



# REFLECTION JOURNAL





## Week 1: God's Present and Open Kingdom

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Spend a few minutes deeply breathing. If you want, you can recite the memory verse below as you breathe. With each inhale, receive God's presence, His plans for this time, and His love for you. With each exhale release your thoughts and attitude to God.

### Opening Prayer:

*My Heavenly Father, you created the heavens and the earth. You love and fill your creation. Jesus says that You and your Kingdom come in the midst of our broken world and my broken life. You bring goodness, and you invite me to enjoy You and to let my life become a part of what You are doing in this world you love.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

"The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need." - Psalm 23:1

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Reflect on God's goodness shown through his purposes and activity.*

### Daily: Psalm 145:3-13

Monday: Genesis 1:27-2:1

Tuesday: Exodus 14:26-31

Wednesday: Psalm 8

Thursday: Isaiah 11:1-9

Friday: Colossians 1:15-23

Saturday: Revelation 5:10

### Daily Practice:

Spent some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page

1. What has God done for you?
2. What are you thankful for?

### Closing:

*Father, You are with me and in your Kingdom I have all I need. Guide me this day to recognize your presence, power, and beauty around me.*





## Quotes:

*“Jesus’ good news about the kingdom can be an effective guide for our lives only if we share his view of the world in which we live. To his eyes this is a God-bathed and God-permeated world.” - Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy*

*“Our failure is not that we choose earth over heaven: it is that we failed to see the divine in the earth, already active and working, pouring fourth Grace and spilling glory to our lives. There is a terrible beauty operating through our creation.”*

*- Makoto Fujimura, Silence and Beauty*

## Go Deeper:

Article: [“The Kingdom of God”](#), SoulShepherding blog

<https://bit.ly/4IMJKQC>

Book: [Eternity is Now in Session](#), by John Ortberg

<https://amzn.to/3HemLPn>

Song: [“Psalm 23 \(I Am Not Alone\)”](#) by People & Songs

<https://bit.ly/3U62kqQ>

Song: “The Kingdom of Heaven” by Jenny & Tyler

<https://bit.ly/4mruF7b>

Song: “Build Your Kingdom Here” by Rend Collective

<https://bit.ly/3IUspGX>



## Week 2: When God Comes Near

### Opening Practice:

Slowly read Psalm 23 as a prayer and confession to God.

### Opening Prayer:

*My good Father, you created me and you love me. You have given me freedom and a life, a kingdom. Apart from you my kingdom and the kingdoms of this world are hurt, tired, and broken. As I bring my kingdom, just as it is, to your Kingdom, you will provide what is right and good. As I do this, may I experience the awe and wonder of your love, goodness, and power.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

“From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” - *Matthew 4:17*

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Reflect on each daily scripture in light of Matthew 4:17. Write your thoughts on the blank page.*

### Daily: Matthew 4:17-25

Monday: Genesis 28:10-17

Tuesday: 2 Kings 5:1-14

Wednesday: Psalm 103:1-5

Thursday: James 5:16

Friday: Acts 3:1-10

Saturday: Revelation 21:1-5

### Daily Practice:

*Each day, spend time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.*

Day 1-2: What are broken parts of your life (Sickness, addiction, concern, frustration, needs, emotional wounds)? Confess these to Jesus and give them to him.

Day 3-4: Go back through the list you wrote in days 1-2, and say “God I give this back to you.” Write how you see him working.

