

LENT 2010

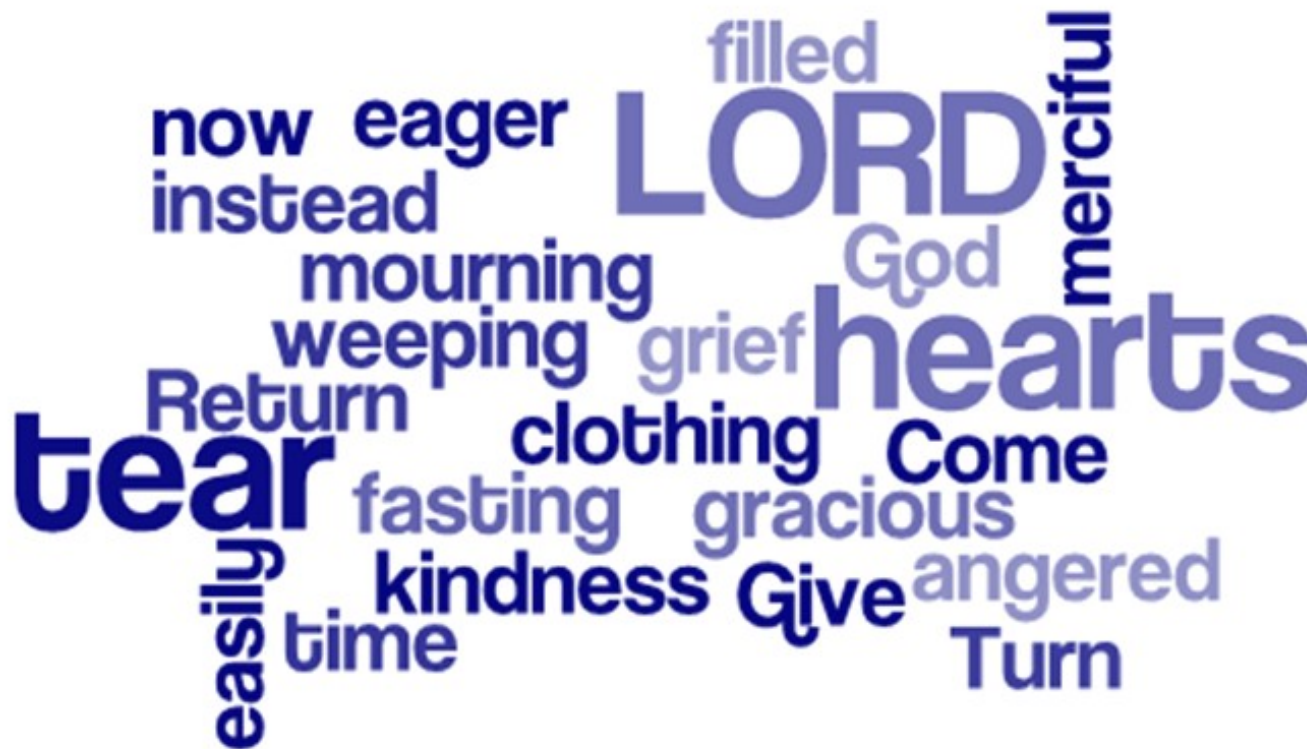
PRAYER GUIDE

FEB 17-
APRIL 3

WEST U
METHODIST
3611
UNIVERSITY
BLVD,
77005

- Take time to make room for God.

More info:
www.westumethodist.org



Joel 2:12-13 (NLT)
created at www.wordle.net

Following Jesus up the Mountain

From Wednesday, February 17th until Saturday, April 3rd you are invited to follow Jesus up the mountain toward the cross. In ancient times, when worshippers went up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord at the time of Passover, they would sing and pray to aide in their journey. This Lenten season, resolve now that you will endeavor to make room for the Holy Spirit to do a new thing within you by meditating on scripture and praying daily. This guide is designed to offer you a path of ascent for the next 40 days. You will be equipped with a Bible passage and a prayer to pray along each step of the way. Mark off a time and a sacred space each day for yourself (and a group of family and/or friends, if possible) to discover God in the biblical text and in prayer.



Mt. Zion, Israel

WEEK 1

Feb 17, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

2 Corinthians 5:20- 6:2

We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. As God's partners, we beg you not to reject this marvelous message of God's great kindness. For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation. (New Living Translation, NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

¹Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Partnering God and loving Father, you are merciful and good! You are compassionate, kind and gracious! Thank you for standing ever ready to clean us up from the mess of our destructive decisions and our woeful mistakes.

Today, Jesus, I desire to be a positive ambassador for you. I desire to speak your truth in love to those around me by living a life that imitates you. I ask for your help because you say you are there to help me. I ask for you to save me from myself, the effects of stress, fear, anxiety and guilt, because you have said that "Today is the day of salvation." By faith, I grasp on to your peaceful presence in my life.

Holy Spirit, help me to walk by faith. Help me to be aware of you in my daily life and to be aware that how I live— what I say, do, and think--affects those around me.

