1-2
1 CORINTHIANS 13:11 / PROVERBS 18:9**

When a man transitions into a state of manhood, he evolves from a carefree boy with little responsibility to a man that is eager to sacrificially take on responsibilities for others. He becomes a dependable resource who commits himself to protect and provide for the good of others. He develops good manners, self-control, and moral courage. He will positively influence, lead by example, and inspire others to emulate his actions. When spiritually mature, he will align his actions to glorify God, disciple others, and understand how his spiritual gifts can be utilized to lead people to Christ.

Many men willingly become the principal earner of family income, and have a significant amount of leadership success and influence in the workplace. However, many of these same men have simultaneously become spectators in the most critical areas of their life when it comes to being a good husband, father, and spiritual leader in the home. An example of this might be the workaholic husband with misaligned priorities that checks out after work by indulging in personal interests. The reason for misaligned priorities can be endless, but one reason could stem from being raised in a household where the father was passive or perhaps absent.

Passivity might be part of our human condition. After all, Adam's first documented sin was, in fact, passivity. Most of us remember in Genesis 2:5 that God gave Adam the responsibility to work in the Garden of Eden, and the only command was not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Satan tries to convince Adam and Eve to believe the lie that God doesn't have their best in mind and is holding out on them. We know how this critical moment played out in Genesis 3:6.

We sometimes forget where Adam was when Eve ate the fruit. He was not out hunting, building something, or working in the garden. In his first critical test of manhood he was right there with Eve who was under attack by Satan. He was passive rather than proactive. He failed to act courageously, protect Eve from temptation, and even exhibit self-control. Men have been caught up in the shadow of Adam ever since.

No matter where passivity takes place in a man's life, it will ultimately lead to self-destruction. Passivity can also be a form of sinfulness.

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. James 4:17

Jesus, sometimes referred to as “the second Adam”, calls us to reject passivity, gives us the strength to put away our childlike behavior, align our minds on the will of Christ, and love others sacrificially in order to achieve biblical manhood.

In 1 Corinthians 15:49, Scripture tells us “we have borne the image of the earthly man” meaning Adam who first sinned by being passive. It also tells us “we bear the image of the heavenly man” meaning Jesus who provides us with a perfect model of manhood in which to examine ourselves. Jesus is a faithful provider, strong protector, loving leader, a truthful teacher, and a willing servant. He provides hope and encouragement for those who follow Him. Jesus rejects passivity, and acts courageously in the face of sin.



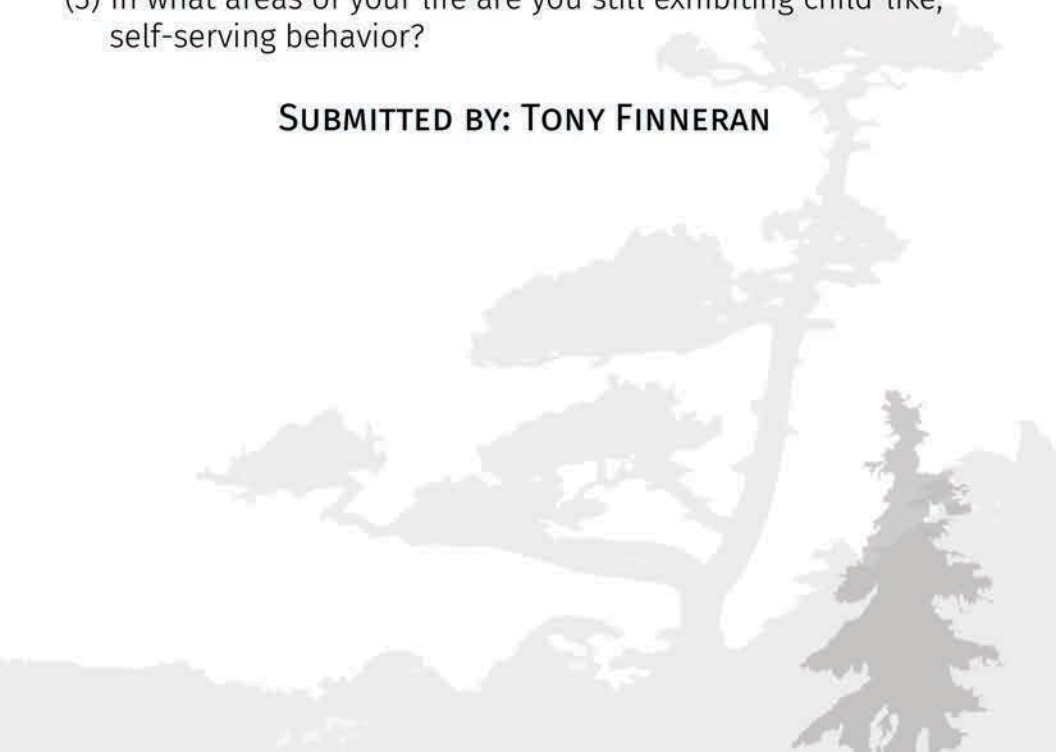
PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, we pray that your Spirit will shine a light on the most critical areas in our life where we need to not only be engaged, but also to lead and act courageously. We ask for fearlessness in honoring God before man. We ask for the strength and wisdom to be the spiritual leaders in our home and our circle of influence. Please help us to love others sacrificially by putting their needs above ours because of what Jesus has done for each of us. Please help us to align our minds and hearts in conjunction with Your will. In Jesus Name we pray.

REFLECTION

- (1) Where am I being passive in my life? (Parenting, being a good husband to my wife, discipling my children/others in my circle of influence, taking care of elderly parents, taking care of the needy or sick, finances, being spiritually courageous, etc.)
- (2) When are you being silent when you should be speaking up?
- (3) In what areas of your life are you still exhibiting child-like, self-serving behavior?

SUBMITTED BY: TONY FINNERAN



DAY 13 - 3/3: LOVING... IS HARD.

READ: EZEKIEL 18 / PROVERBS 24 / DEUT. 9:6 / EPHESIANS 1:5-6

When I think of how our God loves - or better said, how love is woven into every part of His being and cannot be separated out any more than the unchanging reality of His sovereignty or holiness - I'm left feeling the stark reality of my feet of clay.

When I am hurt, I don't always respond with love. I can be tempted to think people, possessions, time, relationships, this moment... *even my life... belong to me.*

God's love is shown in relationship just as my love is shown in relationship. What is in the heart will be shown. Here are some ways the love of God, His heart, is shown in relationships:

God's love for the world. Image bearers act in outright rebellion against their Creator, yet He cares for them. "He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Matt. 5:45) Would I begrudge God's blessings on anyone?

God's love for the lost. Listen to Ezekiel 18. "Do I take pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? (23). "Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live! (31b-32). And consider this from Proverbs 24, "Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn His wrath away from him." (17-18). Well, that's sobering! Do I gloat or rejoice when the wicked *or my enemy* get what they deserve? Do I get what I *deserve*?

God's love for His own. We, His elect, are recipients of God's *saving* love. Why? Because we are recipients of God's saving love... that's it... that's all. We can dig around and search

Scripture and not find anything about ourselves to warrant His affection. "Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people." (Deut. 9:6) In eternity past, He loved us, chose us! We are His treasured possession. Why? "In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with *His pleasure and will* – to the praise of *His glorious grace*, which He has freely given us in the One He loves." (Eph. 1:5-6). Do I only give grace to those who are easy to give it to? Do I love the stiff-necked and want good for them? Those I *choose* to love, will it cost them, will there be strings attached? In the end, does the way I love others glorify God or glorify myself?

All those questions above are sure to lead me to realize that I do not love as God loves. My love isn't always for the other person. I fall short.

Loving... is *really* hard! Ahh, but He gives us more grace!

PRAYER

Father, we pray to You, the One whose love blazes like the sun and can impart that same love into our dim hearts, for Your glory. Teach us to love like You love. Help us to love the stiff-necked and want good for them. May we love in a way that glorifies Your holy name.

REFLECTION

- (1) Do you only give grace to those who are easy to give it to?
- (2) Do you love the stiff-necked and want good for them?
- (3) Those you *choose* to love, will it cost them, will there be strings attached?
- (4) Does the way you love others glorify God or glorify yourself?

SUBMITTED BY: PAM PRIGEL



DAY 14 - 3/4: FORGIVENESS AND THE WISE MIND

READ: LUKE 6:37 / LUKE 17:4 / PROVERBS 8:32-34 / MATTHEW 7:1-3

"I feel so betrayed... so hurt... so utterly disgusted..." "I'm so angry." "I know he did it on purpose." "She's so inconsiderate and selfish." "She deserves justice." "It's only fair." "He needs to know what it feels like." "I'll show them."

Many of us have been in a situation provoking feelings like those above, and we know the conflict of wanting justice as it crashes into a commandment to forgive (Luke 6:37, Luke 17:4). But is it just a directive that we are forced to struggle through and follow solely out of a place of obedience or did God gift us the tools within a wise mind for forgiveness to also be an empowering choice over the evil influences we encounter (Psalm 119:98)? Maybe both?

God created us with a mind full of wise potential; He designed us to pursue wisdom. Just read the Book of Proverbs. Not to mention the words "wise/wisdom" appear 367 times in the Bible. Our mind is full of innate and nurtured, or learned, feelings that with our experiences generate perceptions and beliefs, both of which help us make decisions in how we respond and act by engaging with our surrounding world, a fallen world that hurts and disappoints often.

Becoming aware of the functioning of these three components, or corners of our cognitive triangle, can help us better win the battles in our mind and enable, encourage, and empower us as we forgive in response to our Lord's command. Throughout the Bible, we see God and Jesus experience an entire gamut of emotions. Being made in His likeness, our feelings were given to us as indicators and sensors to help us receive information from our surroundings. These indicators help us formulate understanding of our circumstances that we then choose to accept as real and valid. These beliefs, in combination with our feelings, help determine our actions. So, what is the problem?

Our feelings often become dictators and our beliefs grow narrower as we endure continued hurts without healing. Thus, forgiveness feels hard or even impossible.

But what would happen if we tugged on one corner of this triangle by replacing our beliefs with God's truths and promises (Proverbs 8:32-34). "She did it on purpose" becomes "maybe I don't know everything that happened" (Proverbs 3:5). "She's so inconsiderate" becomes "we all struggle with pride sometimes" (Matthew 7:1-3). "They deserve justice" becomes "None of us deserve the grace we're given." (Col 3:13) "I'm disgusted" becomes "I'm hurt and disappointed by what happened." "I feel so betrayed" becomes "I just want to understand and really desire peace or reconciliation." Now those feelings and thoughts we can work with when enacting forgiveness. Let God reign in your mind and in your heart, as the hurt and grief you suffer, He has already overcome! (John 6:33)

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You are so wise and so gracious. Thank you for creating me in Your image and giving me a mind full of potential for compassion and forgiveness. Help me to use Your weapons to battle the thoughts provoked by impulsive feelings that become hurtful and deceptive. Give me a thirst for Your knowledge and truth. Thank you for the peace that comes from Your understanding and not my own narrow focus. Help me to embrace a lifestyle of forgiveness according to Your purposeful design. In Your Holy Name, Amen.