Day 5-6: Create reminders that God is as close as the air touching you and wants to guide you through all the parts of this day! (*Example: When I see the clouds (some object) I will confess “God you are near, you hold these clouds together, and my life also” (Col 1:17)*)



## Closing:

*Father, through Jesus you open your Kingdom to me today. It is big enough to deal with all of my hurts and needs. As I give them to You, please show me Your goodness, Your presence, and Your power that I might experience the wonder of You. I confess you are more than enough. Through Jesus, my savior and master I pray. Amen.*

## Quotes:

*“Jesus brings us into a world without fear. In his world, astonishingly, there is nothing evil we must do in order to thrive. He lived, and invites us to live, in an undying world where it is safe to do and be good. Human existence understood in the context of this full world of God[’s Kingdom] can be as good as we naturally hope for it to be and think it ought to be, though perhaps not in the precise terms that would first come to our minds.” -Dallas Willard <sup>1</sup>*

*“I became aware of the world’s tenderness, the profound beneficence of all that surrounded me, the blissful bond between me and all of creation; and I realized that joy... breathed around me everywhere, in the speeding street sounds, in the hem of a comically lifted skirt, in the metallic yet tender drone of the wind, in the autumn clouds bloated with rain. I realized that the world does not represent a struggle at all, or a predaceous sequence of chance events, but shimmering bliss, beneficent trepidation, a gift bestowed on us and unappreciated.”*

*- Vladimir Nabokov <sup>2</sup>*

## Go Deeper:

Book: [The Divine Conspiracy](#), by Dallas Willard, Chapter 3

<https://amzn.to/45rGZyh>

Song: “[Psalm 34](#)” by The Brookly Tabernacle Choir

<https://bit.ly/45emUdO>

Song: “[The Goodness of God](#)” by Bethel Music

<https://bit.ly/3HdWb8Z>

Testimony: [Morolake Akinosun](#), Olympian

<https://bit.ly/46FBVHX>

<sup>1</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p95-96.

<sup>2</sup> *Beneficence* by Vladamir Nabokov. This book is not written from a Christian perspective. The use of this quote is to help you realize the nearness and goodnes of God. The use of the quote does not imply that the author is necessarily a reliable source of information in other areas, or that we agree with everything the author has written.





## Week 3: God's Present and Open Kingdom

### Opening Practice:

*Notice something from God's creation, either around you or in a photograph. Take some moments to truly consider it, its intricacy and beauty. Let yourself be amazed at the majestic imagination, creativity, and goodness of God.*

### Opening Prayer:

*Abba Father, Daddy, you love me and invite me into your world this day. Your presence fills your creation. Thank you for Jesus who brings the good news of your Kingdom. Thank you for the Holy Spirit, my guide, who walks with me today giving grace and power to do what I can not, and loving mercy as I imperfectly learn. In your name I pray, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."*

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." - Matthew 5:3, 13, 17.*

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. What did God do? What did people do?*

**Daily: Matthew 5:1-20**

Monday: Isaiah 55:1-5

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Wednesday: Isaiah 61:1-4

Thursday: Mark 5:(1-14) 15-20

Friday: Isaiah 60:1-7

Saturday: Psalm 107:1-9 (10-43)

### Daily Practice:

*Day 1-2. Beatitudes: Jesus invites you to experience the goodness of the Kingdom that meets our deepest desires for a good and abundant life and which confronts, overcomes and/or redefines our hurts and difficulties. On the blank page write a list of where you don't feel you are experiencing the good life—the questions, frustrations, and/or difficulties— as a way of releasing them to Jesus.*



*Day 3-4. Salt and Light: When we give hurts, wounds, and difficulties to Jesus we make a space which God's Kingdom fills with flavor and radiance. On the blank page, next to the list of challenges, write what God is showing you about himself in the midst of that issue, habit, or situation. Look for opportunities to share with someone what God is showing you.*

*5-6. Righteousness: Go through half of the list you made on Day 1. Over each item confess: "God, you make me righteous not by what I do but what you do as I give this to you. Show me the Kingdom way of moving forward"*

## Closing:

*Jesus, you bring blessing, the good life I want. I bring all of my life, my hopes, my fears, my brokenness, and my joys before you. It is you who give my life flavor and radiance. May I be humble and open to share what you are doing in me. You make me righteous. I will practice what Jesus says to grow in the right way of your Kingdom.*