Please forgive me for the times I have fallen short of living like you. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Holy God, there is none like you in the entire universe. You are the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. You are the creator, provider and sustainer of all things. In Jesus' name, amen.

¹ All prayers in this guide are based on various Psalm texts and/or on Jesus' Model Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). For more information please see: *Praying to Change Your Life* (2009), by Pastor Suzette T. Caldwell.

WEEK 1

Feb 18, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

"Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between prosperity and disaster, between life and death. I have commanded you today to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, laws, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and become a great nation, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy. "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, that you and your descendants might live! Choose to love the LORD your God and to obey him and commit yourself to him, for he is your life. Then you will live long in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Our great Father, you are awesome and mighty! You are the one who watches over all our ways! Thank you for creating us in your image. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for creating us with free will so that we may choose to love you back.

I pray to accomplish your will and ways in the earth. I ask, Lord Jesus, that you would guide my steps in the paths of your right ways; that you would direct my path. Help me to not be distracted by voices that call me away from following after you. Let me listen only to your beautiful song. Please drown out the noise of my life in the pleasant ways of your love.

Holy Spirit, increase my faith. Give me the strength to remove things from my life that are attachments or addictions that pull me away from experiencing the fullness of your presence and joy. (con't next page ↩)

LENT 2010

PRAYER GUIDE

WEEK 1

Please forgive me for when I followed the Pied Piper of unholy desire, and chosen to escort “death” rather than “life” into my thoughts, words and deeds. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Holy God, you are the beginning and the end of all things; the alpha and the omega. You are the God of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel. You are faithful to all generations who call you blessed! In Jesus’ name, amen.

JOURNAL SPACE:



WEEK 1

Feb 19, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 9:14-15

Then the disciples of John [the Immerser] came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Our merciful Father, you are full of grace and glory! You are the one who knows the real truth about every human heart! Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your presence. Thank you for bearing with fickle humanity.

I pray, Jesus, to be honest with myself about myself: to look into the mirror or your way and your truth. I seek to allow you to plumb the inner depths of my imagination. Set my heart up right. Move in and make all things new. Give me the integrity to stop following my own agenda while I say that I am serving you.

Holy Spirit, cleanse my heart. Wean me from depending on things and people that blur my clear vision of you.

Please forgive me for when I have merely gone through the motions and fulfilled religious duties instead of simply seeking to rejoice in your loving presence. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Holy God, you are Reality. You are the bridegroom joyously declaring his love! You are One God, seeking every day for hearts turned toward you! In Jesus' name, amen.

LENT 2010
P R A Y E R G U I D E

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 1

Feb 20, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Isaiah 58:9-14

"Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; You will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom will become like midday. "And the LORD will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. "Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, The restorer of the streets in which to dwell. "If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot From doing your own pleasure on My holy day, And call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, And honor it, desisting from your own ways, From seeking your own pleasure And speaking your own word, Then you will take delight in the LORD, And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth ; And I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Psalm 86:

Incline Your ear, O LORD, and answer me; For I am afflicted and needy. Preserve my soul, for I endeavor to be a godly person! O You my God, save the one who serves you and trusts in You. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You I cry all day long. Make glad my soul glad, for to You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and give heed to the voice of my supplications ! In the day of my trouble I shall call upon You, for You will answer me. There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours.

All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And they shall glorify Your name. For You are great and do wondrous deeds ; You alone are God. (con't next page👉)

LENT 2010

PRAYER GUIDE

WEEK 1

Teach me Your way, O LORD ; I will walk in Your truth ; Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever. For Your lovingkindness toward me is great, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of death itself. You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. Turn to me, and be gracious to me; Oh grant Your strength to Your servant. Show me a sign for good, that those who don't care a thing about me may see your goodness and be ashamed, because You, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me. Through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Journal Space:



WEEK 2

Feb 21, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Romans 10:8-13

But what does [another scripture portion] say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, in your mouth and in your heart "-that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek ; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Creator God, our perfect Parent, whose ways are not our ways nor are your thoughts our thoughts. You are wholly "other." It is you who has made us, and not we ourselves. Thank you for being a nurturing Mother and a providing Father. Thank you for caring for both the minutia and the grand things of life.

Lord Jesus, I ask for your Kingdom to come to earth, and for your will to be done with the same veracity as it is done in your direct presence. Make me a gracious conduit of your blessings and ways to those around me. Stand guard over my mouth. May I speak only at your prompting, knowing that a wise person saves their tongue for constructive words. Help me to see others at you see them, no matter how much they might occasionally annoy me!

