

Grace Guide



SEPTEMBER 21-26

“Praying As Jesus Prayed”

MONDAY
9/21

EXODUS 34:1-9

When Moses asks God to show him his glory, God responds by revealing not simply his power but his character. The Lord describes himself as compassionate and gracious, patient, loving, faithful, and forgiving. This is an important reminder about prayer: before we bring our requests to God, we need to remember who God is. Moses' prayer begins with an awareness of God's character and a desire for God's presence. We can approach God honestly because we are approaching a God who already knows us, loves us, and is merciful toward us. Deep prayer begins not with finding the right words but with knowing the One to whom we are speaking.

1. Which of the characteristics God reveals about himself in this passage means the most to you today, and why?
2. How are your prayers different when you seek God's presence rather than simply seeking something from God? Do you ever just seek God's presence? Why or why not?

TUESDAY
9/22

EZEKIEL 36:22-28

In this passage God makes clear that his purpose is ultimately to make his holy name known. Yet God's answer is not merely to demand better behavior from the people. God promises to cleanse them, give them a new heart, put a new spirit within them, and, in face, to give them God's own Spirit. God wants more than outward conformity, he desires inward transformation. This connects deeply with Jesus' prayer in John 17 (our reading for Sunday), where he asks the Father to sanctify his followers. Prayer is not simply asking God to change our circumstances. Sometimes the deeper prayer is asking God to change us, to cleanse our hearts, to renew our desires, and to make our lives increasingly reflect God's own character.

1. Where in your life do you most need God to bring about an inward change rather than simply changing your circumstances?
2. What is the difference between asking God to help you behave differently and asking God to change your heart?

WEDNESDAY
9/23

LUKE 6:12-16

Before Jesus chose the Twelve, he spent the night on a mountain praying to God. The decision before him was significant, and Jesus responded not by rushing into action but by giving himself to prayer. Even Jesus, who knew the Father's will perfectly, made prayer a priority when important decisions had to be made. Jesus' example challenges our tendency to pray only after we have made our plans or when we have run out of other options. Prayer should come first. Before we decide, act, speak, or move forward, we can pause and seek God's wisdom and direction. Praying as Jesus prayed means learning to make room for God before making room for our own answers.

1. Why do you think we sometimes make our plans first and ask God to bless them afterward?
2. How might your decisions be different if you consistently invited God into the process before you knew what you wanted to do?

THURSDAY

9/24

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

The apostle Paul points us toward the mind and attitude of Jesus which he challenges us to imitate: humility, selflessness, obedience, and a willingness to put the interests of others ahead of our own. Prayer can easily become centered on what we want, what we need, and what we hope God will do for us. But Jesus shows us a different way. His life was marked by complete surrender and self-giving, and his prayer life reflected that same heart. As we spend time with God, prayer should not simply change our circumstances, it should change *us*. The more we understand the heart of Christ, the more our prayers can begin to reflect his humility, his obedience, and his concern for others.

1. Which aspect of Jesus' attitude in this passage is easier for you: humility, selflessness, obedience, or putting others first? Which is most challenging?
2. What might be different today if you intentionally chose to “have the same mindset as Christ Jesus” in the way you speak, serve, or respond to someone else?

FRIDAY

9/25

PSALM 131

This is a remarkably simple prayer of quiet trust. The psalmist has stopped trying to understand everything, trying to accomplish everything, or trying to control everything. Instead, his soul has become quiet and settled in the presence of God, like a child resting with its mother. There is something deeply freeing about such prayer. We do not have to bring God an answer for every question, nor do we have to solve every problem before we can be at peace. Sometimes prayer means bringing our restless hearts into God's presence and learning to trust him with what we cannot understand. A quiet heart is not a heart that has no concerns, rather it is a heart that has learned where to place those concerns.

1. What concerns or unanswered questions can make it difficult for your heart to be quiet before God?
2. What does it mean for you personally to “hope in the Lord” when you do not have all the answers?

**SATURDAY/
SUNDAY**
9/26-27

JOHN 17:1-26

Here we have a remarkable glimpse into the prayer of Jesus. He prays first concerning himself and the glory of the Father, then for his disciples, and finally for all who will believe in him. Jesus asks the Father to protect them, sanctify them, preserve their unity, and enable them to carry his message into the world. His prayer reveals what mattered most to him: not simply that his followers would be comfortable or successful, but that they would know God, belong to him, and that they would remain faithful, live in unity, and share in God's mission. When we pray, it is easy for our requests to revolve around our immediate needs, and that is understandable and not really wrong. But Jesus invites us to see beyond ourselves. Prayer opens our hearts to the things that matter to God.

1. As you read Jesus' prayer, what do you notice that Jesus asks the Father to do for his followers?
2. Which of Jesus' concerns for his followers do you most need to bring before God today: protection, holiness, unity, faithfulness, mission, or love?

VERSE OF THE WEEK

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

(John 17:15-17)