## Quotes:

- *The Beatitudes are illustrations of God's staggering blessing in the midst of suffering, "Forgiveness and redemption are available to all, regardless of circumstances. Once the soul is set free, the imagination can reach beyond one's limited circumstance and imprisonment. The prison cell can then become a tea house for contemplation; the light coming through the cell windows can carry the aroma of hope." - Makoto Fujimura<sup>1</sup>*
- *Speaking to these common people, "the multitudes," who through [Jesus] had found blessing in the kingdom, [he] tells them that it is they, not the "best and brightest" on the human scale, who are to make life on earth manageable as they live from the kingdom. God gives them "light"—truth, love, and power— that they might be the light for their surroundings. He makes them "salt," to cleanse, preserve, and flavor the times through which they live. These "little" people, without any of the character or qualifications humans insist are necessary, are the only ones who can actually make the world work. It is how things are among them that determines the character of every age and place. - Dallas Willard<sup>2</sup>*

## Go Deeper:

- Book: [The Hiding Place](#) by Corrie ten Boom
- Testimony: [Chaz Smith](#)  
<https://www.iamsecond.com/film/chaz-smith/>
- Song: ["Salt and Light"](#) by Lauren Daigle  
<https://bit.ly/3kQJUbD>

<sup>1</sup> *Silence and Beauty*, ch7 'the appendix', kindle.

<sup>2</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p141, kindle.



## Week 4: Letting go of Anger

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Spend a few moments reflecting on and repeating aloud the following scripture:

*"For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him." - Psalm 95:3-4*

### Opening Prayer:

(7-Steps: Step 1. DECIDE)

*Jesus, you said that God's Kingdom is near, good, powerful, and available. No power can ultimately defeat it. Because of this, you invite me to lay down my frustrations and anger. They are not the way of your Kingdom. Teach me today how to deal with the issues of this day, not out of anger, but from your perspective of love.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

(7-Steps: Step 3. CONFESS)

*"Human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."*

*- James 1:20*

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Reflect on these scriptures in light of Jesus' teaching to let go of anger.*

**Daily:**            **Matthew 5:21-26**

Monday:        Genesis 4:1-8

Tuesday:       Psalm 30:1-5, 37:7-9

Wednesday:   Proverbs 29:22, 30:33

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Friday: Colossians 3:1-4, 8-10

Saturday: Ephesians 4:25-32

### Daily Practice:

Each day: Using the 7-steps model, practice steps 2-6 any time you feel anger (from frustration/annoyance to rage). Write down the situations in which you felt angry that day in the Habit Journal.

Daily reflection questions: *write responses in the Habit Journal.*

(The Habit Journal is available at: <https://ggle.io/5x6M>)

Day 1: Where do I see anger in people around me, the media, or culture?



Day 2: When do I experience anger (at home, work/school, with others)?

Day 3: When I act out of anger, what do I think it will provide that is good? After I acted out of anger, did it make things good?

Day 4: What are triggers or cues that bring up anger in my life?

Day 5: Look back at your journal for the instances when you faced anger throughout this week. For each instance, label it:

- 4 - Recognized and began steps after action
- 3 - Recognized and began steps during action
- 2 - Recognized and began steps after allowing thoughts, but before action
- 1 - Recognized and began steps at the moment of temptation

*As you grow, you will find the numbers decreasing. Keeping a journal helps you to see your progress.*

Day 6: Continue practicing the 7-steps when you encounter moments of anger (annoyance to rage) and logging these in your journal to help you be mindful and track your progress.

## 7-STEPS OF HABIT CHANGE



**1 Decide** to do what Jesus says

*See the opening prayer.*

**2 Stop:** When under temptation, say “Stop.”

*This helps create space.*

**3 Ask** Jesus’ help and perspective.

**4 Admit** what is wrong: the temptation, issue, feelings, or action you are facing.

**5 Confess** what is true.

*See the memory verse and scriptures above.*

**6 Obey:** Do what you know to be right, trusting the Holy Spirit is helping you.

**7 Accountability:** Write down the situation in your Habit Journal and be willing to share it with others who will help you.