REFLECTION

- (1) What corner of the triangle feels like the hardest to manage for you? How can you apply God's truths in doing so?
- (2) What does it mean to "adopt a lifestyle of forgiveness"?
- (3) What will change for you personally based on this knowledge of the wise mind God gave us?

SUBMITTED BY: TARYN GREY


DAY 15 - 3/5: A PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

READ: EPHESIANS 2:10 / HEBREWS 1:2-3 / PSALM 121:4

When I was pregnant with my first son, I was looked down upon by many because I chose to go back to work and not be a stay-at-home mom. I was told that the Bible says that I should take care of my child and not continue my police officer career. After much prayer and seeking guidance from the Bible, I was led back to the streets without hesitation.

Everyone is called to work. Some work as students and some as teachers, some work as stay-at-home mothers/fathers and some work in businesses. Everybody works in some way for a living. Not all work is paid, and God may lead you to unpaid work. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, in work or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." We need to recognize that being "called" to work really means being "created" and "commanded" to work.

God also is a worker; we are His workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). He creates and sustains the world by the power of His Word (Hebrews 1:2-3). We serve a God who neither sleeps nor slumbers (Psalm 121:4). Work is something that we do here on earth, and we will also do in heaven. Work continues through the very end of the Bible. There is work in the Garden of Eden, and there is work in the New Heaven/New Earth. If work is something that we will do for eternity, shouldn't we ask the question, "How can we work in a way that glorifies God?" Our work is to reflect His glory.



The work here that God is referring to is the work for Him. It's easy for our eyes of faith to become glassy at work and forget for Whom we work. God is at work in your life in more ways than you can imagine. You may not see how it benefits others, but know that God has chosen to act through you and your skills for the good of others.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the gift of work. Help us to see how You are calling each of us to work. We ask that You give us help when we need a new perspective and understanding in how we are called to glorify You.

REFLECTION

- (1) Do you work with the right perspective? Our careers are temporary, but our calling to work for God is eternal. How have you struggled with this?
- (2) How can you maintain a good attitude in a bad work situation? Have you ever experienced a work environment where it was hard to maintain joy?
- (3) In what ways are fear of God's judgment and anticipation of his reward motivators to faithful service in the workplace? Are they motivators for you?

SUBMITTED BY: JENN DENNY

DAY 16 - 3/6: FUTURE GENERATIONS OF BELIEVERS

READ: LUKE 2:52 / MATTHEW 25:23 / MATTHEW 7:21-23 / PSALM 78

I attended a conference some years ago where one of the speakers made a point that felt like an arrow piercing my heart. He stated that every Christian, new or seasoned, needs to have an answer to the following question: What is the faith of the next generation worth? What is the faith of your children worth? Take a moment to reflect on what that means to you.

There will come a time when every one of us who draws breath, who was created in the image of God, will stand before our Maker to give an account for what we have done with the time He has given us. We will behold the LORD in all of His unimaginable glory, and He will either respond "well done my good and faithful servant", or He will say, "I never knew you", and cast us off from His presence, only to live out eternity separated from all that is good.

If you are a follower of Christ, your heart has been changed. You, and others, can see the fruits of the Spirit ever present in the way you live your life. None of us are perfect models of Christ. We equally wear the title of sinners and saints, but He calls us to be holy as He is holy. Each day brings a new opportunity for sanctification and a renewing of the heart - dying to self, dying to our favorite sins, dying to the pride of our sin nature.

When your heart has been changed by the LORD, the Great I Am, His goodness, His mercy, His grace and all of the many ways He has been faithful in our lives cannot help but spill out of us when we speak. How then do we feel timid, or speechless, when sharing our love of Christ with unbelievers? Our children? Grandchildren? These image bearers are the future generation of believers. They are our most enduring legacy. Our privilege, as Christ followers, is to share what we have been given with them.

Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Likewise, the future generation of believers need this generation to boldly tell of the glorious deeds of the Lord so they might know Him and grow in His ways.

Jesus opens His arms wide to His children, embracing them, inviting them to ask for wisdom in His truths, which Scripture teaches He will surely grant to all who ask. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to share the knowledge we have been granted when the veil was removed from our eyes. God will use our example, mistakes and blunders included, for His Glory, in His perfect timing, for His good.

In Children's Ministry, we talk about how it can be hard, at times, to simply get yourself, your family, and your kids to church, much less reach their hearts. It doesn't always seem like the kids are paying attention or the message is reaching them. It may not always feel like we are making a difference, but the Lord sees His servants' hearts. While we may not see the fruit of our efforts for decades, or even in our lifetime, it isn't for us; it is for Him. He uses each one of His beloved to be His hands and His feet in the time we are here. He uses us to penetrate the hearts of the lost. We don't know how He will use what we say or what we do, but we trust in the knowledge that the omniscient Father does.

We do not know the day or the hour He will call us to Himself; but make no mistake, the hour is coming. The future of the next generation is dependent on how believers share the love of Christ with them.

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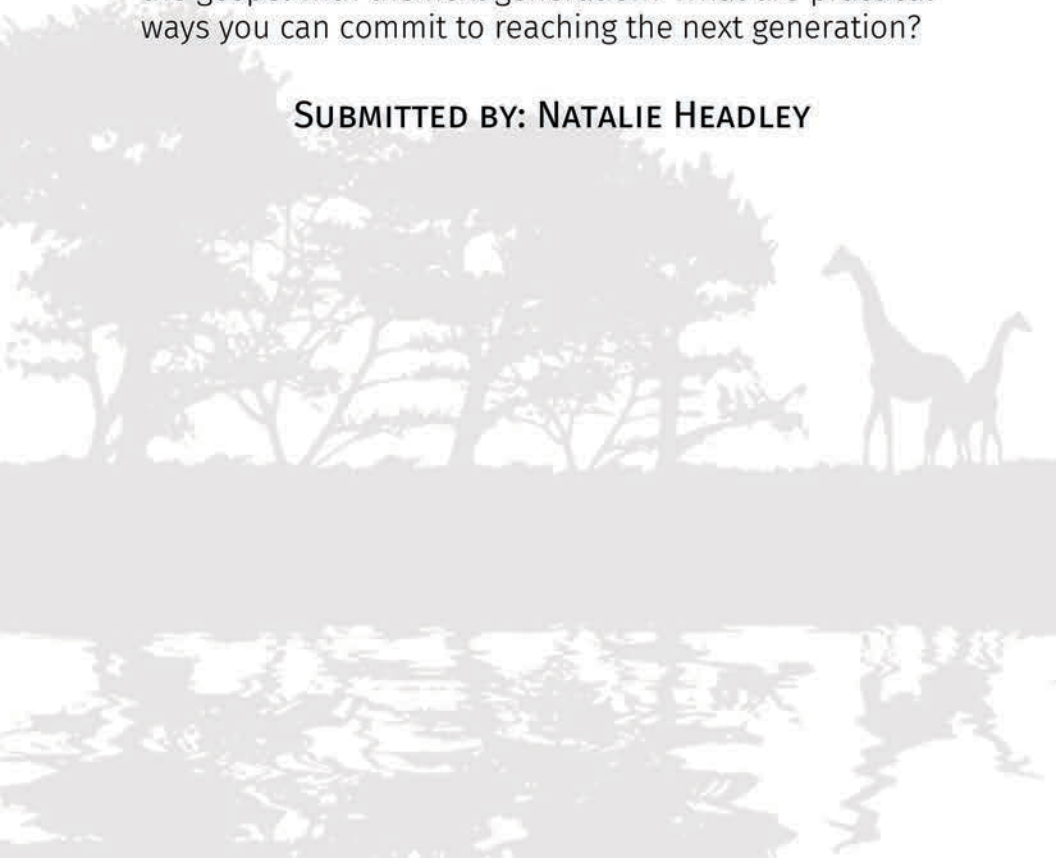
PRAYER

Father, You are more incredible than we can begin to imagine. Your faithfulness, mercy, generosity, and grace can be overwhelming. Help us to find the words to share what You have done in our lives with the next generation of believers so their hope will be firmly planted in You. Make us bold, Lord. Help us in areas of weakness. Please use us to lift Your precious name on high and let each of our hearts cry out, 'Your will be done'.

REFLECTION

- (1) What is the faith of the next generation worth to you?
- (2) How is God calling you to influence the next generation of believers?
- (3) What habits, obstacles, or fears prohibit you from sharing the gospel with the next generation? What are practical ways you can commit to reaching the next generation?

SUBMITTED BY: NATALIE HEADLEY



DAY 17 - 3/7: SURRENDERING

READ: MATTHEW 16:24 / 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 / GALATIANS 2:20

Take a moment to imagine you are kayaking upstream against a strong current. You can quickly feel an overwhelming sense of exhaustion, frustration, and weakness. Now, imagine Jesus turning your kayak around. You drop your oars and just float downstream. This is the serenity, quietness, refreshing relaxation that surrendering to an almighty, sovereign King offers.

Surrender: To completely give up one's own will and subject one's thoughts, ideas, and deeds to an all-powerful, loving God. It simply means to stop fighting. It is telling God that you are not big enough to fix your worries and struggles. It is humbling yourself, realizing you are incapable, and understanding God is omnipotent.

If we are honest, surrendering is difficult because we want to be in control. We want to be strong, and we want things to work out the way we planned. However, in Matthew 16:24, Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". Also, in 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul teaches that we are a new creation. When we are in Christ, our old, self-worshipping nature passes away and we become more conformed to His image.

The enemy seeks every day to find ways to fill our minds with doubt, worry, and anxiety. Without surrendering our thoughts and anxiety to God, the enemies' schemes will eventually cripple us. We need to stand strong, take heart, and have confidence that God is fully in control. We need to recognize His authority and move over to let Him lead. Letting go may be scary at first, but we can find freedom in our hearts and minds when we surrender. In doing so, we allow God to realign our priorities and principles with His priorities and principles.

