



GREAT ADVENTURE

PRAYER GUIDE 2019



HILL COUNTRY
BIBLE CHURCH



GREAT ADVENTURE

This Great Adventure Prayer Guide runs from June 10 – July 5, 2019, which is the time from the Night of Prayer to the kick off of Back Yard Bible Clubs and Xtreme Adventure.

Our hope and prayer as you engage in this Prayer Guide is that you'll be compelled to pray deeply for all those participating in the Great Adventure — hosts, drivers, volunteer leaders, staff, and the children and students attending events including mission trips. Each year, we pray that both youth and adults will come to know and love Jesus. And this year is no exception. We're devoted to saturating greater Austin with the love of Jesus, spanning all generations.

Thank you for joining with us in praying for this special and powerful annual program.

MONDAY, JUNE 10 | WEEK 1 THEME: LOVE

Week 1 Song Suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgdy0-cetuW>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UruRQwl8pRE>

Read: 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part,¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Devotion:

Verses 1-3 makes it clear that love is the central component in Christian service. It is the foundation upon which every “good work” is based. In fact, works done out of any other motive (i.e. fear, desire for approval, or guilt) do little or no “good.” How does that make you feel about the things you are investing in right now? Do you love doing those things? Would you still invest your life there, knowing that the acts themselves add nothing to your relationship with God? If God does not want or need your best efforts, or even your money, what does He want? Matthew 22:34 says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.” God loves us so much and He wants us for our own sake, not for what we can do for Him. 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because He first loved us.” Before we can give anything “good” to God we must recognize and receive His love for us. His love must be our motivation. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 again.

Journal:

- Reflect on how much love God has given you. Do you reflect that love back to Him?
- Has the love and joy you first felt when you accepted Christ been replaced by duty, guilt or fear?
- Have you never received the truth of God’s love for you? What would keep you from accepting Him today?

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

Read: 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Devotion:

These verses define what love is and what it isn't. 1 John 4:8 tells us that God is love. Love is the defining characteristic of God and 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 is the definition of love, therefore; God is and is not each of these statements. Think back over your life, where has God shown you kindness and patience? When has God waited quietly in the background while you were enjoying the praise and attention of the world? Do you know that God is not angry with you? Not even a little. If you have angry voices that haunt you, do you know that those are not from God? He only desires good for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember the times when God spoke truth to you and protected you. Does it surprise you to think that God trusts you? He has hope in you.

Journal:

Spend today journaling on all the ways that you have experienced and enjoyed God's love in your life. If you cannot believe that He truly loves you this way, ask Him to show you how He has always been with you.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

Week 1 Song Suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgdy0-cetuW>

Read: 1 Corinthians 13: 10-12

¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Devotion:

Love Never Fails! That is a great promise, but if love never fails, then love has a goal. God has hopes and dreams and aspirations for you. On Monday, we discovered that God wants a love relationship with us, more than He wants worker bees out dutifully doing “good” things for Him. His love will not fail, but not fail at what? What is the aim of this love relationship? Verses 10-12 give us three versions of one answer: in verse 10, the answer is completeness. Right now, we might be able to understand that part. Love will not fail to give us Completeness if we trust Him. In verse 11 it is “adulthood.” In this life our perspective is childlike and simple, but Love will not fail to grow us up into adulthood, if we surrender to His discipline. In verse 12, the promise is intimacy, right now our knowledge of God is shallow and two-dimensional, like an image in a mirror, but Love will not fail to bring us home where we can touch the face of Him and not just the reflection of Him.

Journal:

Today, journal about what love desires to accomplish. God will give you the faith to trust Him, but you must decide to activate that faith. Can you set aside the frustrations of today and live by faith in the hope that Love will not fail to give you all of Himself?

THURSDAY, JUNE 13

Week 1 Song Suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgdy0-cetuW>

Read: 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part,¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Devotion:

On Monday, you looked at the things you are pursuing, your work, ministry, and relationships and examined your motives. On that day we were looking to lay down things that may have seemed good, but were rooted in wrong motives. Today, look at the things you are pursuing and ask yourself, "Where do I see God at work?" You will know that God is at work if you feel genuine love. Because God loves us, He wants each of us to know Him and experience Him; therefore, He invites each of us to join Him in something that He loves. What work would you do even if you were never paid or recognized for doing it? What people do you love so much you want to see them succeed, even if they never know your name? What hurts and injustices would you suffer pain over if it brought someone else comfort? These opportunities are as much His gift of Himself to us, as they are our gift of obedience to Him.