May I know your presence with me, Holy Spirit, when things do not go the way I planned. Whisper calm assurance into the chaos of my soul. (☞)

WEEK 2

Forgive me for wandering from your narrow way. Forgive me for thinking myself better than another person made in your image. for when I have merely gone through the motions and fulfilled religious duties instead of simply seeking to rejoice in your loving presence. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Holy God, you are Reality. You are the bridegroom joyously declaring his love! You are One God, seeking every day for hearts turned toward you! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Space:



WEEK 2

Feb 22, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 16:13-19

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." Then he asked them, "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you lock on earth will be locked in heaven, and whatever you open on earth will be opened in heaven." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Our Father, you are the Comforter, you are the One who satisfies our deepest desires and feeds us in the green pastures of your presence. Thank you for offering us a place to rest and for being attentive to our needs.

Good Shepherd, Lord Jesus Christ, we recognize you as Messiah, the Chosen and Anointed One. Give us willing hearts to become obedient members of your flock. Tend us with the rod of your just correction and with the staff of your wondrous love. Be our Gate. Keep us safe from seen and unseen dangers. Remind us of your presence even when we walk through dark and mysterious circumstances. (☞)

LENT 2010

P R A Y E R G U I D E

WEEK 2

Forgive us when we seem more willing to worry and snap at our fellow “sheep,” than to trust you and seek rest in you. Forgive us when we go astray; when we insist on doing things our own way. Forgive us when we do not take time to slow down and ask for your guidance. Holy Spirit, remind us of who we need to forgive, and help us to forgive others.

Help us not to yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

Beautiful Lord, you are the provider of all good things. You are ever faithful. You are eternally vigilant; you neither slumber nor sleep. You are the creator of rest and comfort and hope. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Journal Space:



WEEK 2

Feb 23, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Isaiah 55:10-11

"The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it. "

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Gracious Father, I glorify your name! I extol your greatness! You are the Creator: the One who sees; the One who hears; the One who makes all things new! Thank you for caring about me. Thank you for loving me and liking me.

Lord Jesus, please help me *not* to be a hindrance to what your word desires to accomplish in the earth, but rather make me a mirror of your character. Give me the courage to set aside my agenda for yours. Give me eyes to see people and circumstances as you see them. Let me not stop my ears to those who need to see you alive and active in my living. By your Spirit, make me radiant with true joy! Help me to put away all pretense and dishonesty. Help me to take off my false self and put on the new creation.

Please forgive me for when I have not read your word nor spent time in your presence as my true self desires. Please forgive me for not paying attention to those around me who need your touch. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Holy Lord, you are just, wise and good! You are all-seeing and all-hearing! Your word endures forever! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 2

Feb 24, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Luke 11:29-32

As the crowd pressed in on Jesus, he said, "These are evil times, and this evil generation keeps asking me to show them a miraculous sign. But the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. What happened to him was a sign to the people of Nineveh that God had sent him. What happens to me will be a sign that God has sent me, the Son of Man, to these people. "The queen of Sheba will rise up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, because she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And now someone greater than Solomon is here – and you refuse to listen to him. The people of Nineveh, too, will rise up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And now someone greater than Jonah is here – and you refuse to repent. (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Psalm 51:

A humble heart, O God, you will not turn away!

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offenses.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.

A humble heart, O God, you will not turn away!

Create for me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a faithful and steady spirit within me.
Do not let my sin keep me from enjoying the full benefits of your Holy Presence!

A humble heart, O God, you will not turn away!

For you are not pleased with mere sacrifices that do not come from heart.
When I simply go through the religious motions you would not accept it.
The best sacrifice, O God, is my pulverized spirit;
a heart and life whose impurities have been burned away in the crucible of repentance!

A humble heart, O God, you will not turn away!

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 2

Feb 25, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 7:7-11

"Keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks. You parents – if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him. "Do for others what you would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the law and the prophets." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Gracious Father, you are an answering God! You are kind and you are true! You are a strengthening and saving God! Thank you giving me strength beyond my own. Thank you for hearing my prayer!

I acknowledge, Lord Jesus, that like Esther and Mordechai, that you have placed me in this time and in this place "for such a time as this." God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, free me to please you. May I learn to depend on you as my primary source of strength. Put in my mouth words that you want me to speak. Turn stubborn hearts into receptive ones. Turn mourning into gladness and sorrow into wholeness. Help me to keep seeking you and keep knocking on your door. Make me desperate for you!

Please forgive me for when I have chosen excessive busy-ness, anxiety and fear over resting in your provision and presence. Forgive me for when I have chosen to retaliate and seek revenge against those whom I perceive have wronged me. Help me to treat others in the same way I want to be treated. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Holy Lord, you are loving. You give good gifts. You are a saving, merciful and blessing God! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 2

Feb 26, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Ezekiel 18:21-28

[God says:] But if wicked people turn away from all their sins and begin to obey my laws and do what is just and right, they will surely live and not die. All their past sins will be forgotten, and they will live because of the righteous things they have done. "Do you think, asks the Sovereign LORD, that I like to see wicked people die? Of course not! I only want them to turn from their wicked ways and live. However, if righteous people turn to sinful ways and start acting like other sinners, should they be allowed to live? No, of course not! All their previous goodness will be forgotten, and they will die for their sins. "Yet you say, 'The Lord isn't being just!' Listen to me, O people of Israel. Am I the one who is unjust, or is it you? When righteous people turn from being good and start doing sinful things, they will die for it. Yes, they will die because of their sinful deeds. And if wicked people turn away from their wickedness, obey the law, and do what is just and right, they will save their lives. They will live, because after thinking it over, they decided to turn from their sins. Such people will not die. (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Just and Right Father, you are a discerning God! You are not a hidden deity! You are the Living Lord; the one to whom my soul clings! Thank you for being forgiving and patient. Thank you that you do not want people to die in their sin. Thank you for sending Jesus to live and die on my behalf.