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The result allows us to echo Paul's testimony in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for being the ultimate sacrifice, so that one day we may be with You. I know unequivocally that I can trust Your infinite goodness, wisdom, and holiness. Help me to step out in faith moment-by-moment as I surrender my life to You. Help me to take every thought captive and to rest in Your unfailing love. Make me willing and obedient to live a life that is pleasing to You, as I say daily, may Your will be done and not mine. Look deeply into my heart and prune out all the things that are displeasing to You. Lord, I know in Luke 9:24–25 it says, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it". As I rest in You, I pray that day-by-day I may be increasingly conformed into the likeness of Your Son. And in the midst of a confusing world, help me to find peace, in full surrender to Your whole will. Thank you for all Your many blessings, In Jesus name I pray Amen.

REFLECTION

- (1) What comes to mind when thinking about surrendering?
- (2) What have you been holding back from God? Is it control, worry, money, your relationships, or your future?
- (3) What are practical ways that you can surrender your doubt, worry, and anxiety?
- (4) Think of trials that you have persevered through by His strength?
- (5) What are some priorities and principles that you have surrendered to God to be more conformed to His image?

SUBMITTED BY: MAURA SMITH

DAY 18 - 3/8: PRAYING FOR OUR MARRIAGES

READ: PHILIPPIANS 2:1-7 / GENESIS 2:24

One flesh... Scripture begins with the book of Genesis which means *beginning*. Everything in the creation account is essential for how we begin to see our world rightly.

The Creation account ends with this idea of two becoming one. "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."
(Genesis 2:24)

Take a minute and think about the idea of one flesh. What comes to mind?

One flesh is not only a picture of the bond of marriage, but the New Testament reveals it to also reflect our relationship with Christ. When two become one in marriage, a new and unique family is created. When a person surrenders their life to Christ, a new life is born. God uses unity to bring forth life in both marriage and the Body of Christ.

Physical oneness in marriage brings about not only reproductive fruitfulness, but also a spirit of peace, a bond of love and being of one accord. Physical oneness with Christ is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit, forgiveness, and unity within the body, in the life of the believer. This union of our oneness in marriage and in the body of Christ both depend upon us having the mind of Christ. In marriage, selfishness and pride must be killed off if we expect to have unity with our spouse. As the church, we must grow in humility, counting others as more important than ourselves if we are to be unified as a body. No relationship will prosper if the partners are constantly in a battle for power. If we do not have the mind of Christ, we will find ourselves straying from the union.

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Our marriage will fail, our church will split, and the name of Jesus will not be lifted high. To continually take on the mind of Christ is the only way to have a successful marriage as well as a thriving church.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we pray for unity within the marriages of Perry Hall Baptist Church. We ask You to bring healing to the areas that have been broken by a lack of oneness. We ask that unselfish love may be cultivated in all of our relationships as we seek to have one mind and spirit.

REFLECTION

- (1) Consider what are the small areas of selfishness you can kill off in your life, in your marriage? In your service at Perry Hall Baptist Church?
- (2) What would it look like if you emptied yourself for your spouse? For the body at Perry Hall Baptist Church?
- (3) Commit to one way you will look to the interest of your spouse or Perry Hall Baptist Church this week. Write your commitment below.

SUBMITTED BY: SUSANNE HARDING



DAY 19 - 3/9: DECLARING HIS GLORY AMONG THE NATIONS

READ: PHILIPPIANS 2:1-7 / GENESIS 2:24

All throughout Scripture, we are commanded to “declare His glory among the nations.” First, I want to discuss what it means to declare, then where we ought to declare. To ‘declare’ means to announce and express clearly, publicly, and emphatically. That looks different for each person and scenario, but nonetheless is a commandment given to us by God. It might be getting to know a person and building a relationship and trust that eventually leads to a conversation about Christ; or it might look like serving behind the scenes joyfully, knowing that Christ is doing a mighty work through you and those you are serving. Something that the Lord has been revealing to me lately is that you do not have to speak to declare His glory. The simple actions of serving, loving, and sacrificing for others is declaring who Christ is and how He has transformed you and redeemed you from an eternity in sin.

In Genesis 12:1, Moses writes, “Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” Just like Abram, God is calling you to go. To go to a land that He has prepared for you. In John 17, Jesus says, “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” Jesus has sent you and will continue to send you, all He requires of you is your obedience. I implore you to be prayerful about where God is calling you! It may be in Kids’ Club, a soup kitchen in Baltimore, a mission trip to Asia, or at the grocery store. Every nation and community needs Christ, not just a third-world country. I often get discouraged when people ask me what my plans are for this summer as if I can’t serve the Lord in the States. But the truth is, no matter where God calls me, whether it is back home, or another country, I am still on mission for Christ. It is time to obey the calling He has put on your life.

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You will never be too old, lack the resources or time to declare His glory. In fact, that is what we were created to do. For me, in this current season, God has called me to college in West Tennessee, not solely for school, but for ministry. This campus is my mission field. What is yours?

One of the main purposes and goals of the church is to carry out the Great Commission that is found in Matthew 28:19-20. I believe that as a church, we have done a good job of this and have seen a growth in global missionaries being sent out. I can think of five young adults, me included, who were sent out on global missions just last summer (2022). Spending four weeks in Zambia, Africa this summer was life changing. It was extremely challenging yet overwhelmingly beautiful at the same time. Being back in the States for six months, I can firmly say that the Lord is doing a mighty work here! I have started a Bible study on my campus and have seen a few girls come to know Christ as their personal Savior. All it took from me was a heart of surrender - to lay down my fears and pride and trust that He will complete a good work in me. I tell you this to primarily brag on Christ, but to also thank and encourage you. Thank you, PHBC, for your financial and spiritual support. I am forever grateful for the Sunday school teachers, the Wednesday night volunteers, pastors, and those serving behind the scenes for pouring so much into me. I pray that I can one day do that for others.



PRAYER

Lord, we pray for our current missionaries - those global and local. Carrying the burden and weight of the Gospel is heavy, but it brings forth freedom, therefore we ask for Your guidance as we press on! Father, we ask for clarity and peace about where You are calling each of us. You promise to prepare the land, so we pray that You will give us a heart of obedience and surrender. Please use us for Your glory!

REFLECTION

- (1) Where is God calling you to be His ambassador?
- (2) What must you surrender in order to be His ambassador?
- (3) How can you support the missionaries being sent out on global missions from PHBC?

SUBMITTED BY: KELLY KRACK



DAY 20 - 3/10: BROKENNESS IN OUR CITY

READ: JAMES 2:16 / 1 JOHN 3:18

One November day, sitting in a coffee shop in Perry Hall, I am meeting with Dayson. We should be meeting about a Christmas party for the 85 kids this 24-year-old mentors in the city. Instead, we are discussing ways to support the young people in his program that have just experienced a member boy who was grazed by a bullet, and one girl, who was paralyzed at age 14. Wrong place, wrong time. Our youth.

How do you navigate the brokenness of this city with a group of young teens? An off-duty city officer walks into the coffee shop, here to assist. Next, in walks a local pastor, here to support. We have no answers, but we must make a plan to give these kids hope. A week prior, our same team was standing watch at the funeral for a 13-year-old, who was killed while selling snacks for her dance team. How will things get better? How will things ever change?

Fast forward two short weeks. Dayson brings his students to help some of our local Perry Hall teens in making sandwiches for neighbors experiencing homelessness. The same youth gave our turkeys for Thanksgiving. How does this heal? How does interaction with those in need, those who hurt, or maybe even those who are the cause of the problem bring change?

The city is crying out for change, hope, and healing. Who will join them in that hope? Believers should speak words of life by telling others the gospel, but we also need to add action to our words. How are these young people able to reach out when they would have every reason to sequester away?

For various reasons, not everyone can go and walk the streets. However, we are called to go and make disciples. Stepping out. Combining words and actions. It is not an either-or question. Meet the needs **and** share the gospel - that is what we're called to do.

Change will not happen in isolation; it takes everyone playing their part. Change will not happen in a broken city if we sit behind the comfortable walls over “the county line”. Be encouraged that change is possible. If our young people, so touched by fear and brokenness, find hope through action, you may also. The broken city is crying out. They need you. Fill that gap. Be not just the truth, but also the action.

PRAYER

Father, we cannot begin to know the hurt and the sorrow of these young ones, but You do. We pray for your guidance, Lord, on how we as a church can support our city. Help us to know how to give these souls hope in not only their circumstance, but in You, Lord. Make clear to us how we can model the love of Your Son. Break us out of our comfort zone and use us to be Your hands and feet.

REFLECTION

- (1) How might God be prompting you to give hope to, and serve, the youth in our city?
- (2) What can you do to model Christ's love with the people who are broken and lost in our city?

SUBMITTED BY: MELISSA HULTS


DAY 21 - 3/11: PERRY HALL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

READ: JOHN 15:1-8

I was a student at Perry Hall Christian School for 13 years. As a 20-year-old, more than half of my life, and many of my schooling years, were spent at PHCS. There, God blessed me with a community that I have yet to find since. I made friends that I can point to and confidently say that we will be friends for life and eternity. But most importantly, I received Godly instruction that gave me a Biblical lens to examine the world through. Not just in our Bible class or math and science curricula, although still important, but by the example laid out by the teacher in front of the class.

God purposefully picked each teacher at PHCS to be put in front of young, moldable minds. Don't get me wrong, I can certainly say that I received a quality education. But of more eternal significance, I was taught a Biblical model for living through godly men and women who pointed me back to Christ and His word.

Luke 6:40 tells us, "The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher." We are promised in Scripture that we cannot help but become like our teacher once we have been fully trained. The men and women that are given care over the development of our children matter deeply. For Christ to be exalted in the lives of young people, they need this to be modeled in school. The younger generation needs training. And that first must take place in the home, but our schools play a large role as well.



The training that I received at PHCS has become rooted in who I am, which pushed me to become grafted to Jesus Christ. He is the vine, and we are the branches. Christ promises us that if we remain in Him, we will bear much fruit. PHCS was a catalyst for my faith; it has been for the many Kingdom builders who came before me and will continue to be for those yet to come.

While I know that other families have stories of God's faithfulness evident in their educational choices, I share my testimony as a form of gratitude and encouragement to our church. I will forever be grateful for the investment of Perry Hall Baptist Church into PHCS.

PRAYER

Father, we pray for PHCS as a ministry of Perry Hall Baptist Church. We ask that it would be fruitful in its work of reaching young minds and molding them for a life of service in whatever vocation You might have for them. We pray, Lord, that You would continue to bring believers to the PHCS staff who are able to effectively introduce Jesus to children from unchurched homes every day.

REFLECTION

- (1) Consider a few of the lasting habits that were instilled in you from kindergarten to 12th grade. How would your walk with Christ have been transformed if a godly teacher had invested in you?
- (2) What is one tangible way that you can commit to supporting PHCS as a ministry of Perry Hall Baptist Church?