### Closing:

*Father, You are with me, and in your Kingdom I have all I need. Help me recognize when I am angry and what triggers my anger. Help me to stop, to be honest with you, to confess what is true, and to release my anger. Give me grace to respond with love.*

## Quotes:

*In the right hands, and with the right training, and from the right heart, anger can be wielded righteously. Yet in most cases, it is only a destructive force. I rarely see all things clearly, and a weapon as dangerous as anger is best deployed only by those with perfect vision. I trust Jesus to use anger righteously. I don't trust myself. I have misfired too many times and I have hurt too many people with my anger." - Skye Jethani <sup>3</sup>*

*I have an internal script to combat the message of shame whenever I mess up. It goes something like this: "Yes, you messed up again. Go to the Lord with a contrite spirit, and he will forgive you. The Lord has not completed his work in that particular area of your life yet. Be patient. He will. He knows what he is doing. It is the Lord's labor of love. Do you feel his fingers molding you to his likeness? There is no shame. You are in God's hands. There is only love. There is only grace." It took many years for the Lord to rewrite my internal script. As your love overflows with more knowledge and insight, I pray that your internal script is being rewritten as well." - Christine Youn Hung <sup>4</sup>*

## Go Deeper:

Book chapter: "It's OK to be Angry," Ch 8 from [It's OK to Be Not OK](#), by Federico Villanueva <sup>5</sup>

Video: [Dallas Willard: Living Without Anger](#) (0:00-33:15)  
<https://bit.ly/2WKvjpu>

Article: [Mental Health and Anger Management](#)  
<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/mental-health-managing-anger>

Book: [UnOffendable](#), by Brant Hansen<sup>6</sup>

Song: "[Anger Management](#)" by Lecrae  
<https://bit.ly/3yHChJg>

Song: "[I Want to Say I'm Sorry](#)" by Andrew Peterson  
<https://bit.ly/3t8f0yV>

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<sup>3</sup> Skye Jethani, *What If Jesus Was Serious?: A Visual Guide to the Teachings of Jesus We Love to Ignore* (Moody Publishers, 2020), 57.

<sup>4</sup> Christine Youn Hung and Albert Hung, *Born the King: An Advent Devotional* (The Foundry Publishing, 2019), 61.

<sup>5</sup> Federico Villanueva, *It's OK to Be Not OK: Preaching the Lament Psalms* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Preaching Resources, 2017), chap. 8, Kindle.

<sup>6</sup> Brant Hansen, *Unoffendable: How Just One Change Can Make All of Life Better* (Thomas Nelson, 2015).



## Habit Journal (Letting go of Anger)

Timing: Recognized and began steps

4 - after action

2 - after allowing thoughts but before action

3 - during action

1 - at the moment of temptation

| Experience of Anger<br><i>What was the situation?</i> | Trigger<br><i>What caused the anger?</i> | Response<br><i>How did I respond?</i> | Timing<br>(1-4) |
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## Week 5: Letting Go of Contempt

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Psalm 136 repeats the refrain, “[God’s] steadfast love endures forever.” Spend a few moments repeating this phrase, letting God ground you in the truth of his steadfast love for us and for everyone he has made, in spite of the brokenness of the world.

### Opening Prayer:

*Father, You are with me and your Kingdom provides all I need. I will experience anger and contempt, but it is not the way of your kingdom and will not bring good, only wounds and shame. With your Spirit help me choose to respond in love when I experience anger and contempt.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

“Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

- Matthew 5:22b

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. These scriptures are examples of contempt or instructions of releasing contempt.*

#### **Daily: Matthew 5:21-26**

Monday: 1 John 4:16-21

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 20:30-34

Wednesday: John 17:15-23

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, 21-23

Friday: Matthew 9:35-36

Saturday: Romans 2:1-4

Turn over



**Daily Practice:**

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.