Lord Jesus , you have said that my way of life must surpass those who merely give you lip service and offer half-hearted actions that do not reflect the true, dilapidated and disordered nature of their hearts . Help me to have a true and undivided heart focused on you. May I worship you with a pure conscience. Assist me to trust in your word and to acknowledge your work in my life. Guard my mouth and my thoughts. Give me the strength to put aside unhealthy thoughts, words, images and food. You desire that I be healthy and whole: body and soul.

Please forgive me for when I have used my tongue in an evil way. Please forgive me for losing my temper; for offering unnecessary or exaggerated criticism; for spreading rumors or talking behind another's back; for lying or betraying a confidence. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others. Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

You are the righteous Judge. You are the Great Arbiter. You are the redeeming, forgiving one! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 2

Feb 27, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 5:43-48

[Jesus said,] “You have heard that the law of Moses says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and on the unjust, too. If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. 47 If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Psalm 119:1-16

I will be happy if I live with integrity and follow your law, O LORD. I will be happy if I obey your decrees and search for you with all my heart! Keep me from compromising with evil, and guide my steps to walk only in your paths. You have charged me to keep your commandments carefully. Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your principles! Then I will not be disgraced when I compare my life with your commands. When I learn your righteous laws, I will thank you by living as I should! I will obey your principles. Please don't give up on me! How can I keep my way pure? By obeying your word and following its rules. I have tried my best to find you – don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your principles. Saturate my mind with you; may I learn to speak aloud all the laws you have given. I will rejoice in your decrees as much as in riches. I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your principles and not forget your word. Amen!

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 3

Feb 28, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Philippians 3:20-21; 4:1

[Paul from prison said,] “But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere. Dear brothers and sisters, I love you and long to see you, for you are my joy and the reward for my work. So please stay true to the Lord, my dear friends .” (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Almighty Father, you are my light and my salvation: my only hope! You are the one who hears me when I call. I thank you for being my refuge: my place of rest.

I desire to seek your presence continually, but sometimes I forget about you. Help me to know your love for me in real, meaningful ways. Please grant me light in mystery, wholeness in brokenness, and clarity in chaos. Find ways to remind me that by trusting in you, Lord Jesus, that my true citizenship is in heaven. I am in this world to live a full life before you, but I am not OF it. I am not a slave to all that would draw my attention from you.

Holy Spirit, make my steps secure and my feet solidly planting on the Rock of my salvation. May I know the joy of the Lord to be my true strength. May the light of your face shine upon me and warm my spirit. May I find myself smiling for no particular reason, because I am learning to trust in you, Lord Jesus!

Please forgive me for when I allow fear and circumstances to steal the joy of your presence from me. Forgive me when I focus on the “whys” of life more than on Whose I truly am. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others. (con’t next page ☞)

WEEK 3

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Holy God, you are faithful, true, dependable, sure: a Rock, a Fortress, a Hiding Place! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Space:



WEEK 3

March 1, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Luke 6:36-38

[Jesus says,] "You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. Stop judging others, and you will not be judged. Stop criticizing others, or it will all come back on you. If you forgive others, you will be forgiven. If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving – large or small – it will be used to measure what is given back to you." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Deuteronomy 9:4-10

Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You are the one who keeps your merciful covenant toward those who love you and observe your commandments! O Lord, we know we have sinned, even though we don't always like to admit it; we have rebelled against and departed from your commandments and your laws. We have not always listened to those who have tried to tell us the truth about ourselves.

Justice, O Lord, is on your side; we are embarrassed by our misdeeds; for nothing is hidden from you! And our sin separates us from you; and it hurts! O LORD, we are shamefaced for having sinned against you. But we know, O Lord, our God, that you are a God of compassion and forgiveness! Too often we have taken your patience, love, and grace for granted! We have rebelled against you and paid no heed to your words and your ways! We have found ways to justify our sins!

Please forgive us, we pray! We cling to the promise of forgiveness found in the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, our example, our great high priest, and our friend, who ever makes intercession for us! Amen.

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 3

March 2, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 23:11&12

[Jesus says,] “The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Our great Parent, you are the Truth Teller! You are the Righteous Judge! Thank you for not letting me live in darkness and sit in the filth and mess of my existence! You are the one who can wash me clean and make all things new. You want to make me brighter and cleaner in my interior life than what the best soap or bleach on the market can do with stained clothing.