SUBMITTED BY: KIT HARDING

DAY 22 - 3/12: A SLICE OF HEAVEN


READ: COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

Each Summer since 2013, my family has spent a week at Mountain Top Bible Camp. My wife and I look forward to this week each year because it's one of the few times that all eight of us are in the same place for an entire week. Currently, our two oldest children attend college in other states and the other four kids' activities keep them on the run.

Mountain Top week has become our family vacation, yet there is very little relaxation or time alone to read a book, watch a sunset, or lounge by the pool. An all-inclusive cruise, a week at the beach, or theme park may be a more desirable family vacation for many, but we have found that serving together alongside our best friends and other Christian leaders in an environment that shares the Gospel each day is a perfect way to spend a week.

During this awesome week, our family serves the Lord through leading a cabin full of energetic 8- to 12-year-old campers, organizing activities, and assisting with worship and chapel time. That is just the tip of the iceberg. Most of all, we have opportunities to share Jesus with campers.

Each one of our children has been (or still is) an MTBC camper, kitchen worker, or a counselor. Serving and being a camper during this week has taught them how to love and care for others well, how to share the Gospel, and how to freely worship the Lord without holding back!



I call this week “A Slice of Heaven” because I know God is there and He is working through us for His glory. Since there are 100 kids and 30 staff, sin does have the ability to creep in. It is not perfect like we know Heaven is, but there are glimpses into what Heaven might be like.

Campers often share stories of non-Christian behavior they experience at home or school. God has equipped each of us with the ability to share a kind word, provide comfort, be a shoulder to cry on, or help a camper start a relationship with Christ. Watching a teenager interact with a young child that they just met and encourage them to seek Jesus is an amazing site that I know brings joy to the Lord.

PRAYER

Father, we pray that You will continue to bless Mountain Top Bible Camp. We ask that You direct the path for kids who do not know You so they are able to attend camp this year. We pray for unity among leaders and counselors. Lord, we also ask that any professions of faith are genuine and become the start of a life-long commitment to Your Son, Jesus Christ. Above all, Lord, we pray that You will be glorified, and Your name will be lifted on high.

REFLECTION

- (1) Who do you know that you could encourage to participate at Mountain Top Bible Camp?
- (2) How can you be a counselor to people in your neighborhood?

SUBMITTED BY: KEVIN KRACK



DAY 23 - 3/13: LOST AND BROKEN

READ: EPHESIANS 2:8

For over 30 years I was in control of my life. I had developed my own personal theology. By my own standards, I was a good man. I believed in God, and that there was a heaven and a hell. I didn't really know Jesus, but I believed He existed. Even though I didn't go to church, I considered myself to be a Christian. I was my own little kingdom of one.

I was fortunate enough to go to college and graduate. At age 22, I married Sandy, the love of my life. We were married in a church because that's what good people do. We both worked and enjoyed spending time together. We wanted to have children, and after four years of working and saving money, we decided to start a family. Our daughter, Kelly, was born with several mental and physical disabilities, and after three years she died.

This was a difficult time for me. I was angry at God. I was a good man, and I deserved to have a healthy child. For the first time in my life, I realized that I was lost, and there was very little that I controlled in this life. We started going to a little church in our neighborhood seeking to know more about God. In 1980, we attended the Billy Graham Crusade at the old Memorial Stadium. Little did I know that God would use that evening to change my life for all eternity. For the first time, I heard that I was a sinner saved by God's grace and faith alone in Jesus Christ. I was broken and prayed for forgiveness of my sins.



Even though it was painful at the time, God used Kelly's life and death to bring Sandy and me to a saving faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. I was lost and broken. Now I am a new creation in Christ. By God's grace, my faith has compelled me to continually pray for salvation for all those lost people that God has put on my heart and, whenever possible, to share the gospel with them.

In John 14:6 Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

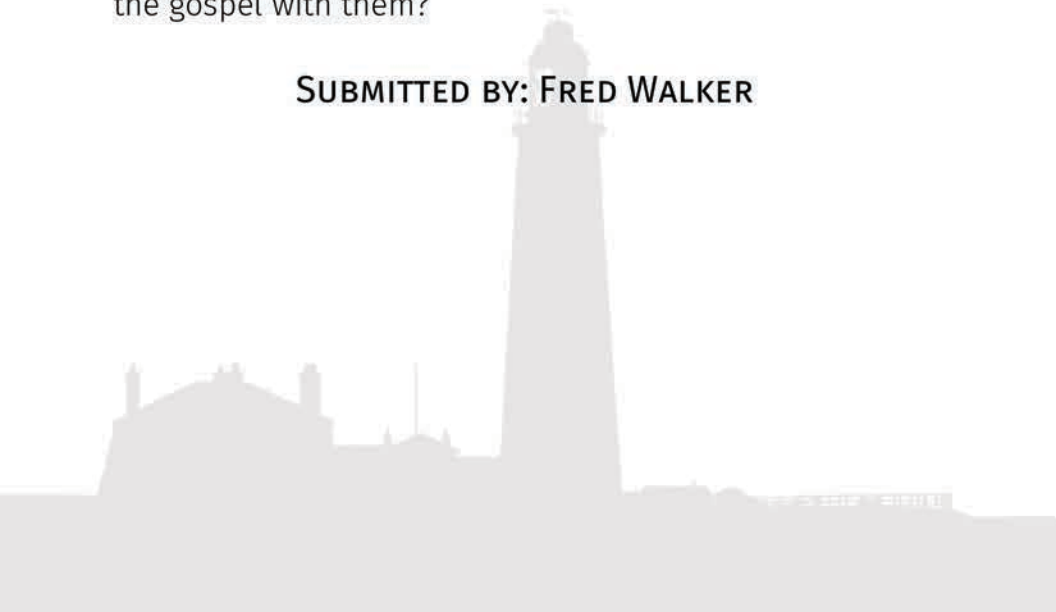
PRAYER

I pray that as we go through the storms of life, that we would be humbled and drawn ever closer to our Lord and Savior. That we would freely give our lives to Him, and that we would be excited to tell others how much God loves us and cares for us. Amen

REFLECTION

- (1) Is the Holy Spirit stirring your heart to pray for and reach out to lost people?
- (2) How many lost people do you know? Have you really shared the gospel with them?

SUBMITTED BY: FRED WALKER



DAY 24 - 3/14: WOMEN IN THE... HOME?

READ: GENESIS 3:6 / MATTHEW 13:46 / PROVERBS 31:30

In a culture where feminism is viciously stomping out femininity, we can be encouraged by the Bible's high calling of womanhood.

Our culture perpetuates many lies to women through social media and television: we are the same as men, we can have it all, children are a burden, and the home is a trap from the 1950s. Certainly, we cannot look to the world for answers. So where can we find truth and be correctly informed about what is worth attaining; good and beautiful; holy and righteous?

As women of the church, we instinctively know that the answer to these questions is the Word of God. Then why is it too often the last place we look when we feel discouraged and discontented? The Father of Lies knows the trappings of the world well and dangles forbidden fruit which "looks pleasant to the eyes and good for food and desirable to make one wise," (Genesis 3:6) so close to our faces that we lose sight of the obvious. Watch out! Be vigilant! Seek truth and hold onto it like the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:46).

Womanhood, God tells us, is beautiful and precious; it is a high calling, and full of honor. We are God's image bearers. God was not satisfied that His creation of mankind was "good" until He made woman.

Being a godly woman in the home looks different for each family and with a time for everything under the sun. Some women are called to be: Daughters (Proverbs 144:12), Single (1Cor 7:7), Wives (Proverbs 18:22), Mothers (Duet 6:4), Grandmothers (2 Timothy 1:5), and Widows (1 Timothy 5: 3-6).

In all these roles, there is commonality. As women of Christ, we should reflect the beauty of Christ (Proverbs 31:30).

Our homes should be a beacon on a hill shining out the light of loving kindness — it should be a warm glow of encouragement to your family and Christian friends as well as a light of truth beaming to a broken and weary world. Our homes should be a sanctuary of peace and rest for all who live there or step foot inside.

Our “speech (should) always be with grace, seasoned with salt,” (Colossians 4:6) so that our children are trained by our praises to the Lord; our husbands are uplifted by our peaceful musings; our church family receives our encouragement; and our neighbors are intrigued by our contentment.

We cultivate these qualities by reading God’s Word, singing hymns and praises as we go about our tasks, praying for ourselves and others, and nurturing those around us. Truth should reign supreme. Guard your time and redeem it. Be rooted in the Word.

PRAYER

Father, we pray that the ladies of our church will be women who are deeply rooted in Your Holy Word. We pray that when faced with the world’s claims, demands, and lies, that they will guard themselves by putting on Your armor (Ephesians 6), and that they will seek Your wisdom and counsel before any other. We pray that Your truth will be paramount in our hearts.

REFLECTION

- (1) Take time to examine your speech. Is it always graceful and seasoned with salt? If not, what changes might you make to better align yourself with what God asks of His children?
- (2) How can you encourage a woman who is listening to what culture is telling her about feminism versus what the Bible says about femininity?

SUBMITTED BY: MARISSA CHESSE

DAY 25 - 3/15: THE UNITY OF FAMILY

READ: HEBREWS 12:1-2

Oftentimes, when we hear the word “unity”, we think of how it relates to the world. We may also think of the “captial C” church, or our individual church body. While unity in all of these things is important, sometimes we overlook a smaller example of this God desired trait: The unity of our family.

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2

I know upon first glance this passage doesn't seem to have much to do with family unity. So often, we get unity and uniformity mixed up, and there is no greater place this can happen than in our home. We love and guide our children with hopes they will one day become independent adults who will make a difference in the world around them. Many times we seek to do this our way. We get frustrated when our children aren't listening, or doing what we say, when we say it, how we say it. We do this with our spouses, too. Am I right? I know I cannot be the only guilty party here.

This is where this passage and unity come in. We can be unified as a family, while still allowing our children and our spouse the freedom to be who God is calling them to be, the way God is calling them to be it.

Unity isn't forcing everyone to run the same pace with the same stride. It's running together in the same marathon, yet allowing each individual family member to run their own race. Unity is coming together, deciding what each of you needs to throw off to better run in the marathon together. It's praying for each other, helping each other overcome struggles, but not trying to overcome those struggles for them.

We are called to fix our eyes on Jesus. In order to have unity as a family, this has to be the number one priority. Uniformity is fixing our eyes on each other. Unity is fixing our eyes, as a family unit, on Christ.

PRAYER

Lord, I pray that You help us to remember that unity and uniformity are two different things. You never called us to all be the same, for we are each called to a unique purpose. Help us to fix our eyes on You, rather than each other. Help us to run our own race with endurance, yet run in the marathon of this life together, seeking to glorify You in all we do. Amen.

