

Week 30 Daily Devotional

I. Prayer to enter the Lord's presence:

Be still for a moment. "Lord, I give the day that is now past to you. It is yours. I give the day that is to come to you; help me to see where you are working and to join you there. Speak to me during these moments. I commit them and myself to you."

II. Prayer of Confession:

"Lord, you are faithful to forgive me and cleanse me of my sin when I confess it to you. I confess my sin(s) of _____. Thank you for forgiveness." (1 John 1:9)

III. Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Choose to be thankful, speak out loud of what God has done.

"Thank you, Father, for _____. Fill my heart and my mouth with gratitude throughout this day."

IV. Scripture Reflection

Day 1

Read

Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?

Genesis 18:25

Reflect

In this prayer, Abraham intercedes (pleads on behalf of) for the city of Sodom. It was a city known for its wickedness, but Abraham asks God to spare the city if righteous people are found within it. The fact that God is wholly just is a given for Abraham. He doesn't question *if* God is just— he *knows* God is just — and on that basis, he pleads for God to act justly. For God to “do right” in this situation would be to show mercy and compassion on those in the city. Surely, the God of all the earth will justly show mercy, even amid such wickedness.

Respond

Abraham's prayer did not question God's character, it was a faith-filled prayer of trust *in* God's character. Are you questioning God or trusting God? If you're struggling with trusting, ask him for faith to trust in his goodness.

Day 2

Read

By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. Romans 8:3

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. Ephesians 2:14

Reflect

The cross is where God's retributive and restorative justice meet. Retribution has to do with punishment of sin. Restoration has to do with relationships. God's justice carries both meanings: it's Romans 8 **and** Ephesians 2. In order for God to truly be holy and righteous, sin must not go unpunished. Jesus sacrificed himself for us through his substitutionary death on the cross (Romans 8:3). At the same time, he makes us "one" and restores us to relationship with himself (Ephesians 2:14). That's the nature of atonement. God punishes sin and makes us one (at-one-ment) with him. A cruciform view of justice includes punishment but goes beyond punishment to include the restoration and healing of relationships.

Respond

Thank God for the cross. Thank him for not only forgiving your sin but for including you in relationship with him. Is there strife in your different relationships right now? Confess sin, acknowledge where you might be in the wrong, and strive for reconciliation.

Day 3

Read

But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Genesis 39:21

Reflect

Joseph experienced many injustices: betrayal, sold into slavery, recipient of racist false accusations, wrongly condemned in prison. Yet, this verse tells us God was with him and showed him steadfast love. This tells us something very unique about God's character. God is willing to stand in solidarity with us in our suffering. He is willing to enter into our injustices. He is willing to enter into that place of suffering with us. There is no other religion in the world where God would do this. When we suffer, we don't want a philosophical answer, we want to know that God is "with us."

Respond

Sometimes we don't know why God allows certain trials in our lives but we do know that he is with us. All of us have pain in our lives; for some of us it's right in front of our faces and for others, it might be more distant, but it's still there. Remember that God is with you. Imagine him sitting with you right now. Trust and know that he is good and faithful.

Day 4

Read

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalm 13

Reflect

Lament is a type of prayer seen throughout all the psalms. Lament expresses inner turmoil. Often, it is easy to lament when you are suffering, but it can be awkward when things are going well for you. However, biblical lament is also way to "weep with those who weep," to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering. Biblical lament is not just expressing inner turmoil or showing empathy, however. Ultimately, lament is an expression of confident trust in God's goodness. This psalm begins with a complaint but ends on a note of trust.

Respond

Who in your life is suffering, experiencing pain or hardship? Lament with them. How can you be faithfully present to them? Are you experiencing pain or a trial right now? Let your prayer of pain be an expression of trusting God.

Day 5

Read

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.
Habakkuk 2:14

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Amos 5:24

Reflect

The nature of Christian hope is future-oriented. It is oriented toward the “eschaton,” or “the end.” We’re looking forward to the fullness of God’s kingdom, when all that is wrong in the world shall be put to right. God’s kingdom is already and not yet. It’s here in part but not yet here in fullness. His work of restoration has begun but it’s not yet been finished. These prophets had a forward-looking faith. They viewed their lives in the present in light of the hope of what God would accomplish in the future. They lived with the end in mind. They truly lived in line with what matters most. What matters most in the end matters most now.

Respond

Remembering what matters most in the end trains us to reject the trivial things that don’t matter now. What false gospels or false idols are you living for now? All of it pales in comparison to the hope that awaits us. Repent of it and look forward to our hope. Be reminded of what truly matters. Stop living for the fleeting things of the world that are passing away. Abide in him.

V. Prayer for others:

Pray specifically for the concerns of your life and the lives of others.

VI. Prayer of commitment:

“Lord God, I commit to love you with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind and to love my neighbor as myself. Empower me today to love you and others with everything that I am.” (Luke 10:27)

This Month's Scripture Memory:

Philippians 4:4-8

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.