



PRACTICING THE WAY OF JESUS



PARK CITIES BAPTIST CHURCH

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FROM THE

Pastor

In this series we will look at very practical ways to live like Jesus. The premise here is—if we want to live a life that looks like Jesus we must live a life in the way that Jesus lived—developing His same practices before the Father. Jesus is first our **Substitute**, but we also look to Jesus as our **Example**, and especially as He walks to the cross in His final weeks. The spiritual disciplines is the way we practice the way of Jesus. These disciplines put us in position to be with Jesus, to hear from Him, to know Him more intimately, and to follow Him. Jesus modeled these disciplines in His life.

Dr. Jeff Warren

SENIOR PASTOR

3 Daily Questions



How do you know if you're following Jesus? There is not a complicated formula that you execute or a list of dos that you check off and a list of don'ts that you avoid. It starts with reflecting on the fact that there is nothing for you to do, because it has already been done for you on the cross. Jesus did it all so that we don't have to. Jesus paid our debt so we can be free to follow the One who set us free. There is such comfort to know there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It is because of the great love of Christ for us that we follow the One who gives us purpose and identity. As we have said, there are no magical formulas or things to do; however, you can ask yourself some simple questions that, if answered truthfully, should help you draw closer to Jesus.

The key to following Jesus is abiding in Christ. Abiding in Christ positions us to hear and know **what God is saying to us**. In our abiding, we are found in a place in which the Holy Spirit speaks to us as we read scripture, worship, pray, walk, drive to work...as we are going through life, He speaks. God speaks all the time and we have to put ourselves in a position to hear Him. As a follower of Christ, I want to hear from the One who gives me purpose, life and identity as a child of God. So, I must ask myself, what is God saying to me?

As we know, the Lord is always speaking and working in our world. Once a follower of Christ hears from God, then there are a few questions that one must ask. **How will I obey?** Is there a command to obey or an example to follow? God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit by His word, prayer, a sermon, circumstances, and the church. When He speaks, there is usually an action that needs to take place. So many times, we are afraid and ignore when God speaks. It is at this point that the follower needs others to encourage him in the Lord and walk faithfully in obedience. The greatest blessing is found in walking in obedience because the follower now is stepping out in faith to trust the One who saved him.

It is this step of faith, the action taken, that others need to hear about. That is why we ask, **whom will I tell?** When you tell someone your story, then you encourage others to share what God has done in their life. It is better than the idea of paying it forward in a drive-through line because the impact of telling someone what God has done changes lives and gives hope to others.

**As you read through this devotional guide,
you are encouraged to ask the three questions:**



- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

Week 1

SUBMISSION



Living a life of submission opens up the possibilities for God to move in us and through us in unexplainable ways. Any time you choose to that is an act of submission. All of the disciplines require submission—but what are you submitting to and to Whom?

Questions to consider this week as you study the discipline of submission in your life:

- Why was Jesus' teaching on submission so revolutionary?
- How have you seen the discipline of submission abused?
- What images come to your mind when you think of the word "self-denial?"
- We don't always recognize areas where we haven't submitted to the Lord's wisdom and will. What are some ways we can identify those areas on a regular basis?
- Who is a trusted friend who can help you identify places in your life where you're leaning on your own understanding instead of submitting to God?

Family Discussion

Submit: to stop trying to fight or resist something; to give up control

We like to be in control and do things our own way. But being part of a family means we need to submit to one another. What are you trying to keep control of? Talk about how you can submit to one another this week.

When we submit to God, we are telling Him that we trust Him with our whole lives. Is there an area of your life for which you're having a hard time trusting God? Pray and surrender it to God, asking Him to help your trust in Him grow.

SUBMIT YOURSELVES
THEREFORE TO GOD.
RESIST THE DEVIL,
AND HE WILL
FLEE FROM YOU.

James
4:7 ESV

MONDAY

THE CALL TO SUBMISSION



SCRIPTURE

Mark
8:34

John
12:24-26

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, please show me the thoughts, attitudes, and habits I am clinging to today and how they keep me from taking up my cross and following you fully. Reveal to me what it would truly mean to “lose my life” for your sake and give me the humility and strength to obey.