**Each day:** Be aware of moments or alerts to contempt. Use the 7-steps model and habit journal, if helpful.

*(These pages are available at <https://ggle.io/5x6M>)*

**Daily reflection questions:** *write responses on blank journal pages.*

**Day 1:** Where do I see contempt in people around me, the media, or culture?

With: other nations, languages, races, or cultures; Social/moral views;  
Political views; people of different ages

**Day 2:** When do I experience contempt (at home, work/school, with others)?

**Day 3:** *Look over the list you created.* How does this contempt show itself in my thoughts, attitudes, or actions?

**Day 4:** What are specific triggers or cues that bring up contempt in my life?

*3 possible cues: Don't understand, Differences, Disagreements*

**Day 5-6:** Continue practicing the 7-steps when you recognize contempt.

Continue to reflect and let God show you areas of contempt in your life.

These are often hidden and unrecognized and take time to recognize and deal with.

**Closing:**

*Father, you created all things and people and said they are good. You said that if we do not love others whom we do see, we can not love you whom we do not see. Through this day show me any contempt in my life, that I may learn to let go of it, and to value others as you do.*

**Quotes:**

*“When we trace wrongdoing back to its roots in the human heart, we find that in the overwhelming number of cases it involves some form of anger. Close beside anger you will find its twin brother, contempt. Jesus’ understanding of them and their role in life becomes the basis of his strategy for establishing kingdom goodness. It is the elimination of anger and contempt that he presents as the first and fundamental step toward the rightness of the kingdom heart.”*

- Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* <sup>7</sup>

*“We must lay before [God] what is in us; not what ought to be in us.”*

- C.S. Lewis <sup>8</sup>

The healing of contemptuous Eustace from “The Voyage of the Dawn Treader”

*“Sleeping on a dragon’s hoard with greedy, dragonish thoughts in his heart, [Eustace] had become a dragon himself.” [Eustace later remembered,] “Then the lion—[Aslan, the Son of the Emperor Beyond the Sea]—said ‘You will have to let me undress you.’ I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So I just lay flat down on my back to let him do it. The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I’ve ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off.”*

- C.S. Lewis <sup>9</sup>

**Go Deeper:**

Article: [“C.S. Lewis: The Undragoning of Eustace”](#) by Jennifer Neyhart

Article: [“Speaking with Contempt”](#) by Tim Keller

Article/Study: [“Beneath their Sneering Veneer People Prone to Contempt are Psychologically Fragile”](#) from Research Digest, a publication of the British Psychological Society.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p164, kindle.

<sup>8</sup> *Letters to Malcom: Chiefly on Prayer*

<sup>9</sup> *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*

## Week 6: Letting Go of Lust

*Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.*

### Opening Practice:

Spend a few moments in silence confessing this quote from St. Augustine, “You made me for yourself, O Lord, and my heart is restless until it rests in you.”

### Opening Prayer:

*Father, You are with me and your Kingdom provides all I need. I will experience lust or obsessive desires but they are not the way of your Kingdom. Holy Spirit, would you show me any lust in my life be it visual or emotional. Help me understand the wounds and shame it brings. Reveal the goodness of the Kingdom heart that loves and values others as creations of you and that leads to the intimacy I was made for.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

- Matthew 5:27-28 ESV

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. What does each passage tell us about God’s creation of sexual intimacy or of the consequences of lust and misplaced sexuality?*

### Daily: Matthew 5:27-30

Monday: Genesis 2:15-25

Tuesday: Romans 1:18-27

Wednesday: Colossians 3:1-10

Thursday: John 8:1-11

Friday: Psalm 63:1-8

Saturday: Ephesians 5:1-7

### Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.

**Each day:** Be aware of temptations to lust. Use the 7-steps model and habit journal, if helpful, to track these instances, your responses, and the progress you are making.

*(These pages are available at <https://ggle.io/5x6M>)*

**Daily reflection questions:** *write or sketch responses on blank journal pages.*

**Day 1:** Lust is a strong sexual desire (typically visual for men and emotional for women) that fantasizes about what we can get from others. Where do I see lust and sensuality in people around me, the media, or culture?