Lord Jesus, give me the courage to fold up and lock away forever, out of your sight (and mine!) those actions, thoughts, habits, words, and deeds that cause separation from others, from You and from knowing my true self. Put these sinful things into the lock-box of your grace and do not let them gnaw at me anymore!

Forgive me when I have thought of myself as something more than what I really am. Please forgive me for not being willing to be honest with myself. Please also forgive me when I fall into self-pity and stare too long into the pool of despair. Help me to realize that humility and honesty with myself is not the same thing as beating myself up and heaping shame and blame upon myself; for that is simply another form of arrogance. Assist my spirit in seeing me as you see me: as your child. And just as any good and loving Parent who discovers their own wounded, dirty child standing before them, You will move heaven and earth to see me healed and clean. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others. Make me holy, as you are holy!

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Righteous Lord, you are the penetrating Light of Truth. You are the one who holds the keys to life and death. You are Jehovah-El Roi, the one who truly cares and sees all things! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 3

March 3, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Psalm 31

O LORD, I have come to you for protection; don't let me be put to shame. Rescue me, for you always do what is right. Bend down and listen to me; rescue me quickly. Be for me a great rock of safety, a fortress where my enemies cannot reach me. You are my rock and my fortress. For the honor of your name, lead me out of this peril. Pull me from the trap my enemies set for me, for I find protection in you alone. I entrust my spirit into your hand. Rescue me, LORD, for you are a faithful God. I hate those who worship worthless idols. I trust in the LORD. I am overcome with joy because of your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul. You have not handed me over to my enemy but have set me in a safe place.

Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am in distress. My sight is blurred because of my tears. My body and soul are withering away. I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness. Misery has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within.... But I am trusting you, O LORD, saying, "You are my God!" My future is in your hands. Rescue me from those who hunt me down relentlessly. Let your favor shine on your servant. In your unfailing love, save me. Don't let me be disgraced, O LORD, for I call out to you for help....

Your goodness is so great! You have stored up great blessings for those who honor you. You have done so much for those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world. You hide them in the shelter of your presence, safe from those who conspire against them. You shelter them in your presence, far from accusing tongues.

Praise the LORD, for he has shown me his unfailing love. He kept me safe when my city was under attack. In sudden fear I had cried out, "I have been cut off from the LORD!" But you heard my cry for mercy and answered my call for help. Love the LORD, all you faithful ones! For the LORD protects those who are loyal to him, but he harshly punishes all who are arrogant. So be strong and take courage, all you who put your hope in the LORD! (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

RE-READ PSALM 31 ABOVE, MAKING IT A PERSONAL PRAYER BACK TO GOD.

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 3

March 4, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Luke 16:19-31

Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed and who lived each day in luxury. At his door lay a diseased beggar named Lazarus. As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. Finally, the beggar died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham. "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in these flames.' "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. Anyone who wanted to cross over to you from here is stopped at its edge, and no one there can cross over to us.' "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, send him to my father's home. For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them about this place of torment so they won't have to come here when they die.' "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read their writings anytime they want to.' "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will turn from their sins.' "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead.'" (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Holy Father, you are our Hope. You are our Provider and our Security. We thank you for the assurance of your presence and the greatness of your grace.

We pray for the discipline to make space and time to study and internalize your Word. We cry out, Lord Jesus, to you! Help us to slow down the business of making a living and to truly learn to live! Where we have over-extended ourselves financially, please open before us a way of prudent escape and resolution. Help us to simplify our lives!

Holy Spirit, build up our faith. Let us see you work as you did long ago. Do a miracle among us! We want to know you better. We want to hear your voice and see your face! Please turn down the volume of life so we can hear your still small voice of reason and peace! (con't next page ☞)

WEEK 3

Please forgive us when we have been so full of the hard-knock drudgeries of daily life, that we forget about You, or we erroneously begin to think that You are powerless or meaningless in a high-tech, fast-paced world. Holy Spirit, remind us of who I need to forgive, and help us to forgive others.

Help us not to yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

Blessed Lord, You are the lifter of weary heads, the one who fortifies the exhausted, and the antidote to the poison of self-sufficiency. You are the greatest Remedy. In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Space:



WEEK 3

March 5, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 21:33-46

[And Jesus said,] "Now listen to this story. A certain landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country. At the time of the grape harvest he sent his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers grabbed his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. So the landowner sent a larger group of his servants to collect for him, but the results were the same. "Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, 'Surely they will respect my son.' "But when the farmers saw his son coming, they said to one another, 'Here comes the heir to this estate. Come on, let's kill him and get the estate for ourselves!' So they grabbed him, took him out of the vineyard, and murdered him. "When the owner of the vineyard returns," Jesus asked, "what do you think he will do to those farmers?" The religious leaders replied, "He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop after each harvest." Then Jesus asked them, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous to see.' What I mean is that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit. " When the leading priests and Pharisees heard Jesus, they realized he was pointing at them – that they were the farmers in his story. They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid to try because the crowds considered Jesus to be a prophet. (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Psalm 105

I will give thanks to you, O LORD and proclaim your greatness! I will let the whole world know all the marvelous things you have done! I will sing to you; yes, sing your praises!