TUESDAY

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST



SCRIPTURE

Philippians
2:1-11

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus, who models to the world what it means to be the servant of all. Reveal to me the ways that I can selflessly serve the people in my life today.

WEDNESDAY

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL



SCRIPTURE

Galatians
2:19-21

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, I am ready to know what it means to lay down my old life so that the crucified Christ may live in me. Let me be a home for his Spirit to dwell, a vessel for his purposes and his glory. Amen.

THURSDAY

SUBMISSION IN THE MARKETPLACE



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
5:38-48

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, I know that my love for you is only as strong as my love for the worst of my enemies. Show me how I can radically submit to loving those who do not agree with me, who wish me harm, and who remain blind to the truth. May the way I treat my enemies show the world that your love has the power to uphold justice and heal the strongest of divisions.

FRIDAY

SUBMISSION WITH REFERENCE TO THE STATE



SCRIPTURE

Romans

13:1-10

Acts

4:13-20, 5:27-29

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, please help me treat everyone I meet with kindness and respect, no matter what position or power they possess. Give me the strength to stand up for what is right and true, to love my neighbor, and to pray for those—just and unjust—who are in positions of authority.

Week 2

SOLITUDE



It is in solitude that we position ourselves to hear from God and abide in Him. Jesus practiced the pattern of solitude in His life, to come close and spend time with the Father. We must do the same to abide in Him, to know Him and to hear from Him.

Questions to consider this week as you study the discipline of Solitude in your life:

- How might the practice of solitude impact your relationships?
- What is a temptation you're facing currently? What needs to happen in your solitude so that you are better prepared to face that temptation rather than more tempted to give in?

Family Discussion

Solitude: a situation in which you are alone, free from distractions

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to live one hundred years ago? Some people say life was more simple back then, because there weren't as many things causing distractions. What is distracting you from focusing on your family and God?

Consider taking a No TV Challenge for five days (Monday-Friday). What are some things you can do to have quality time as a family instead of watching TV or playing video games? Make a commitment to each other to have no screens (for entertainment) this week and spend time as a family.

We all need some time to be alone, to rest and spend time with Jesus. Schedule time to be alone this week, if possible. If you are a parent, have your spouse or a family member watch the kids while you get out. Go to a local park, nature preserve, or a room in the back of your house. Spend time reading through Scripture and ask God to reveal a new thing about Himself to you.

BE STILL, AND KNOW
THAT I AM GOD.
I WILL BE EXALTED
AMONG THE NATIONS,
I WILL BE EXALTED IN
THE EARTH!

Psalms

46:10 ESV

MONDAY

PRAYER AND SOLITUDE



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
6:5-6

Luke
5:16

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, forgive me for the moments and seasons in my life that I have failed to make time alone with you. Quiet my mind and my heart so that I can be fully attuned to your presence, to the secret and sacred space we share today. May I set aside the desire to appear devout to others for the freedom of being fully accepted, seen, and loved by you alone.

TUESDAY

THE INSIGHTS OF SOLITUDE



SCRIPTURE

Psalm
8

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Father, the life of your Son shows us that there are times to learn together, and there are times to learn alone. Jesus continually sought solitude from his disciples and the crowds so that his mind would be free to focus on the truths the Father gave to him. May I trust that my aloneness—my empty-handedness—with you will bear the fruit of patient wisdom and reveal the truths that can only be heard in the deep quiet of my soul.

WEDNESDAY

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL



SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah
20:7-8

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord I confess to the many times I have avoided the quietness of my soul because I was afraid of the darkness I might find there—because I was afraid of facing my own sorrow, my own doubts, my own anger, my own unbelief. The darkness—my darkness—is not dark to you, and because of this, I shall not fear. You allow precious things to come out of darkness.

THURSDAY

THE SOLITUDE OF THE GARDEN



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
26:36-46

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, prepare me to step into the quietness of the garden, as Jesus did on the last evening of his life. Knowing the brutality and horror that awaited him, he cried out to you, his Father, pouring out the grief and sorrow that welled up in his very body. May I trust you in this way, to hold up my soul, my life, my body, even as I walk into the uncertainties of tomorrow.