Journal:

Where is God inviting you to be with Him in what He is doing?

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

Week 1 Song Suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgdy0-cetuW>

Read: 1 Corinthians 13

Devotion:

Reread your journal entries from this week. Anywhere the Lord has spoken to you, stop and really listen to what He is saying. Don't let those words of truth, encouragement, and love fade away and be forgotten. Pray over them and ask Him to help you make them real and living prophecies in your life. Worship and thank Him for His presence and faithfulness.

Journal:

What are the most important things you and God have discussed this week?

MONDAY, JUNE 17 | WEEK 2 THEME: PLANTING SEEDS

Week 2 Song Suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qexh7DOtrsI>

Read: Matthew 13:1-15

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed.⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

¹⁰ The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

¹¹ He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.¹² Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.¹⁵ For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.

Devotion:

In his book Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby says, “God is always at work around you. . . When you see Him at work, it is your invitation to join Him where He is working.” In this parable Jesus is showing us that God is working in all of our lives, but many of us fail to recognize the opportunities that He gives us to partner with Him. God puts great faith in seeds. Seeds are small things, and once planted they can get lost. It can be hard to tell sometimes if anything good came from a seed that is planted, but the promise of the seed, the hope of a seed, is that it will grow and multiply and become many seeds. Some of God’s opportunities, some of His words to us, are very small subtle things, but they have God-sized potential behind them. In this parable, Jesus says that many will receive opportunities, but only a few will multiply those opportunities and see God-sized results. The difference is that some of us are looking and listening for God to be at work around us, and many of us are not. Right now, ask God to forgive you for the opportunities that you have missed in the past. Pray that today will be a new day.

Journal:

What opportunities around you today has God put before you?

TUESDAY, JUNE 18

Read: Matthew 13:16-23

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸ "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Devotion:

Today, we read the explanation of the parable. Look particularly at the first group of people, those who are like seed sown on a path. They missed out because they didn't understand. A path is trodden on and worn down until it doesn't even look like soil anymore. It is as hard as a rock. When the seed falls on the soil it is so light and tiny. The path is oblivious to what weighty potential is held inside. It doesn't nurture the seed like the good soil does. It's too burdened down with heavy things. Today, ask God to show you the heavy things that are keeping you from having hope in the really great things that He is doing. Are there burdens? Is there sin? Have you just become jaded by the constant rush of life? Has it made you hard and indifferent to what God is doing? Does change seem impossible?

Journal:

Whatever the Lord brings to mind today, confess it and give it back to God. Let go of what is holding you down. Ask Him to show you one open door; one thing that can move and change in your life today?

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19

Read: Matthew 13: 20-21

²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Devotion:

As you read this parable again, did you notice anything new? Is it becoming more and more familiar? Ask God to continue to speak to you through His word. The second group of people is the rocky soil. They receive the “message of the kingdom” joyfully, but they have no root, and so when it gets hard, they give up and move on to something else. Roots are what hold a plant upright and in place. They branch out throughout the soil in order to have a firm footing and to reach as many nutrients as possible. If the seed is God’s message, and your heart and mind are the soil, then how has God’s message worked His way through every area of your life? What areas have no sense of His presence at all? 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because He first loved us.” If this is true, then you cannot establish deep roots with God in areas where you do not receive His love.

Journal:

Where are you doubting God’s love for you? Ask Him to reveal His love to you in those areas.

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

Read: Matthew 13: 22-23

²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Devotion:

The third group of people are full of thorns. These people have the same opportunities to receive God's love and kingdom message into their lives, but their lives are already spread out and given away to a myriad of other things. Worries and wealth, these can seem like very crucial pursuits, but when compared to an eternity in God's presence, they are seen as thorns and weeds, nearly worthless. It may be a hard thing to do, but today, take some time to prayerfully look at what you are giving your heart, your time and your money to. Are they precious opportunities, or are they merely temporary pastimes consuming your life? It can be hard sometimes to know if something is an obstacle that must be persevered through or a thorn causing needless pain. Ask God what things to endure with faith and patience and what things to uproot from your life so that you can experience the freedom of being His and not a slave to money and material things. The good soil receives the seed, understands the message, and produces a crop. This is not an automatic thing. Just because you are a Christian, does not mean these things will be true of you.