[IF YOU HAVE A HYMN OR SONG YOU WOULD LIKE TO SING TO GOD, RIGHT NOW, PLEASE TAKE TIME TO DO SO BEFORE CONTINUING WITH THE PRAYER]

I will tell everyone about your miracles. I will exult in your holy name; I am a true worshipper of you, O LORD. In you I will rejoice! I will expend all my strength searching for You! And as I do, I will go about thinking of the wonderful works you have done, the miracles and the judgments you have handed down. You are the LORD my God. Your rule is unquestionable. You always stand by your covenant – the commitment you made to a thousand generations. For you are a remembering God who kept your sacred promise to Abraham your servant. You are a God who fulfills covenants and keeps promises, in hopes that I, and people just like me, will follow your principles and obey your laws. Praise the LORD! Amen!

Journal Space:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for journaling. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 3

March 6, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Luke 15:11-32

Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. "A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money on wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man." 'So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began. "Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, and he asked one of the servants what was going on. Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the calf we were fattening and has prepared a great feast. We are celebrating because of his safe return.' "The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, 'All these years I've worked hard for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the finest calf we have.' "His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you and I are very close, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'" (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

WEEK 3

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Our ever hopeful Father, you are kind and merciful! Thank you for pardoning my sins. Thank you for being the one who redeems my life from the pit. Thank you for not dealing with me as I deserve, but rather you deal with me tenderly, according to your loving kindness.

Jesus, may your word settle into my thoughts and may it serve as a plumb line for my decision-making. May I not forget to include you in the mechanics of my living. Bring me back to you when I wander away. Don't let me die in a far-off, loveless, hungry land! Fill me with you. Make me dissatisfied with the left-overs of the world. Help me to know how much you love me, and that your love for me does not depend on how near or far I am from you.

Holy Spirit, make me new inside. Turn my heart and head toward you.

Please forgive me for when I have left you sitting with my luggage on the roadside, or put you away in a dusty closet. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Great Lord, there is none like you! You are the great Shepherd! You are the Promise-Keeper! You are the ever-patient Parent! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Response:



WEEK 4

March 7, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

[Paul said,] I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, what happened to our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. God guided all of them by sending a cloud that moved along ahead of them, and he brought them all safely through the waters of the sea on dry ground. As followers of Moses, they were all baptized in the cloud and the sea. And all of them ate the same miraculous food, and all of them drank the same miraculous water. For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. Yet after all this, God was not pleased with most of them, and he destroyed them in the wilderness. These events happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did or worship idols as some of them did. For the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged themselves in pagan revelry." And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day. Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. And don't grumble as some of them did, for that is why God sent his angel of death to destroy them. All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close. If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin. But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it. (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Psalm 103

"I will Praise you, O LORD," I tell myself; with my whole heart, I will praise your holy name. I will never forget the good things you have done for me. You forgive all my sins and heal all my diseases. You ransom me from death and surround me with love and tender mercies. You fill my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's! You, O LORD give righteousness and justice to me when I am treated unfairly. You revealed your true character to Moses and showed your mighty deeds to the people of Israel. You are merciful and gracious; You are slow to get angry and full of unfailing love. You will not constantly accuse me, nor remain angry forever. You have not punished me for all my sins, nor do you deal with me as I deserve. For your unfailing love toward me, who reveres you, is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. You have removed my rebellious acts as far away from me as the east is from the west. (☞)

WEEK 4

You, O LORD are like a father to me: tender and compassionate... For you understand how weak I can be; you know I am only dust. My days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, I bloom for a little while and then I will die. The wind blows, and I will be gone ...But Your love, LORD, remains forever! Your salvation will extend to my grandchildren because I seek to love and obey you! You have made the heavens your throne; from there you rule over everything.

Praise the LORD, you angels of his, you mighty creatures who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will! Praise the LORD, everything he has created, everywhere in his kingdom. As for me – I, too, will praise you, my LORD and my God!

Journal Response:



WEEK 4

March 8, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Luke 4:24-30

[Jesus said,] But the truth is, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown. "Certainly there were many widows in Israel who needed help in Elijah's time, when there was no rain for three and a half years and hunger stalked the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a widow of Zarephath – a foreigner in the land of Sidon. Or think of the prophet Elisha, who healed Naaman, a Syrian, rather than the many lepers in Israel who needed help." When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. Jumping up, they mobbed him and took him to the edge of the hill on which the city was built. They intended to push him over the cliff, but he slipped away through the crowd and left them. (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Blessed, parenting God, you are the well-spring of delight! You are the One who can quench the deepest longings of the human soul! Thank you for offering me living, waters to slake the gnawing thirsts of my life. Thank you for being light and faithfulness in a dark and trackless desert.