FRIDAY

THE SOLITUDE OF THE CROSS



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
27:32-50

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, may I focus my heart today on the last moments of Jesus' life and his solitary work on the cross. Forsaken by all, he gave himself up as the perfect sacrifice, the sole offering that would break the curse of death once and for all. For my salvation to be in Christ alone, Christ himself had to be alone, despised and abandoned by many. Thank you for this mystery, this gift without price, given so that I will never endure the great and final loneliness of a life apart from you.

Week 3

PRAYER



A life of intentional and fervent prayer positions us to hear from God. We see Jesus practicing prayer in His life. In fact, He taught us how to pray. We look at Jesus positioning Himself before the Father in prayer—to hear from Him and to obey Him and He calls us to do the same.

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Mark
1:35 ESV

How do we make prayer a part of our everyday life? We can learn from three things that Jesus did.

- **A CERTAIN TIME:** Jesus got up very early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. In order for prayer to become a mark of our lives, we should do the same. Make a daily appointment with God and keep it.
- **A CERTAIN PLACE:** Jesus had a prayer place. Your prayer place needs to be an undistracted environment where you can pray out loud and perhaps have some worship music playing in the background at times. We can pray all the time and everywhere, but to have intentional time with the Lord it's important to find a place free of distractions.
- **A CERTAIN PLAN:** Go into your prayer time with a plan. If it changes that's fine. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave His disciples a prayer outline. We call it the Lord's Prayer. Allow the Lord's Prayer to serve as a guideline to your daily time with Jesus this week.

Questions to consider this week as you study the discipline of Prayer in your life:

- For Christians, why is boldness before God not irreverent? What are some ways you can approach God boldly this week?
- How can we keep from being discouraged by the example of the "giants of the faith"?
- Why is it important to view prayer as a learning process?
- What should we do when we don't feel like praying?
- What are some things you can praise God for in your life right now? What are some things you need to confess to Him? What can you pray for Park Cities?

Family Discussion

Pray: to address God with worship, confession, requests, or thanksgiving

Think about your family and friends. How do you get to know each other better? By talking to each other! Prayer is how we communicate with God and it's an extremely important part of our relationship with Him. As a family, practice praying prayers of worship, confession, requests, and thanksgiving.

Follow the 2-5-2 pattern for prayer this week.

2 | Parents, pray together twice this week. Pray for each other and the needs of your family.

5 | Families, pray together five times this week. Dinnertime or bedtime are great opportunities to talk and pray as family.

2 | Families, spend time twice this week teaching each other from the Bible. Have each family member pick a short passage and talk about what you have learned from those verses.

BLESSED BE GOD,
BECAUSE HE HAS
NOT REJECTED MY
PRAYER OR REMOVED
HIS STEADFAST LOVE
FROM ME!

Psalms

66:20 ESV

MONDAY

THE PATTERN OF PRAYER



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
6:5-15

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, show me how to pray. Give me the wisdom to ask for what I need in faith, to offer praise and gratitude with eagerness, to protect my heart from fear and unforgiveness, and to show the same mercy to those around me, just as you have shown mercy to me. Amen.

TUESDAY

THE PRAYER OF REPENTANCE



SCRIPTURE

Psalm
51

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, you are close to the brokenhearted. You are close to me, even when I fail to live in the way you have instructed. Give me a heart of repentance, a heart that breaks for what breaks yours, a heart willing to be searched and tested and purified. Protect me from callousness to my own sin, and likewise, the self-hatred that seeks to shatter me. Heal and restore me into right relationship with you. Thank you for the gift of your forgiveness.

WEDNESDAY

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING



SCRIPTURE

Psalm
150

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, help me to pause several times today to thank you for all the gifts you have given to me. Thank you for my life, for making my heart beat and my lungs breathe. Thank you for the people you have placed before me to love and care for, for dear friendships, for children, for parents, for siblings. Thank you for your great mercy and the priceless gift of salvation. Thank you for giving me this day, this hour, this moment to be alive and in awe of your world. Amen.