REFLECTION

- (1) Is your family unified in Christ? If not, what are practical ways you can work toward this goal?
- (2) Are there obstacles in your life preventing you from fixing your eyes on Christ alone?
- (3) What steps can you take to being intentional on fixing your eyes on our Savior?

SUBMITTED BY: EMILY KULP



DAY 26 - 3/16: A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVING

READ: JOHN 11:28-37 / 1 SAMUEL 1:15

As someone whose profession involves a lot of talking and giving advice, I sometimes find it hard to sit in silence. Silence is sometimes necessary though, and helpful, especially to those who might be grieving. There is a tendency to want to try to fix the problem, to fill the space of dead air and uncomfortableness, especially if you haven't experienced grief in the way a brother or sister is currently.

If you are the one enduring a season of grief personally, how do you handle the tremendous sorrow and anguish that some days feels overwhelming and unbearable?

Throughout the Bible, the scriptures offer us numerous stories of those who endured heartache and experienced grief. The shortest verse in the Bible shows us how Jesus Himself felt the pain that comes from loss. John 11 tells the story of the death of Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, who passed away while Jesus was fulfilling His ministry. Though there are lessons in the other parts of Lazarus's story, John 11:35 gives us a vivid depiction of grief as felt personally by Jesus.

When Mary came to Jesus to tell of Lazarus's death, she says, "Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:32). Jesus doesn't try to offer an explanation, He doesn't try to make an excuse or console her, instead He asks her, "Where have you laid him?" and upon seeing Lazarus, his dear friend, "Jesus wept" (v. 35). In that moment Jesus shared in our very real and raw human emotions and allowed Himself to feel sadness and the anguish of loss. He could have immediately performed a miracle and in that very moment raised Lazarus from the dead; He could have offered words of comfort, but instead "He wept" and took time to feel the pain and sting that comes along with death, loss, and heartbreaking circumstances.

Just as Jesus Himself felt the weight of grief and expressed His sorrow, I believe God wants us to pour our hearts out to Him in our suffering and heartache. In 1 Samuel 1:15 Hannah “poured out her soul before the Lord” as she was grief stricken over not being able to have children. When the situation was unbearable Hannah turned to God and remained fervent in prayer. If you are in a season of grief and heartache, my prayer is that you will pour out your heart to the One who hears, sees, and loves you with an everlasting love. God is sovereign but we also know that not everything can be fully understood this side of Heaven. While we wait, may we wrestle well with our feelings, pour them out to the Lord, be real and authentic as Jesus allowed himself to be in His human form when He mourned the loss of His dear friend Lazarus.

Grief can come in many forms in my opinion - the death of a loved one, loss of a friendship, a cancer diagnosis, a loved one who has walked away from the Lord. All these scenarios likely trigger heartache on some level but in every circumstance, God is waiting to comfort us.

PRAYER

Lord, as we strive to be more Christ-like in all we do, open our eyes and hearts to those around us who may be grieving and who we can lift to You in prayer. Let us be led by Your Spirit to see our brothers and sisters who may be working through grief and pain and give us insight to how we can help them, when to speak or when to just be “still” with them. When we are experiencing grief and heartache ourselves, may we pour out our hearts to You and lay our sorrows at Your feet as we remember that even You felt the pain of loss.

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REFLECTION

- (1) Psalm 56:8 written by David says, "You number my wanderings, put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?" How does the imagery that Jesus is "catching" our tears impact you?
- (2) For those of us who are not currently walking through a season of grief and heartache, how can we help our brothers and sisters?

Remember that grieving may look different for different people. God made us all unique and not every person will handle their sorrow in the same way.

Pray for those who are visibly suffering through their grief daily and ask God to reveal how we can show love to them.

Pray that God will reveal to you those who are suffering "silently" and trying to mask their pain and deal with loss alone.

Avoid judging those who may seem to have worked through their grief and outwardly appear to "have it all together." Only the Lord truly knows a person's heart and we should never assume we know how a person is feeling.

SUBMITTED BY: AMY FINNERAN



DAY 27 - 3/17: AGAINST THE FLOW

READ: ISAIAH 43:2-3 / ACTS 16:31 / PSALM 91

In the year 2011, the International Bulletin of Missionary Research defined “martyr” as “believers of Christ who have lost their lives prematurely in situations of witness, as a result of human hostility”. The number of martyrs (in the period 2000-2010) was approximately one million.

You may be familiar with the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; three Jews that King Nebuchadnezzar put in charge of the province of Babylon. (Daniel 3:12) Three men who refused to worship the gold statue the king had built. Clearly prepared to be persecuted for their faith, they were willing to be thrown into the fiery furnace. They knew God was ABLE to deliver them, but they were prepared if He did not. They would never serve another god (Daniel 3:16-18).

Jesus says in Luke 14:26-27, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple”. Thousands are confronted with this truth when they begin their Christian walk. A Christian’s walk can cost them their family, home, or even their life. This is why the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is still relevant today. These men did not cower away from presenting their bodies as living sacrifices.

Today millions are being persecuted for their faith. Tortured, burned, assaulted, enslaved by ungodly hierarchy because they will not denounce Jesus Christ. They need our prayers, our support, and our voice. The Scriptures tell us to honor and care for one another, that if one part suffers all parts suffer with it (1 Cor 12:24-26).

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These men and women live with persecution every day and yet they have stated it builds their faith and makes them strong. They know that the cost of resisting idolatry is high but it does not compare with the cost of rejecting God.

PRAYER

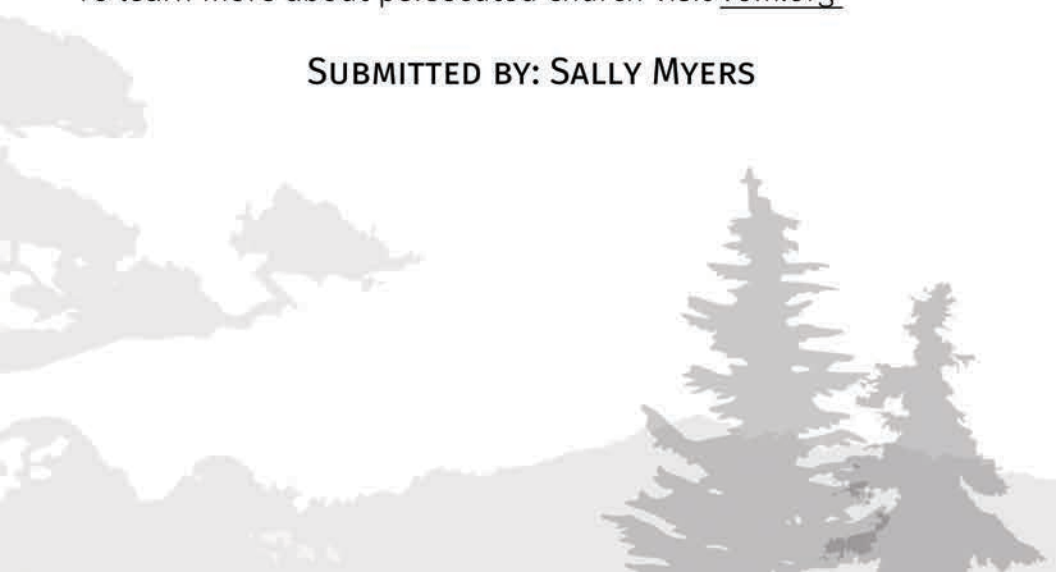
Please join with me to pray for those who are being persecuted for their faith. Father, we pray that their hearts and minds will be prepared and they will put on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-18). Lord, we ask that they will not lose their faith or their joy (II Tim 1:6-7). We pray they will have strength and conviction as they prepare to swim against the flow.

REFLECTION

- (1) Have you found yourself in a situation that caused you to go “against the flow”
- (2) If so how did you feel? What was the outcome?
- (3) Think of other ways you could support the persecuted church.
- (4) List some scripture verses to read to “pray over” these men and women around the globe.

To learn more about persecuted church visit vom.org

SUBMITTED BY: SALLY MYERS



DAY 28 - 3/18: CHRISTIANITY AS COMMUNITY

READ: ACTS 2:46-47

There is an entertaining parable (actually a pretty funny story) about the bricklayer who tried to lower 500 pounds of bricks to the ground from the sixth-floor roof of the building where he was working. His approach involved a barrel filled with all the bricks, a rope, a pulley, and his 150-pound self. By the end of his experience, he'd suffered multiple broken bones, bumps, and cuts. On his insurance claim form he wrote, "Trying to do the job alone" as the cause of his accident.

Much like trying to do the physically impossible by yourself, Christian life is simply not intended to be done alone. Certainly, there are circumstances - hopefully, few and temporary - that keep us apart from one another. We saw that during our experience with COVID. But that is to be the exception and not the rule. Virtually nowhere in God's Word is there instruction for or support of going it alone.

When we look at the biblical model of Christianity, though, our lives and growth as followers of Christ are rooted in "one another". In fact, the New Testament uses the phrase "one another" almost 60 times.

While there is no substitute for gathering weekly for corporate worship (see Hebrews 10:25), the foundation of discipleship at PHBC is community - living life together: in Community Groups, Bible studies, Discipleship groups, Core Groups. Collectively, and with good reason, they're known as Life Groups.

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PRAYER

Father God, we pray for Your blessing upon the men and women of all ages in our family of believers and that You will strengthen our desire to live joyfully and fruitfully in community with one another. Please guide us into relationships that will connect us, help us to learn and grow, and strengthen our heart for service. Please guide our Life Group leaders in helping our church family serve one another faithfully and glorify You.

REFLECTION

- (1) How are you joining together with other followers of Christ outside of Sunday morning?
- (2) If you are not in a Life Group, what is preventing you from joining one?

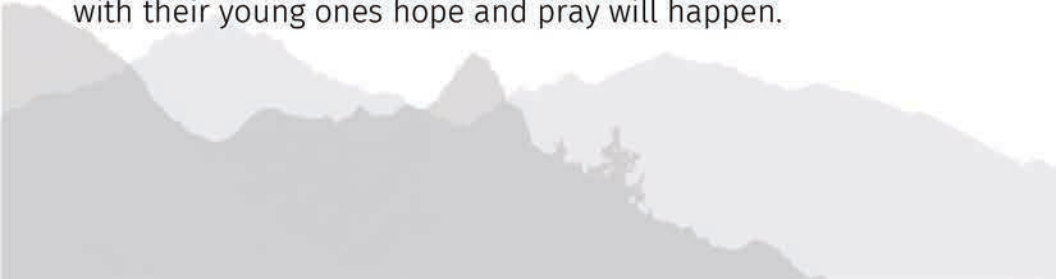
SUBMITTED BY: MARK THAYER



DAY 29 - 3/19: A PRAYER FOR KIDS' CLUB

READ: PROVERBS 22:6 / EPH 6:17 / 10:14-16 / PSALM 71:17

We have a special opportunity at Perry Hall Baptist Church to have a wide variety of groups and activities for the most precious among us, our children. We are told in Proverbs 22:6 to "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is exactly what the leaders in our Kids' Club strive for, and what the families that trust us with their young ones hope and pray will happen.