Journal:

To be good soil we must constantly be examining our hearts and minds and asking, "Where can I make more room for God?" How can I soften and prepare more of my heart for God to branch out and lay down roots in every area of life? How can I give Him even more freedom to grow His message in the parts of the world that I visit today?

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

Read: Matthew 13:1-23

Devotion:

Reread your journal entries from this week. Anywhere the Lord has spoken to you, stop and really listen to what He is saying. Don't let those words of truth, encouragement and love fade away and be forgotten. Pray over them and ask Him to help you make them real and living prophecies in your life. Worship and thank Him for His presence and faithfulness.

Journal:

What are the most important things you and God have discussed this week?

MONDAY, JUNE 24 | WEEK 3 THEME: COMMUNITY

Week 3 Song Suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5be3vovh3l4&index=3&list=PLLuJudzXLkP3x2dK-8Kg-N9I3lV9lU1mtq>

Read: John 17

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

⁶ “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word.⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of[b] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by[c] that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.¹⁷ Sanctify them by[d] the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.²⁶ I have made you[e] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

MONDAY, JUNE 24 | WEEK 3 THEME: COMMUNITY --- *CONTINUED*

Devotion:

Jesus uses the word glory or glorify five times in verses 1-5. Jesus prays for glory, but not for Himself. He asks to be glorified, so that the Father will receive glory. He knows that our only hope is to know the Father and find life in Him. The glory Jesus seeks is not self-serving, but so that God's goodness will be known, and in knowing Him, many will be saved. Jesus prays this prayer not long before being arrested. He knows that what is about to happen will not look glorious at first. It will be hard and ugly, but through that, eternal life will be given to many, and God the Father will be proven good, gracious, and kind. Many times, we talk about fellowship or community, but we mean, finding a place I like, where the teaching is interesting, the music suits my tastes, but when Jesus prayed, He was seeking a community that would cost Him a lot.

Journal:

Journal today about what true community looks like in your life.

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

Read: John 17: 6-12 | Jesus Prays for His Disciples

⁶ “I have revealed you[a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of[b] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by[c] that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

Devotion:

Jesus' disciples believed because Jesus took the time to reveal who God was to them. He drew them into community with Himself. He did that by giving them the Father's words, protecting them, and watching over them. This is our example. God gives us the message of Jesus. That message takes root in our hearts and saves our lives, so let's reveal the Father, give His Words away, and watch and protect our new friends until the roots are established. This is how Jesus tended God's "harvest field."

Journal:

Who might God be wanting you to reveal Him to?

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

Read: John 17: 13 -19

¹³ "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by[a] the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Devotion:

In verses 13-19 Jesus talks of the world. He says the world will hate us because of the truth of God's word growing in our hearts. He says we are not of the world, but we are in it. He expressly says that He is not asking for us to be taken out of the world, but rather protected from evil in the world. Then He talks about being sanctified, as He is sanctified. To be sanctified is to be set aside as something sacred. We experience a sacred communion with God. We are given the opportunity to be a part of that community, but not everything in the world can join that community. Evil exists in the world and its words, thoughts and attitudes are not based on Truth. God's Word is Truth. This passage reveals two perils. One that we will go out into the world and become corrupted by its idols. Ask God to guard the soil of your heart, so that nothing takes root, except Jesus, and Jesus takes root everywhere. The other is that we will hide from the world and put up blinders to the world dying all around us. Ask God to show you the "world" you need to face. Ask Him to reveal, how you may be trying to escape the world and leave it behind.

Journal:

What are the idols in your life that may be pulling you away from God and into the world?

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

Read: John 17: 20-26

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you[a] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Devotion:

Verses 20-26 focus on unity. That God's love is in Christ and Christ is in us and we are all one. Jesus even prays that we may have "complete unity." Unity in Christ is how the world will know that God is real, and that Jesus is His Son. The world talks about unity, but it always looks like tyranny. Cults and dictators force everyone to be the same, but that is not Jesus' way. Love is what binds the church together. When we each love Jesus more than our comfort, or possessions, our security, or our own sense of importance, that's when the Message takes center stage, and the world really gets a chance to hear it.

Journal:

Spend time with God today. Ask Him to open your eyes to what others bring into your life, even the things that may seem annoying at first. What petty grievances can you let go of today? What adjustments can you make to be more of a servant to your pastor and elders?