I pray to bear Your word with courage as a light of hope into a desperate world. I ask, Lord Jesus, you help me to have the faith of Naaman and the widow of Zaraphath who accepted your word by faith and were the better for it. Keep me from trusting in my religious learning, my abilities, or my experience; and do not let me slip into the arrogance of self-pity. Let me always remember to invite your Spirit to partner with me in every endeavor. Prevent me from slipping into gross self-reliance.

Holy Spirit, give me the strength and courage to climb your holy mountain. For, you are not a co-dependent God looking to “fix,” me, but you are interested in inviting me into wholeness, alive in your presence. That requires work on my part. Let me no grow weary in working out my salvation surrounded by your grace. Let me know joy in the journey, because you walk with me. (con't next page ☞)

WEEK 4

Lord Jesus, please forgive me for when I have tried to satisfy the depths of my soul with everything other than you. Build my trust in you as I climb toward you; for you are not far off, and like a child you walk just ahead of me in order to teach me to walk on my own. Forgive me when I behave like a spoiled child and demand you to treat me or handle me as I would desire, rather than the way you know is best for me. Holy Spirit, remind me of who I need to forgive, and help me to forgive others.

Help me not to yield to temptation but deliver me from the evil one.

Faithful LORD, you are faithful, just, true and holy. The author and giver of true gladness and joy! In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal Response:



WEEK 4

March 9, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No!" Jesus replied, "seventy times seven! "For this reason, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn't pay, so the king ordered that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt. But the man fell down before the king and begged him, 'Oh, sir, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then the king was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient and I will pay it,' he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and jailed until the debt could be paid in full. "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him what had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison until he had paid every penny. "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters in your heart." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Forgiving and gracious God, bring to mind by your Holy Spirit those persons that I need to forgive for wronging me, realizing that I am only continuing to hurt myself and damage my relationship with you and others by holding on to wrongs done to me. Please help me to remember what your word says that if I cannot forgive others, then I block myself from receiving the forgiveness you want so badly to give me. I here now list out loud those persons I believe have wronged me:

Help me also to be conscious of those I have wronged and find a way to admit my wrongs, ask for forgiveness and make amends, as far as is possible. I here now aloud confess to you, Lord God, these things I have done wrong that I know have hurt others, and I ask your forgiveness and for creative and/or appropriate ways to make amends. (☞)

WEEK 4

A prayer based on Psalm 25:

Today, Lord God, I'm looking to you! No more negative self-pity! I've thrown in my lot with you; I'm trusting that You won't leave me hung out to dry. Show me how you work, God; Teach me who you really are. Take me by the hand; Lead me down the path of truth. You, alone, are my Savior. Please forgive my past; Forget that I sowed wild oats; Mark me with your sign of love. I believe that you plan only the best for me, God! You are just; you correct my mis-guided half-thoughts; You desire nothing more than to send me in the right direction; if I would only pay attention to where you are leading. I know you are a good God that gives someone like me your hand; You can lead me step-by-step. Help me to see the road signs of your grace and love. Help me to become a true worshipper of you, Lord God. Keep my arrows aimed true toward your bull's-eye. Settle me down in a promising place. I long for a friendship with you, O God! I want to worship you and know you as much as I can! I want you to be able to trust me! Help me to keep my eyes on you and not stare at my feet! O Lord, Look at me and help me! Lift my ton of sin that I insist on dragging behind me; relieve me of this burden. Keep watch over me and keep me out of trouble; Don't let me down when I run to you. I need you to stitch me together. I can't wait to see what the finished product of my life will be in you! Amen!

Journal Response:



WEEK 4

March 10, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Matthew 5:17-19

[And Jesus said,] "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill them. I assure you, until heaven and earth disappear, even the smallest detail of God's law will remain until its purpose is achieved. So if you break the smallest commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven." (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Psalm 147

Hallelujah! I love to sing praise to you, O God; praise is beautiful, praise is fitting. You are the one who rebuilds Jerusalem, who regathers Israel's scattered exiles. You are ever there to heal my broken heart and to bandage my wounds. You count the stars and know each one's name. You are great, and awesome Lord with limitless strength; I'll never be able to fully comprehend all that You know and do. When I fall you are able to put me on my feet again; you shield me from the wicked.

I sing to you, my God, a hymn of thankfulness; I play the instrument of my life in praise to you, my God, You fill the sky with clouds; you prepare rain for the earth, then turn the mountains green with grass; you make provision for the animals, from cows to crows. You are not impressed with horsepower; the size of my muscles means little to you. I want to build up my spiritual muscles and learn to respect You. I know that gets your attention! I want to learn to depend on your strength! You are my true source of security, for myself and for those I love. You keep the peace and you put bread on my table; You launch your promises earthward - how swift and sure they come! Sometimes it feels like you are far away and things have gone cold. I seem like You spread snow like a white fleece, you scatter frost like ashes, you broadcast hail like birdseed - who can survive your "winter," O Lord? Then suddenly you revive me! You give the command and all the hard ice melts; you breathe and oi la! it's spring! You have given me your words of life. You have given me your commands. Help me to follow them, by clinging to your mercy! Hallelujah!