PRAY for our children and ask that God will hide His truth in their hearts. When we send our children out into the world, they need to be able to fight against the many untruths that confront them. In Ephesians 6 we are told to put on the whole armor of God. Part of that armor is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:17b). Pray that our children will have minds and hearts that desire to know the truth of God’s word.

PRAY that our children will have minds and hearts that desire to know the truth of God’s word. I know upon first glance this passage doesn’t seem to have much to do with family unity. So often, we get unity and uniformity mixed up, and there is no greater place this can happen than in our home. We love and guide our children with hopes they will one day become independent adults who will make a difference in the world around them. Many times we seek to do this our way. We get frustrated when our children aren’t listening, or doing what we say, when we say it, how we say it. We do this with our spouses, too. Am I right? I know I cannot be the only guilty party here.

This is where this passage and unity come in. We can be unified as a family, while still allowing our children and our spouse the freedom to be who God is calling them to be, the way God is calling them to be it.

PRAY that the leaders will have ears to hear and eyes to see when the Lord opens opportunities to share their faith with our children and present the Gospel.

PRAY for the leaders to have the desire, energy, and patience to interact with all the children under their care. Pray for helpers needed to assist with the evening’s activities. The leaders are coming, possibly after a long day at work or tending to other duties.

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PRAY for them to be able to focus on the joy and purpose of doing the Lord's work and loving the children the way Jesus loves the children. In Mark 10:14b we read Jesus' words, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Then in Mark 10:16a "And He took them in his arms and blessed them."

PRAY for the families that have the desire to take their children to Kids' Club, but then life happens, and they are faced with illness, car problems, work duties, etc. Pray that these setbacks would quickly resolve so that every child has the ability to attend and receive God's word and blessing. Pray that each family sees the spiritual growth in their child and can say, "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds." (Psalm 71:17) May families have that goal for their children to pray when they are older.

REFLECTION

- (1) Is there something God is asking me to do to support the Kids' Club Ministry?
- (2) Can I take a few minutes to pray for Kids' Club each time the Lord brings it to my mind?

SUBMITTED BY: DEBBIE MEISTERING

DAY 30 - 3/20: TO CHRIST BE LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

READ: PHILIPPIANS 2: 12-18

From the moment you put your faith and trust in Jesus, your life becomes a journey of lifelong commitment and devotion to our Lord. Philippians 2:1-11 focuses on our Lord who is the light of the world coming in humility and was obedient to the point of death to save us. Those first eleven verses give us "a picture of Jesus' pattern of patient, humble obedience..." (enduring the word commentary) So when Philippians 2:12-13 says,

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

We must not miss out on the connection between the obedience Jesus showed and the obedience WE are expected to show as followers of Christ. We must not miss out on the importance of seeing if our OWN salvation is evident in every area of life. Paul wanted us to understand the importance of humility and obedience in accordance with God's work in our lives through salvation.

Paul then gives practical ways for the church in the Philippi to obey his exhortation in Philippians 2:14-16,

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain."

If we are going to have a lifelong commitment and devotion to our Lord, we must strive to do ALL things without grumbling or disputing. The idea grumbling or disputing refers to our heart attitude towards God first and foremost and then to each other. Why? So that we may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish amid wickedness. Have you ever noticed how conflict hurts our testimony for Christ and our testimony with each other? It also hurts our testimony to the world. If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ then you my friend are on display as an ambassador for Christ.

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My favorite part of this passage is “**holding fast to the word of life...**” If we are going to live a lifelong life devoted to Christ, we must hold fast- cling to the word of God because it is what will sustain for years to come.

PRAYER

Would you pray Matthew 5:16 over our students: “**In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.**”

Father, we pray for the students who come through our doors each week. We lift them up to You, Lord. We ask that You draw near to this ministry (the Bonfire kids, leaders, and their families), and that they will be life-long followers of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

- (1) As I look at my life, how am I working out my salvation? How is God at work in my life?
- (2) How am I holding fast to the word of life today?

SUBMITTED BY: TRISTIN MATTHEWS

DAY 31 - 3/21: PRAYER FOR A REVIVAL OF FAITH IN OUR NATION AND LEADERS

READ: 1 COR 6:9-11

Today we are living in a culture that often seems to place no value on those things that we, as followers of Jesus Christ, hold dear. In fact, the world's system challenges and mocks these things.

When we turn on the TV or radio, or pick up a magazine or newspaper, we are confronted with attitudes and behaviors that are glorified in society, yet are an abomination to the Lord.

We see pastors and leaders in churches – and even some Christian denominations across America – going against the very Word of God they profess to believe. Among the ills that confront us are abortion, gender and sexuality issues, and the practices of the unrighteous that we're told in 1 Cor 6:9-11 will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

However, when we step through the doors of our church, or school, we know that we're in a place that honors the Lord – that observes what He teaches and challenges all who are part of our fellowship to walk and grow in Christlikeness. We are blessed by the pastoral and lay leaders whose unwavering and unashamed allegiance to the truth of Scripture is on display.

Scripture reminds us of our need for revival

- *“create in me a clean heart”* (Psalms 51:10)
- *“the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul”* (Psalm 19:7)

And that we are held accountable for obeying God's Word

- *“if you love me keep my commandments”* (John 14:15)
- *“hear the Word and keep it”* (Luke 11:28)

PRAYER

Father God, thank you for leading each of us to a church home where Your Word is proclaimed; where we are challenged daily to read, study, absorb, and live it in a way that honors and glorifies You. We pray for continued strength and clear purpose for our church's leaders, that Your Word will guide them and us. Father, please let Your Spirit touch the heart of every pastor or teacher who claims to stand for You, that they may truly honor Your commands. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen

REFLECTION

- (1) How should our prayers for our church and national leaders be focused?
- (2) Our prayers should be centered on God's Word and not on the agenda of a political party.

SUBMITTED BY: AL MYERS

DAY 32 - 3/22: GIFTS FOR GOD'S GLORY

**READ: JAMES 1:17 / COLOSSIANS 3:17 / PROVERBS 10:4
1 PETER 4:10 / PSALM 139:13**

God, through His mercy and goodness, has given every one of us certain capabilities and talents. These are known as gifts. As Christians, the ultimate purpose for us on earth is to glorify God and share the gospel. You might think that the gift you have is small and unusable, but that is not true. Be faithful in the small things so God can use you for big things.

Knowing that God foreknew you and knit you together in your mother's womb, you can rest in the knowledge that you are called to live honoring God with the gifts He has given to you. Whether it is teaching, evangelism, or maybe just being crafty with your hands, He's given these gifts to be used for His good.

When we use our gifts to help others to love, build up the Church, or to know Jesus, we are fulfilling God's purpose of praising Him, honoring Him, and glorifying Him. Remember, our God-given gifts are for His glory, not our selfishness.

PRAYER

Father, God, we pray that You will reveal Yourself to us. Please help us, Lord, to discover the gifts You have bestowed on us individually so that we can serve and honor You, our beloved Savior. Help us to know how You might use us for Your glory.

REFLECTION

- (1) Ask yourself – Do I know what gift God has given me?
- (2) Have I committed to letting God direct my steps in using my gift to help or serve others?
- (3) Am I taking the glory for what I do or have done, or am I giving God the glory for what He has done?

SUBMITTED BY: ADA WILSON

DAY 33 - 3/23: INFLUENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

READ: MATT 22:37-39 / MATT 28:19-20 / ACTS 2:46-47 / GEN 17:4-6

We are experiencing exciting times for Perry Hall Baptist Church – our membership is growing, our school ministry has reached record heights in students being served, our youth programs are engaging children of all ages, baptisms have increased, small groups meet throughout the week at members' homes, men and women are being discipled by our leaders, Bible study opportunities are plentiful, and we are faithfully serving and financially supporting outreach efforts in our own community as well as through missionaries abroad. Thanks be to our Lord!

As we continue to grow, we must remain true to our church's purpose, which is rooted in God's will for His people through the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. It's as imperative today as it was two thousand years ago to spread and share the Gospel. The book of Acts gives an account of how and where the Gospel spread after Christ died. As believers, Scripture empowers us through the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news among all people and all nations.

The early church enthusiastically showed characteristics of true revival in Christ in their daily desires to spend much time in worship and fellowship, yielding an increase in "those who were being saved." There's a pattern throughout Genesis in association with divine blessing to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28) not only through Abraham as a "father of many nations" (Gen 17:4-6) but also through God's plan that the whole earth should be populated by those who know Him and who serve wisely as His ambassadors in order that we will become a community of His people (Gen 28:3).

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PRAYER

Father, we pray that our congregation will model Your Son's love and that we will be the "light of the world" and, furthermore, that our "light will shine before others, so that they may see our good works and give glory to [You] who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). We pray that You will provide opportunities for the Perry Hall Baptist Church congregation to serve our community in bold ways that reach the lost and set in motion transformed hearts through our testimonies and through sharing the Word (Acts 4:33, 29). May our outreach and service glorify You, God, by "filling" our community with the gospel (Acts 5:28), "increasing the word of the Lord and allowing it to prevail" (Acts 19:20).

REFLECTION

- (1) How does your life give opportunity to witness for Christ?
- (2) How are you modeling Christ's love as a living sacrifice?
- (3) How are you showing the community and its members that you love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself?
- (4) How are you reaching the lost through witness to the power of Christ?

SUBMITTED BY: DOMINICK DUNNIGAN



DAY 34 - 3/24: BIBLICAL COUNSELING

READ: PROVERBS 12:15 / ISAIAH 9:6

Many of us have sought out someone to talk with during difficult seasons of our lives. Many have met with therapists, psychologists, or psychiatrists to help with grieving the loss of loved ones, marital issues, addictions, job loss, etc. Seeking counseling is nothing to be ashamed about, in fact, counseling is Biblical. Proverbs 12:15 tells us that a wise person seeks counsel from others and the foolish person goes through life on their own.

Biblical Counseling applies theology to our everyday lives, trials, and suffering. Sometimes we need the help of someone who has been called and gifted to help us apply the Word of God to a specific situation. Other times, our small group discussions and relationships help each of us navigate life. However, all of us have access to the best counselor available, and we do not need to make an appointment or worry about office hours. Isaiah 9:6 says that Jesus came to be our Wonderful Counselor.