THURSDAY

THE PRAYER OF GUIDANCE



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
26:36-46

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, I confess that I struggle to fully rely on you to guide my life and decisions. I am often fearful, too proud to be vulnerable enough to admit my need for you. Remind me today that your wisdom far surpasses the knowledge of this world and goes beyond all that I fear. In the Garden of Gethsemane, on the last night of his life, Jesus prayed to the father three times for comfort, guidance, and grace to bear the cross before him. May I lean on your truth in this same way today.

FRIDAY

THE PRAYER OF FAITH



SCRIPTURE

James
5:13-18

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, may I approach you in prayer today with the openness and trust of a child. Help me to bring all of my cares, all of my needs, all of my longings, all of my disappointments, all of my joys, and all of my praise to you without shame or hesitation. I share my innermost life with you, knowing that I can trust you to hold it all, to hold me. Keep my heart tender and my faith strong. Thank you for loving me, your precious child, without condition or reservation, today and for all of time.



Week 4

CONFESSION



Our daily practice of confession will lead to repentance and purity of life. Living a Life of Confession reminds us who we are and how gracious God is.

Questions to consider this week as you study the discipline of confession in your life:

- How can I practice a lifestyle of confession?
- What are some daily practices of confession I can practice that lead to repentance and purity of life?

Family Discussion

Confess: to acknowledge sin

Admitting we have done wrong things can be very difficult, but kids will learn a lot about God's love from parents who admit their own mistakes. Take time to confess to one another areas where you "blew it" this week. Parents, maybe you lost your temper or spent too much time at work. Kids, maybe you didn't obey your parents or got angry at a sibling. If there is anything you have not confessed, talk through it and forgive one another.

Optional Activity: Take the time to write a list of things you know you have done in the past month that have not been pleasing to God. If you have access to a fireplace, lead your family in a discussion about how God does not hold these sins against us! He loves us and offers us grace as if we had never sinned. If it is safe to do so, start a fire in the fireplace and place your lists in the fire.

WHOEVER
CONCEALS HIS
TRANSGRESSIONS
WILL NOT PROSPER,
BUT HE WHO
CONFESSES AND
FORSAKES THEM
WILL OBTAIN MERCY.

Proverbs

28:13 ESV

MONDAY

THE NEED FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS



SCRIPTURE

Isaiah
59:1-9

Romans
3:10-18

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, I confess today how easily I stray from you. I am suddenly aware of all the ways that I have failed to love you and others. I am pained by my hesitation to be generous with what I have been given. I am grieved by my slowness to recognize your presence in my life, guiding and leading me in every decision and with every step. These realities tempt me to despair, but your love pulls me back into the memory and warmth of your presence. You will not leave me where I am. You will never abandon me, and instead, run to meet me as your child. Your love for me is boundless and never ending. Please help me to see who I am through your eyes. Amen.

TUESDAY

THE PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS



SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah
31:34

Matthew
26:28

Ephesians
1:7

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, the weight of my sin is often too much for me to bear. I pause to lament my failings and the real ways they have hurt others and you. I also choose today to step into the awareness that there is no height or depth that can keep me from you. You are strong enough to hold it all. You see my life clearly, without looking away. You release me from the prison of guilt that holds me and set my feet on firm ground. You make me free with your love. Thank you Father, for a love that renews itself, over and over and over.

WEDNESDAY

THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS



SCRIPTURE

1 John
1:5-10

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, I ask you today for sharpness of mind, so that I may see myself clearly in relation to you. Even as you are the Light of the World, I often stand in the shadows, hiding from your voice, forgetful of how far you have taken me, despairing of how far I have yet to go. Help me to walk in your light, in the truth and knowledge of who I am as your child, made in your image and clothed with the righteousness of your son. You know every part of me. You rejoice over me. You cleanse me from my sin and make me brand new. Thank you for the assurance of your forgiveness.

THURSDAY

JESUS CHRIST, OUR ADEQUATE SAVIOR, MEDIATOR, AND ADVOCATE



SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 1:8-10

1 Timothy 2:5

1 John 2:1

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, I thank you today for Jesus, the advocate of my soul. When my accuser condemns me, Christ covers me. When I am lost in my sin, I am found by his love. When my debt could not be paid, Christ shed his blood on my behalf. He fights for me, prays for me, pays for me, dies for me, lives for me. Thank you for giving me such a rescuer; thank you for giving me such a friend. Amen.