Journal Response:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for a journal response. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

WEEK 4

March 11, 2010

Scripture to Ponder:

Psalm 95:1-7

Come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us give a joyous shout to the rock of our salvation! Let us come before him with thanksgiving. Let us sing him psalms of praise. For the LORD is a great God, the great King above all gods. He owns the depths of the earth, and even the mightiest mountains are his. The sea belongs to him, for he made it. His hands formed the dry land, too. Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the LORD our maker, for he is our God. We are the people he watches over, the sheep under his care. Oh, that you would listen to his voice today! (NLT)

(As time permits, please utilize The Divine Reading Method found at the back of this guide to enhance your reading of the biblical text.)

Prayer of the Day:

(best prayed aloud)

Based on Psalm 147

Our loving Father, You are ever-listening, and ever-watching Creator and sustainer of the cosmos! You are the guardian of all our steps. We thank you for keeping us accountable for our actions and choices. We thank you for being gracious and merciful to us!

We long for your Word to come among us and guide us in the way of right living. We thirst for your presence among us! Help us to open our spiritual ears to hear the truth about You and about ourselves, even when it is not what we want to hear.

Please forgive us when we have created you in our own image, lessened your majesty, and tarnished your reflection of purity. Forgive us for not preferring to hear your words of life; but instead have made listening to our own speculations the highest priority. Bring to mind those persons that we need to release and forgive; and help us to forgive those who have offended us.

Please help us not to yield to temptation. Protect us from the evil one.

You are the Voice of promise, hope, love, and joy! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Journal Response:

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for a journal response. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

**MORE TO COME! PLEASE LOOK ON THE CHURCH
WEBSITE FOR A VIRTUAL COPY.**

LENT 2010

PRAYER GUIDE



How To Do “Divine Reading”

@ Home

Psalm 46:10
Psalm 130:5
Matthew 11:28

Worship @6:10
WEST UNIVERSITY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
3611 University
Houston TX 77005
713.664.8111

www.westumethodist.org

READ:

1. Select a text to read from the Bible. It should not be too long. For suggested readings see: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>

2. Once you have selected a text, take a moment to be aware of God’s presence, then ask God to make the text come alive by his Spirit. (John 14:26)

3. Now, S-L-O-W-L-Y read the passage out loud. Notice what short phrases or word(s) jump out/speak to you. (Matthew 13:23)

4. Read the passage again out loud; this time allowing the words and rhythms of the text to wash over you.

5. Read the text yet one more time. This time silently. Again, be sure to read the text at a measured pace. Take an internal inventory of how the meaningful word(s)/short phrases stir up thoughts, ideas, memories, feelings, etc.

MEDITATE:

1. Christian meditation is not the same as Eastern/Zen meditation. In Christian meditation the aim is NOT to empty the mind, but rather to fill the mind and the imagination with the presence of Christ via the scripture. (Psalm 119:15;23)

2. Now, focus on one of the the word(s)/short phrases that were highlighted for you in the readings. Allow this word/short phrase to ruminate, percolate, and weave itself into the fabric of your thoughts. You may want to gently repeat the word or phrase aloud to yourself, allowing it to work its way deep into the soil of your soul. Closing your eyes as you repeat the word or focusing on a sacred image (cross, icon, etc.) may assist you in concentrating your thoughts and imagination on God’s truth for you found in your word/phrase.

PRAY:

1. There are many ways to pray. In general, prayer is a dialog or interchange between yourself and God. This does not necessarily have to involve audible verbal exchange, although it certainly may. (Ephesians 1:18)

2. This is the time to take what you have experienced from the scripture in reading and meditation and to now lift those things into the loving presence of God that the gentle “exfoliant” nature of the scripture has uncovered.

3. What situations, persons, pains, joys, feelings, thoughts, etc. has your interaction with God in the scripture brought to

(continued on back)

the surface of your thoughts? Express those things to God in word, art, song, quiet, etc. Sit down with your Creator and tell him all about the things that matter in your life. (1 Peter 5:7)

CONTEMPLATE:

1. Contemplation is a chance to just simply rest in the loving presence of God.

2. Imagine the most secure and loving moment, place, feeling, etc. you have experienced in your life. Now imagine God and you together in that place/space/moment. Allow God to simply, lovingly look at you and for you to look at God. (Exodus 33:11; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

3. If your mind begins to wonder, no problem. You may want to simply and silently return in your thoughts to one of the words or short phrases you encountered in the reading/meditation. Don’t repeat the word/phrase over and over at this juncture, just simply use it as a means to re-focus your imagination on God himself.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT “DIVINE READING” (LECTIO DIVINA): <http://onetruthministries.com/LectioDivina.htm>

Hall, Thelma. *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*. Paulist Press, 1988.