As we look at the life of Jesus, we can look to how Jesus applied theology to His own trials and sufferings. In Matthew 4, we find Jesus hungry, tired, alone, and tempted. Satan seeks to use the things which Jesus, and we, had to experience. Satan tempts Jesus with His hunger and tries to get Jesus to take the easy route and turn rocks into bread. Next, Satan takes Jesus to the top of the temple to jump off to prove who He is. The third temptation tries to tempt Jesus to take the easy way out instead of going to the cross as Satan tries to offer Him something that isn't his to give. At each of these temptations, Jesus doesn't try to debate Satan, blame others, or prove Himself. Instead, Jesus quotes Scripture to combat each of the temptations.

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We can learn from how Jesus handled temptations. The Wonderful Counselor has provided a resource for us to not just “get by” in life but to live life abundantly. However, much like seeing a counselor, we must make time to spend with our Wonderful Counselor in His Word so that His Word can work in our lives.

PRAYER

God, may we be a people that understands that Your counsel is first and foremost found in Your Word to us. Amen.

REFLECTION

- (1) Where do you go to seek counsel? Why?
- (2) Think of a situation where focusing on what scripture teaches could have influenced or changed the outcome. What might have been different?

SUBMITTED BY: ED BARNETT

DAY 35 - 3/25: PRAYER FOR OUR PASTORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

**READ: ACTS 20:28 / 1PETER 5:1-2 / 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2
PSALM 119:10-12 / 1 TIMOTHY 3:4-5 / EPHESIANS 5:22-25**

Years ago, I experienced for the first time the realization of how overwhelming the position of a pastor can be. As I sat alone before my pastor, he poured out to me with emotion the weight of his responsibilities, a never-ceasing flow of care and love that so many in our church family needed.

In our churches today we often forget that our pastors are fragile, fallible people just as we are. They have emotions. They experience joy and suffer discouragement as we do. They have family and financial burdens and responsibilities.

They have physical problems, illnesses, and they are not immune from life's tragedies.

As Christ is the "Great Shepherd," our pastors are specially called to be shepherds to the church. We have been blessed at Perry Hall Baptist with Pastor Dave and Pastor Chris. They are men who are true humble servants. They love each of us and the church. As they pray for each of us and our families, we need to also pray for them and their families. God has called each of us to love our pastors, to be submissive to their leadership, and to pray for them.

PRAY that Pastor Dave and Pastor Chris may always be fierce defenders and Spirit-filled proclaimers of the Word. Ask that there will never be weakness or compromise.

PRAY that our pastors have households that are full of love and respect in all their relationships. Keep in prayer that God helps our pastors to manage their families well. We pray that their children honor their parents and that the home is a safe Christian refuge for them. Put before God that our pastors love their wives as Christ loved the church and may their wives be respectful to them, submitting to their authority as they would submit to the Lord.

PRAY that Pastor Dave and Pastor Chris continue to clothe themselves with the full armor of God and that they are protected from sin and the schemes of the devil. That He guides them in each decision and that all decisions come after prayerful meditation with the Lord and His word.

Our pastors are special gifts to us from the Lord. Just as they feed us and encourage us, we need to do the same for them. Pray that God might continue to energize Pastor Dave and Pastor Chris with the prayerful love and support we pour out to them.

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REFLECTION

- (1) How can you offer special encouragement and visible ways to support our pastors and their families?
- (2) Are you submitting to the spiritual authority of our pastors? Do you have areas of selfishness or grumbling that you need to pray about?

SUBMITTED BY: BOB MEISTERING

DAY 36 - 3/26: "TO DIE IS GAIN?"

READ: JAMES 1:2-4 / GEN 37:12-36 / JOHN 12:20-26 / GEN 50:15-21

Suffering is a very real and present thing in our world today. Sickness, loss of loved ones, loss of a job, failed relationships; every step we take is a reminder of our mortality. Even in the garden, before the Fall, before death entered the world, the tree of knowledge of good and evil seems to be a shadowy picture of how pervasive death might one day be. (Gen. 3:16)

Many of you have dreams, visions, and hopes of things you would love to accomplish for yourself, your loved ones, or the kingdom. You wait eagerly for God to grant you the opportunity that never seems to arrive. Instead, the shadow of death looms in the forms of injury, greed, disease, malice, disasters, and betrayal at the hands of co-workers, neighbors or even, as with Joseph, brothers. How could anyone count such situations as joy?

Do not misunderstand. I am not saying that we are to find joy in suffering and death itself. Proverbs 8:36 teaches that "All who hate [Wisdom] love death", but when we get a broader picture of what God is doing, we can understand where this sort of joy comes from.

In John 12, Jesus, recognizing His time is drawing near, proclaims the coming crucifixion to those around Him saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." (John 12:23). How different must Christ's thinking have been? The church tradition I grew up in has a unique practice of referring to death as being "promoted to glory". The audacity! Could it be? Death? A promotion? In John 12:24 Jesus says, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

To the flesh this is foolishness, a stumbling block, but as God says in Isaiah 55:8, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways." Joseph knew this. That is how, when his father had passed, and his brothers feared his retribution, he comforted them. "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.'" (Gen. 50:19-20)

Like Joseph was thrown into, and brought out of the pit, Jesus was crucified and brought back from the pit of death. Both Joseph and Jesus, with wisdom and discernment, were given authority and rule(d) righteously so that many who should have died would be kept alive. It is precisely this path down, and through, the valley of suffering and death that Christ's passion was fulfilled and His glory revealed. It is the exact path of which Christ says, "If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servants be also." (John 12:26)

Take joy dear brothers and sisters when you meet trials of various kinds remembering that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

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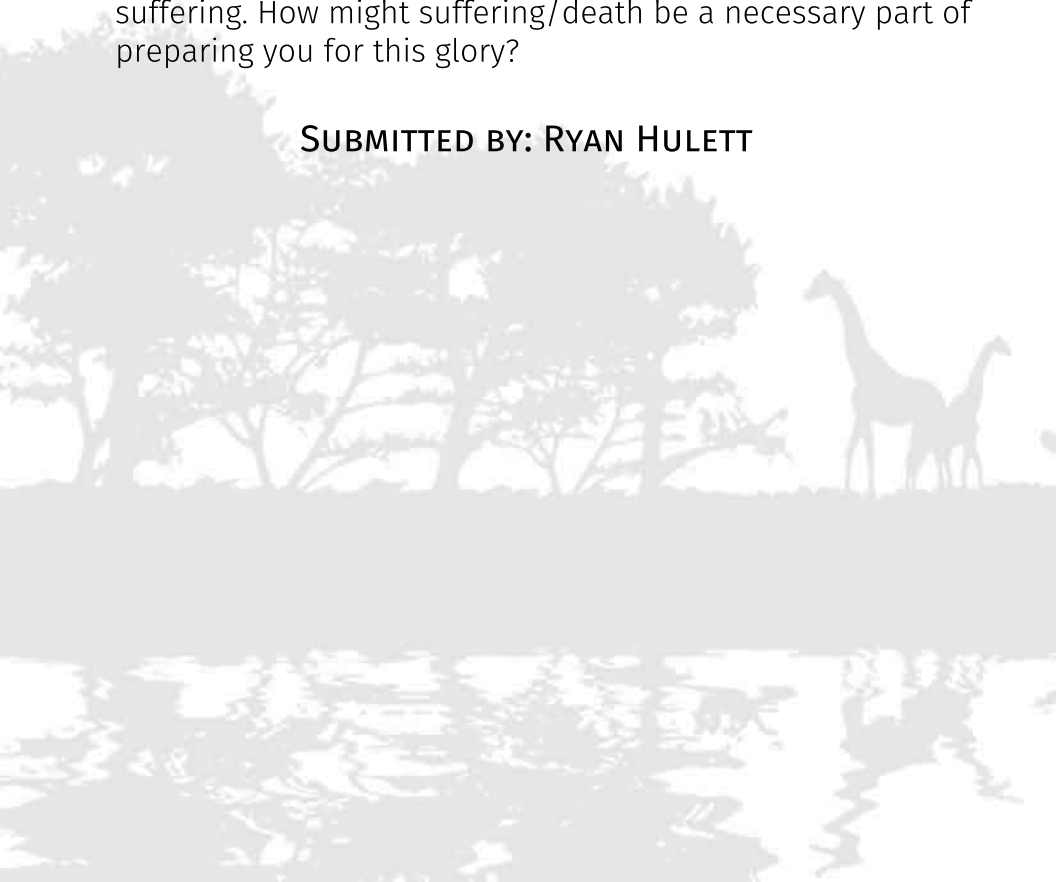
PRAYER

Father, thank you for Your steadfast love and faithfulness. While we may not always know why we must face certain trials, we are confident that if we remain focused on You, You will draw us near and use the circumstance to refine us, preparing us for Your glory. May we always remember You are our hope, peace, and joy. We pray for those who are in a season of suffering, may they find comfort and rest in You.

REFLECTION

- (1) Think of a part of your life that is marked by great suffering. How is this suffering a shadow of death?
- 2.) What is it about suffering and death that causes you the most apprehension?
- 3.) Consider the glory awaiting you on the other side of your suffering. How might suffering/death be a necessary part of preparing you for this glory?

SUBMITTED BY: RYAN HULETT



DAY 37 - 3/27: WHY COMMUNITY?

READ: 1 JOHN 1:7 / JAMES 5:16 / ROMANS 12:5 / GALATIANS 6:2

How do we most often define what it means to be a Christian? One of the most common answers is to be a follower of Christ. To follow Christ, we must look at how He lived when He was on earth for that short amount of time.

Did He isolate Himself, only preaching from a pulpit on the Sabbath? Did He only share the good news with a few, like-minded people? Since He was God incarnate, He certainly didn't need any close relationships while He sojourned here, right? No!

Christ spent His time learning the Scriptures as a youth. He immersed Himself with the people He was sent to save. He built community. If this is the model set before us, why are we so reluctant, as followers of Christ, to imitate the way He interacted with His people?

We know that the obvious first step to Christian community is gathering on Sunday in a place of worship. Most professing Christians do this, at least some of the time, and many make it a priority for weekly Sunday attendance. But are we following Christ's example here? We are commanded to gather as a people in corporate worship, but is that enough? We may go to a Bible study during the week. We may even volunteer at the church in a role that doesn't require much interaction with others. All good things, but why would we need to seek out other settings that require relational intentionality?