FRIDAY

A PARABLE OF CONFESSION



SCRIPTURE

Luke
15:11-24

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, when I think of all the ways I have squandered your blessings, of all the ways I have run from you and into the arms of folly, I am tempted to despair. And yet, you are there, on the road, waiting for me with great expectation. When you see me, you run to greet me with open arms. You celebrate my homecoming. You clothe me in robes of righteousness and your joy in my presence overflows into feasting and laughter. You delight in me, your child, the one who was lost but now is found. Even in my sin, you never stop pursuing me. May I rest in the abundance of your love today. May I believe that I am the child you will always welcome home.

Week 5

SIMPLIFY



When we simplify our lives we position ourselves to hear from God and join Him in what He is doing. Look at the simple life of Jesus and how He positioned Himself to rely on the Father alone. Practicing restraint, even fasting in certain forms—at least eating less, spending less, practicing restraint in every area of our lives is a powerful way to focus our lives on what God is doing in us and in His world.

Questions to consider this week as you study the discipline of confession in your life:

- Is there anything else besides food that you are attempting to feast on right now that you need to fast from? How might fasting from this thing help you draw nearer to Jesus?
- What are some things you and your family can do to set apart the Sabbath from the other six days of the week?
- In a sentence, how would you describe the biblical teaching of possessions?
- What do I set forth as the focal point for an understanding of Christian simplicity?
- List one thing that you could do this next week to simplify your life. Do it!



Family Discussion

Simplify: to reduce to basic essentials

Is there anything you feel like you just can't live without? What would life be like if you got rid of all your "stuff?" Material possessions weigh us down more than we realize. If we're not careful, we will fill our rooms with more toys, clothes, and gadgets that distract us from the main purpose God has for us.

As a family, choose a closet or room to declutter. You don't have to get rid of everything, but think about what you can do without and consider donating items you no longer need. Talk to each other about how it feels to have the space decluttered. How can you work together to keep your lives simplified?

BUT THE LORD ANSWERED
HER, “MARTHA, MARTHA, YOU
ARE ANXIOUS AND TROUBLED
ABOUT MANY THINGS, ⁴² BUT
ONE THING IS NECESSARY. ^[A]
MARY HAS CHOSEN THE GOOD
PORTION, WHICH WILL NOT BE
TAKEN AWAY FROM HER.”

Luke
10:41-42 ESV

To listen to this week's sermon, visit pcbc.org or download our podcast and don't forget to follow along with us on social media.

MONDAY

SIMPLICITY AS TRUST



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
6:25-34

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, guide me as I examine every worry and fear inside my heart, knowing you are compassionate and kind towards me. I am cherished and held by Christ, who knows what it is like to be human—to hunger, to thirst, to wonder, to worry—and sees my every need. Help me rely on you today and trust your Spirit, which lives and moves in me. You are enough. You are always enough. Help me receive this beautiful truth.

TUESDAY

SIMPLICITY OF OBEDIENCE



SCRIPTURE

Genesis
15

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, today I confess how difficult it is to walk in obedience. I often explain away your voice, replacing your wisdom with my own sense of logic and pragmatism. I fail to lean into the mystery of following you because I am afraid of where it will lead, what it will cost. Today I ask for the faith of a child to trust that your ways are not my ways, and to humbly submit to what you have called me to do. May I set aside my own comfort and step into the adventure of following you every day.

WEDNESDAY

THE GENEROSITY OF SIMPLICITY



SCRIPTURE

Leviticus
25:8-12

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear God, may I take pause today to remember all of the ways your grace holds me up and sustains me in even the most trying times. Help my gratitude towards you overflow into a generous love toward others around me, especially those in great need—the poor, the stranger, the lonely, the sick, the homeless, the forgotten. Everything I have belongs to you. Show me how to love my neighbor without reservation today. Give me opportunities to practice generosity with a joyful heart. Amen.