**Day 2:** When specifically do I experience lust? How do I see a person when I am lusting? How does God see them?

**Day 3:** What are specific triggers or cues that bring up lust in my life? How can I address these triggers rightly without resorting to lust?

**Day 4:** What are gateways that feed lustful thoughts, or enable me to act on lustful desires? What gateways can I remove or make difficult to access?

**Day 5:** If I can not move/change triggers or gateways, how can I use the 7-steps to redirect my thoughts toward God and truth?

**Day 6:** Continue practicing the 7-steps when you recognize lust.

### **Closing:**

*Father, you created me as a sexual being and said that it was good. However, my sexuality and particularly lust do not bring ultimate good. You are the good I desire. Today I make a commitment with my eyes to not lust and to let you teach me to value each person as you do.*

## Quotes:

*"And so, in time, Bonifer became the chief advisor to the High King of Anniera, and his soul was riven by his love for the queen and his hidden hatred for the king. He knew, with what was left of his conscience, that the cost of his nearness to the queen was the destruction of whatever goodness was left in him, yet he remained..."* - Andrew Peterson, *The Warden and the Wolf King* <sup>10</sup>

*"We now keep hammering the sex button in the hope that a little intimacy might finally dribble out. In vain. For intimacy comes only within the framework of an individualized faithfulness within the kingdom of God. Such faithfulness is violated by "adultery in the heart" as well as by adultery in the body.* - Dallas Willard <sup>11</sup>

*"Physical fulfillment in sexual relations is not the supreme value and purpose in life, nor is this fulfillment absolutely essential to rich and useful living. Sex in all of its aspects is holy when conformed to God's will, sinful when selfish and lawless."* - Richard S. Taylor <sup>12</sup>

*"Also eliminated [when we learn to release lust] would be the unfair treatment of those who do not attract the lusting look. They do not have the "sexual edge" that facilitates others, often quite subtly, on the path of life: favorable attention, a more "forgiving" application of standards of performance, advancement in position, and financial reward. And of course they can not say anything about this because it would be a humiliating admission of their "unattractiveness." In silence they suffer."* - Dallas Willard <sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *The Warden and the Wolf King*, 237.

<sup>11</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, 163.

<sup>12</sup> "Holiness and Sex" in *Holiness Alive and Well*, p24.

<sup>13</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p161-2.



## Go Deeper:

Video: “[Love as Life Part 1](https://bit.ly/4n3aR9R)” Dallas Willard, 13:00-24:00 <https://bit.ly/4n3aR9R>

Songs: “[Siren Songs](https://bit.ly/2XK3qyP)” by Gray Havens <https://bit.ly/2XK3qyP>

“[Band of Gold](https://bit.ly/2VXQILX)” by Gray Havens <https://bit.ly/2VXQILX>

“[Indefensible](https://bit.ly/3kUKPYq)” by Scott Mulvahill <https://bit.ly/3kUKPYq>

Booklet: “[The Talk](https://bit.ly/3ifsXa8)” Talking about sexuality with your children of all ages, by Focus on the Family <https://bit.ly/3ifsXa8>

Books: “[Loveology: God. Love. Marriage. Sex. And the Never-Ending Story of Male and Female.](#)” by John Mark Comer

“[Every Man’s Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time](#)” by Stephen Arterburn

“[Every Woman’s Battle: Discovering God’s plan for Sexual and Emotional Fulfillment](#)” by Shannon Ethridge

“[Every Young Man’s Battle](#)” by Stephen Arterburn

“[Every Young Woman’s Battle](#)” by Shannon Etheridge and Stephen Arterburn

“[An Impossible Marriage: What our Mixed-Orientation Marriage Has Taught Us about Love and the Gospel](#)” by Laurie and Matt Krieg



## Week 7: Letting Go of Obsessive Desires

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Begin by slowly and deeply breathing in and out. Recognize that God is *with* you. As thoughts come up, recognize them and then set them aside.