For one thing, we need to grow in holiness, a challenging task to do on your own. One may think that this is an individual pursuit, but one of the main roadblocks to holiness is our sin. Our sin does not do well in the light, and when we meet with one another, we include Christ in our company, and sin can be mortified by being exposed by the light.

Being in community allows us to give and receive grace the same way Christ did. God could have just thrown down a Bible to earth and told us how to live; instead, He sent His Son to show us by investing in us and having accountable, deep relationships with His people. We have Him as an example, so let us live in this light.

If you feel like it may be awkward, or if you are an introvert and it may be hard, then you are correct. But not as hard as you may think. We are in community because of our relationship with Christ. Relationships with others come from that common link. I have a pastor friend that was leading a group I was in. He said the hardest part of his week was 10 minutes before the group met at his house, and the best part of his week was 10 minutes after everyone left. Now don't take that the wrong way. He wasn't glad everyone was out of his house! He felt refreshed and renewed that time was spent with other believers, diving into His word, modeling Christ, and developing relationships.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we pray that You put us with other men and women so we can glorify You and pursue Your will together. Open our eyes to Your ways. May we learn from You as an example of how to gather as a community centered around Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen

REFLECTION

- (1) What group, study, or ministry team does Perry Hall Baptist Church offer that you can join?
- (2) Who can you ask to meet with weekly to study a book, the Bible, or just meet up to share life with, in the company of our Lord?

SUBMITTED BY: STEVE HEADLEY

DAY 38 - 3/28: TRANSFERRABLE LIGHT THAT IS SEASONED WITH SALT

**READ: MATTHEW 5:13-16 / JOHN 13:35 / 1 THESSALONIANS 5:14
1 TIMOTHY 4:12 / 1 CORINTHIANS 16:14 / ISAIAH 52:7**

When the Lord shines within you, you glow. When you are seasoned with salt, it creates thirst. It's my prayer, as a Christian teacher working in a public school, this thirst would draw my students and co-workers to the Lord where they can "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8).

As a teacher, I have been given the privilege each day of teaching and molding the hearts and minds of adolescents. Over the past three years of teaching in a public alternative school, my heart has been burdened more than ever to make sure I am being the salt and light in my workplace for my co-workers and students. I also feel the weight of finding ways to give them a glimpse of Christ, to share the gospel, and to point them to Jesus. The public school system can be challenging, especially as our world becomes increasingly like a modern-day Babylon, where things that go against God's design and word are being shoved down teachers' and students' throats. Dark agendas are being executed and sinful behaviors are being tolerated.

It should be our prayer that the Lord uses our Christian teachers to speak words of love and truth to our students and to remind them that they are deeply loved. I love that I get to remind them of who they are and, more importantly, "Whose" they are. As a teacher, the Lord has given me an amazing opportunity to be the salt and light to my students and to give them a glimpse of who He is by experiencing His love, peace, and His presence that fills my classroom. When I allow Him, the Lord works through me by showing me how to be compassionate towards my students, how to be patient, kind


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and gentle, and how to be merciful and understanding with them, just as the Lord is with me. Many times, students come into their schools feeling hopeless and discouraged. How then would I as a teacher, who is a follower of Christ, not want to point them to the One who is our Hope?

As Christians, we have the wonderful privilege of being the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us, planting seeds as we share the good news and allow Him to use us in mighty ways to further His kingdom. Our job is to shine so people see something different in us. They begin to see our hope, peace, and joy as we navigate through life and through the challenges we face. We aren't just sharing ourselves, but we're sharing Jesus who is the light and who is our hope, peace, and joy. As we live authentically for Him, we are a beacon in a dark world, drawing people closer to find out more about this light. The fact that we belong to Christ- that we don't adapt to the system - gives us an influence in our society, and more specifically, our workplace. We are influencing others by our very behavior, be it good or bad, and even when we aren't trying, out comes the salt and on goes the light.

My prayer each day, as I drive to school, is that the Lord will teach me how to live in such a way that brings Him glory and draws those around me closer to Him. I trust the Lord has been purposeful in leading me to this school for such a time. I love that wherever the Lord leads us and places us, He has also equipped us ahead of time for such a task. When we are placed in a challenging job or situation, we must press into Him even more for His strength, guidance, and counsel. Only by remaining focused on Christ, being in His word daily, praying, and being obedient to Him, can we expect to remain the salt and light of the world.



PRAYER

Lord, thank you that You have a purpose for each life You draft. We praise You that we get to be a part of that purpose. May those who we work with, and encounter throughout the day, experience Your love through us in profound and authentic ways. Give us wisdom and boldness in living out our faith and help us to effectively share the good news of salvation through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, we also pray that there will be an open door in the public schools for the Gospel to be shared with students and staff so that we can raise up a generation of people who worship You in spirit and truth.

REFLECTION

- (1) Are you living in such a way where you are being the salt and light to those around you? If you struggle with this, in what ways could you do this more effectively?
- (2) Are you being intentional about praying and asking the Lord to use you in the job that He has provided for you? Do you pray for opportunities where you can have life-changing conversations with those you work with, or surround yourself with, each day?
- (3) Commit to praying for our Christian teachers in the public school system that they would be a light to their students and co-workers. Commit also to praying for the students who attend the public schools, that the Lord would protect their innocence and preserve the spark in their eyes from the darkness of the world and that He would guard them from the devil's schemes, protecting their minds from things not appropriate for their eyes to see and ears to hear.

SUBMITTED BY: KATIE BULLINGER





DAY 39 - 3/29: GOING DEEPER

READ: PSALM 119

A friend and I were talking about the time he'd attended his high school friend's 40th birthday party. He shared that she was always encouraging him to take a step further in his relationship with Jesus. He noted that once he felt like he'd gotten "there", he'd look up only to find her standing in deeper waters. "See, come on! You can do it! This is the way," she'd urge.

With a mixture of emotions, he continued. He found that his desire for a growing relationship with the Lord gave him the motivation to continue navigating deeper and deeper waters.

King David had that desire. We need only to open the Scriptures to see how he was continuously examining his heart. We find him crying out to the Lord in prayers and song to mold him, to refine him, and to make him the man God purposed him to be.

Did you know that some scholars believe David wrote Psalm 119 over the course of his lifetime? When you dig into the psalm, you see it is filled with emotion. It ebbs and flows with worship and praise, feelings of abandonment, pleas for help, a desire to be saved, and a request for the Lord to do a mighty work within him. Over and over, he sings of the attributes of God. He asks God to help him hate what God hates, to meditate on His word, and to delight in His law. David recognizes his own limitations and that he needs the LORD to cause him to turn from, and to, these things. He seeks with a genuine heart the nearness of the LORD. Yahweh. I AM.

If scholars are correct, and David did write this psalm over his lifetime, it makes sense. We see the progression of his prayers, as his walk with the Lord continues. Oh, brothers and sisters, might this also be the desire of our hearts!

In verses 169-170 David says, "Let my cry come before you, O LORD; give me understanding according to your word! Let my plea come before you; deliver me according to your word." David is coming before Yahweh, desiring not simply understanding, as we know the word to mean. More than that, he desired wisdom and guidance, which cannot come from oneself, but can only be found in the Lord.

At the close of the longest chapter in the Bible, in verses 173-176, David goes on, as if to say that what he knows of the Lord is not enough. He wants to know the Lord even more deeply. After 176 verses, after a lifetime of worship of the LORD, his heart is still longing for more. He recognizes that knowing God is not something to be done quickly and easily. Not only is it a life-long pursuit, but one that will go through eternity because the depth of Yahweh is like a limitless well. Go through the deep waters. You can do it. Keep going deeper.

PRAYER

Father, You have promised to draw near to those who draw near to You. Help us to desire spending time in Your Word each day so that we can grow deeper in love with You. Let us share David's longing in Psalm 27:4 when he says, "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple." May this be the desire of our hearts.

REFLECTION

- (1) Do you have a friend who encourages you to go deeper in your relationship with the Lord? Are you this friend to someone else?
- (2) Does the deepest part of your heart desire to know the Lord in new ways each day?

SUBMITTED BY: ANONYMOUS

DAY 40 - 3/30: THE MATTER OF TIME

READ: PSALM 90 / EPHESIANS 5:1-21

Congratulations! We made it! I hope the past 40 days has strengthened your prayer muscles and reminded you of how good it is to be side by side with your brothers and sisters before the throne. Lord, hear our prayers! Now we get to wait on God as He shows us His answers to the prayers of His people. May we feel His hand of blessing on our church and families as 2023 unfolds!

As we wrap up 40 days dedicated to unified prayer, I am struck that there is nearly one week remaining in 2023 for every day we spent in prayer. Before we know it, we will be wearing New Year's party hats, and somebody will say, "Wow, the days are long, but the years are short." And all the hopes, fears, possibilities, successes, and failures of the year will seem to have flown by. Maybe even *passed* us by if we are not intentional. Life seems to alternate between celebration, sorrow, and a flat-out *grind*.

Enter Moses, in Psalm 90. Consider the highs and lows of this man's life. 40 years (14,600 days) in the desert, leading a bunch of grumblers, a people who seemed to have forgotten that they saw the God of creation supernaturally intervene into their lives and pluck them from slavery! We can become so caught up in both the profound and mundane struggles of life that the days drip through our fingers like a handful of water that ends up useless on the kitchen floor. And we easily forget that we, too, are a people rescued from slavery.

"So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12) Remind us how to be satisfied as we pause every morning to consider Your love, Father. Help us to see our sufferings as the catalyst for heart change that You promise them to be.

Teach us to see the passage of time in light of the eternity You have planned for us. Establish the work of our hands! Let us see the work of the day – from the ‘gourmet’ oatmeal served to toddlers, to the toilet in need of a plunge, to the phone call from the friend who always seems to require a little extra grace – as a mysterious and intentional part of Your iron-clad commitment to transform us into the likeness of Your Son!

Life typically takes place in the lulls between the peaks and valleys. Especially in these mundane moments, Paul reminds us to, “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15-16) The God who rules outside of time has set us into mortal coils that have – at best – 70 or 80 years on this earth.

Let’s not just count the days, let’s make the days count. May the past 40 days have reinvigorated your prayer habits. May you begin each day expectantly, seeing the grace in God having woke you up for His kingdom and in His service for another 24 hours. May you wake up tomorrow, day 41, and ask your Father in Heaven, “What do you have for me today, Lord? You own me, my time, and my plans, for You have bought me with a price.” With a plunger or toddler-sized spoon of oatmeal in hand, may each of ask, “How may I serve You, my King?”

REFLECTION

- (1) What question can you take to the Lord each day to help you remember that the next 24 hours belongs to Him and his purposes?
- (2) What aspect of your daily routine needs to be renovated with a heart of wisdom?

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