THURSDAY

THE SIMPLICITY IN SPEECH



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
5:33-37

James
5:12

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, I ask you to shape me into a person who others can rely on as a true and steady presence. Help me to keep my promises. Show me how to live with integrity, and for my actions to always be in alignment with my words. Teach me to be consistent and dependable, a safe harbor of refuge for those in need around me. Let my life be simple, and not simplistic, kind as well as true. Amen.

FRIDAY

SIMPLICITY AND JUSTICE



SCRIPTURE

Amos
5:11-14, 24

Luke
4:16-21

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, give me the eyes to see and respond to the injustices I see around me today. Help me notice the vulnerable, to stand up for the marginalized, to pursue truth and justice for the victims of the powerful. Remind me of the example of the prophets, who defended the weak and boldly proclaimed the truth without fear. Use my position, my time, and my resources to lift up those who have fewer advantages and to meet them in their suffering. Thank you for being a God of justice, for hearing the cries of the innocent. Give me eyes to see and ears to hear these same cries and to respond with strength and compassion.



Week 6

SERVICE



The life of the Christ follower is to be marked by death to self and our own glory-seeking tendencies. Our lives are to be given up for the sake of others.

Questions to consider this week as you study the discipline of confession in your life:

- If suffering has been a part of your story—whether to a small or great degree—how have those experiences affected your walk with Christ? How have they changed the way you view Christ and interact with others?
- What are some specific gifts God has given you that you may not be currently using to serve God or to serve others?

Family Discussion

Serve: to provide what someone needs

Followers of Jesus are recognized by the way they love and serve others. It doesn't matter what your age or status is – we're all called to serve others. Is there something you can do this week to meet another person's needs? As a family, pray for that person and think of a plan to serve them.

Optional Activity: Make Blessing Bags. Fill gallon-size Ziploc bags with toiletries, socks, granola bars, and a note of prayer. Keep the bags in your car and pass them out when you see someone in need.

FOR EVEN THE SON
OF MAN CAME NOT
TO BE SERVED BUT
TO SERVE, AND TO
GIVE HIS LIFE AS A
RANSOM FOR MANY.

Mark

10:45 ESV

MONDAY

THE CALL TO SERVICE



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
20:20-28

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, show me how I can be a servant to those around me today. Help me to lay aside my pride and my privileges, as Jesus did, to be a blessing to my family, my church, and my community. As a citizen of heaven, show me how to put aside my own agenda so I may participate in the community of saints as we work together to tend to the physical and spiritual needs of a hurting world. Help me to answer your call to serve today with eagerness and joy.

TUESDAY

THE SIGN OF SERVICE



SCRIPTURE

John
13:1-17

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Lord, today I remember the Last Supper. I meditate on the vision of Jesus stooping down to wash his disciples' feet, even those of Judas, the one who would betray him. Forgive me for any sense of superiority I have over others, and for all the times I have refused to reach out to and serve those who I felt did not deserve it. Whose feet can I wash today? Who can I give my undivided attention to? Who can I comfort? Who can I feed? Whose burden can I help carry? Please show me, Lord.

WEDNESDAY

THE COMMITMENT OF SERVICE



SCRIPTURE

Exodus

1:5-10, 21:2, 21:5-6

Corinthians
9:19

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, I know that obeying your call to serve is a costly, yet joyful journey. Like the vows of a husband and wife, a life of service is an intentional commitment of the heart, mind, body, and soul to the work of God set before me. Help me stay true to the practice of service as both an offering to others and to God. May I embody the love of Christ for his church and faithfully serve those placed around me. Amen.

THURSDAY

SERVICE IN THE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



SCRIPTURE

Colossians
3:23-25

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Father, today I specifically pray for opportunities to serve my brothers and sisters in Christ. Help me notice opportunities to provide practical and relational encouragement. Show me how I can build up the body of Christ through my fellowship with other believers with whom I am journeying alongside. Stir my affections and animate my prayers with a spirit of unity and grace for your Church. Amen.

FRIDAY

THE MINISTRY OF SMALL THINGS



SCRIPTURE

Matthew
25:31-39

APPLICATION

- What is God saying to me?
- How will I obey?
- Whom will I tell?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for sending Jesus. When he came into this world as a baby, he became part of the human experience, even until death. He suffers with us. He identifies with our sorrow. He understands what it means to be hungry, to be thirsty, and to be abandoned. Give me a spirit of identification with my fellow man, one that never neglects the ministry of small things. Show me how I can meet a need that no one else will see today. Give me the humility to do unglamorous and difficult work, to be willing to see the wounds of others and to respond with compassion.