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

Read: John 17

Devotion:

Reread your journal entries from this week. Anywhere the Lord has spoken to you, stop and really listen to what He is saying. Don't let those words of truth, encouragement, and love fade away and be forgotten. Pray over them and ask Him to help you make them real and living prophecies in your life. Worship and thank Him for His presence and faithfulness.

Journal:

What are the most important things you and God have discussed this week?

MONDAY, JULY 1 | WEEK 4 THEME: SURRENDER

Week 4 Song Suggestion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgsqfjRslzA>

Read: Matthew 6

Giving to the Needy

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

MONDAY, JULY 1 | WEEK 4 THEME: SURRENDER --- CONTINUED

Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,[c] your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy,[d] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Do Not Worry

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[e]?

²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Devotion:

This chapter begins by telling us not to practice “your righteousness” in self-serving ways and ends exhorting us to “seek His kingdom and His righteousness.” It is an interesting contrast. So much of what we think makes us “good” does not impress God who knows us better than we know ourselves. When someone called Jesus “good,” He replied “why do you call me good, there is no one good, except God.” It’s pride that makes us want to be liked, admired, approved of. But Jesus says that rewards await those who put God and His good at the center of all we do, without thinking about what other people think or what it costs us in material things. When we are in Christ, we are accepted because He is. We don’t have to be good, or do good, but in Him we are good.

Journal:

Ask God today to show you what you could do just for Him, for His sake. How can you surrender your own good, in pursuit of His good?

TUESDAY, JULY 2

Read: Matthew 6

² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Devotion:

Verse 2 says "when you give." Are you giving? It doesn't say "if you give" but "when." We live in an activist culture. There is someone raising support for a cause on every corner, an add or phone call with a plug for something everywhere you turn. Are you giving? How do you give, and why do you give when you do? "When you give... give in secret." Jesus says don't let one hand know what the other hand is doing. How is that even possible? How can I give so that even I don't see and congratulate myself? It's a tall order. First, the ability to give is a reason for gratitude to God, not a reason to feel good about ourselves. Second, we are bought with a price, we belong to Jesus. When we give, we don't give out of our goodness, but as His representative.

Journal:

How are you giving? How are you giving of your resources, time, and talents?

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3

Read: Matthew 6: 5-18

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.
⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,[a]
but deliver us from the evil one.[b]'

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Devotion:

When you pray and fast, do you use it for your own good? Do you grandstand and make the most of the opportunity? Does your left ear tell your right one how "spiritual" you are? It is interesting that verses 1-4 were about using our response to the needs of others in a self-serving way, but these verses are about using our neediness in a self-serving way. Isn't it interesting that we can do both? We can take pride in being generous to the poor, and pride in being poor and in need of God's daily provision, forgiveness, and protection. Surrender the facade that you have it all together.

Jesus' prayer establishes the right heart of prayer, because it puts God, His kingdom and righteousness first, then it acknowledges that our bread, our righteousness, and our safety all come from God. Hallelujah! Rest today in knowing that God has you.

Journal:

Journal today about your security in Him and how he provides all you need.

THURSDAY, JULY 4

Read: Matthew 6: 25-34

Do Not Worry

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Devotion:

Do not worry! Jesus refers to pagans a couple of times in this chapter. Pagans are motivated by fear. They serve capricious gods who bless and curse on a whim, therefore they must pray very hard to get their approval and hoard and guard what they have for fear there won't be any more for tomorrow. Interestingly in verse 22 the word translated healthy, could be translated generous—"if your eye is generous, then the whole body has light." In verse 23 the word for unhealthy could also be translated stingy—"if your eye is stingy, your whole body is in darkness." Jesus wants us to know that God is full of light. His eye is healthy. He is generous so don't worry. We don't serve the kind of god (little g) that the pagans do.

Journal:

We serve a God (big G) whose name is Generous, Light, Good Father! Talk to God today about your worries, ask Him how you can seek Him instead of letting fear control you. How can you surrender your need for control?

FRIDAY, JULY 5

Read: Matthew 6

Devotion:

Reread your journal entries from this week. Anywhere the Lord has spoken to you, stop and really listen to what He is saying. Don't let those words of truth, encouragement, and love fade away and be forgotten. Pray over them and ask Him to help you make them real and living prophecies in your life. Worship and thank Him for His presence and faithfulness.

Journal:

What are the most important things you and God have discussed this week?



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