A PERSONAL GUIDE TO

Prayer & Fasting

In the Bible, prayer and fasting are often mentioned together. Throughout history, God's people have made fasting part of their worship. Fasting is God's way of helping us take our focus off the physical and place it on the spiritual.

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is so foreign to most of us in the global west, it seems like a strange and ancient practice. To fast primarily means "not to eat." Yet, biblical fasting has a broader application. It has a spiritual purpose, in an act of the will through which the Christian exerts spiritual control over the flesh with a view to a more personal and powerful experience with God through prayer.

IS FASTING RELEVANT TODAY?

In Matthew 6:16, Jesus said, "When you fast..." He makes the assumption that fasting is a normal part of the Christian's walk. He doesn't say, "You must fast" or "If you fast," simply "When you fast." In Matthew 9:15, Jesus says, "The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and then they will fast." This is perhaps the most important word about fasting for our day. The most natural interpretation of the days when Jesus' disciples will fast is in the present Church age. In fact, this is how the disciples understood Him as well because it was only after His ascension to the Father that we read of them fasting (Acts 13:2). It is this age of the Church to which our Master referred when He said, "Then they will fast." The time is NOW!

ASSESS YOUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION

This is the most critical question of the fast. Preparation for a meaningful fast begins with repentance and confession. If you have unconfessed sin, you must confess it. (Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:2)

- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit brings to your attention.
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you. (Mark 11:25, Luke 11:4, 17:3-4)
- Ask God to fill you with His Spirit so that He will be your sustenance. (Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 5:14-15, John 4:32-34)
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart. (Hebrews 11:6)
- Hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. (Galatians 5:16-17)
- Remember that fasting is feasting as you “feed” on His presence and His will.

Ways to Fast

There are many ways to fast. The purpose of fasting is to give up in order to have more focus on God in prayer. Several types of fasting are appropriate:

MEDIA FAST

Spend less time on your phone. Designate hours, days, even weeks to be off of social media. Don't start your day on your phone. Monitor the amount of time on your phone, screens, playing games or watching movies.

A PARTIAL FAST

Refrain from certain types of food such as soft drinks, coffee, sweets, desserts, and only eat fruits or vegetables. A partial fast can also include a liquid diet during which time the individual drinks only fruit drinks and water. A partial fast could also mean that you have only water. Make sure you are in a healthy physical state for this kind of fasting.

AN ABSOLUTE FAST

During an absolute fast the person has no food or water. Make sure you are in a healthy physical state for this kind of fasting.

OTHER FASTS

Any activity that takes time and keeps you from having time to focus on God in prayer can be sacrificed for Him. Focus on prayer during the time you would ordinarily spend with these activities.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR FASTING SCHEDULE BE?

During your fasting period, you could follow a daily schedule. A routine that could look like this:

Morning

Begin the day with prayer and fasting. Don't look at your phone and get lost in the news, social media, or e-mails. Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees. Invite God's Spirit to fill you with His presence. Let Him know that all you desire in life is His good pleasure. Pray for vision for your life, your church, country, and beyond.

Noon

Return to prayer and God's Word. Take a short prayer walk. Spend time in intercessory prayer for our church, our country, and our world. Pray for our church staff. Pray for the lost people you know.

Evening

Seek a quiet place alone with the Lord. If others are fasting, join them in prayer. If you are married, pray with your spouse for God's will to be done in your marriage and in your family. Pray that God alone would be your one desire.

Be Encouraged

AS YOU PRAY AND FAST!

Remember to focus completely on God and use this time to enjoy His presence. Outwardly you may be doing the same things you would normally do, but inwardly you are rejoicing and praising God that He is your sustenance. You will be surprised at how fasting will draw your attention to God. As you step out in faith and try it, you'll learn how to grow in prayer and fasting. Surrender your will to Him. Let us fast and pray!



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214.860.1500 | PCBC.ORG