### Opening Prayer:

*Father, you are with me, and in your Kingdom I have everything I need. I will experience lust or obsessive desires but they are not the way of your Kingdom and will not bring good but rather wounds and shame. Holy Spirit, help me choose to respond in love and self-control when I experience lust or obsessive desires.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.”  
- Isaiah 55:2

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Read these scriptures in light of Jesus’ teaching about obsessive desires. What does each scripture say concerning the category listed underneath it?*

#### Daily: Isaiah 55:1-5

Monday: Deuteronomy 11:13-16

*Work and provisions*

Tuesday: Psalm 103:1-5

*Security*

Wednesday: Psalm 145:13-20

*Safety and healing*

Thursday: Proverbs 27:20

*Buying, social media*

Friday: Ecclesiastes 5:10, 6:7

*Money and shopping*

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 6:12-13

*Food, substances, sex*

### Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page



**Each day:** Be aware of temptations to obsessive desire. Use the 7-steps model and habit journal, if helpful, to track these instances, your responses, and the progress you are making.

**Daily reflection questions:** *write or sketch responses on blank journal pages.*

**Day 1:** Obsessive desires are often strong urges to have or do something.

When we don't get what we desire, we become anxious or upset. These can also be places where we are out of healthy boundaries. What are the obsessive desires in my life?

**Day 2:** Why do I do this thing (what do I believe this will bring that is good)?

How does this activity impact my emotions, attitude, and relationships with those close to me?

**Day 3:** What boundaries can I set with this specific issue? Do I need to

give this up completely for a period of time? Who can I talk to and permit to help hold me accountable?

**Day 4:** What are triggers or gateways that lead me to obsessive

desires or activities? What triggers can I remove? If I can not move/change them, how can I redirect my thoughts towards the truth in God?

**Day 5-6:** Continue to reflect on the previous day's questions, write down new ideas and discoveries, and journal how your practice is going in laying down obsessive desires.

## **Closing:**

*Father, you created me as a physical being and said that this was good.*

*However, physical things can not provide ultimate satisfaction, life, or security.*

*Only you and your Kingdom can do that. Because you are my shepherd, I*

*confess I have everything I need (Ps 23:1). Help me today to follow your guidance in recognizing and setting down the obsessive desires in my life, and bringing things back into a healthy balance under you.*



**Quotes:**

*"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ."*

- Paul (Philippians 3:7)

*"Lord you have created us for yourself, so our souls are restless until they find their rest in you."*

- Augustine of Hippo

*"Violence is the sure overflow of anger and contempt in the heart. Anger and contempt constantly intermingle, both with each other and with the torrents of fantasized gratifications that also inhabit the human heart: such as those for fame, drugs and alcohol, power, and money. Hungers for these dominate a social framework in which a seemingly unlimited range of desires are constantly pushing their claims for "liberation" into unlimited satisfaction."*

- Dallas Willard<sup>14</sup>

*"God calls us not only to run away from temptation, but to run toward him. He promises that when we are walking by the Spirit, we will not gratify the flesh. As I have followed God's Spirit into meaningful [activities], it has been amazing to see the craving for sin diminish. The thrill of the Holy Spirit manifesting himself through me to bless others fills me thoroughly, crowding out sinful desires that might otherwise have had room to grow (1 Cor. 12:7).*

- Francis Chan<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p159.

<sup>15</sup> *Following the Call*, p111.

**Go Deeper:**

Songs: [“Overcomer”](#) by Mandisa

<https://bit.ly/3tYdNus>

[“Hold me Jesus”](#) by Rich Mullins

<https://bit.ly/3nWNaFd>

Articles: [“The Psychological Effects of TV News”](#)

<https://bit.ly/3EDorvD>

[Children and the Impact of Tablets](#)

<https://bit.ly/3kWULC4> (cited study: <https://bit.ly/3uqJgWF>)

[“Guiding your Child’s Media Choices”](#) by Focus on the Family

<https://bit.ly/3omCXCh>

[“Compulsive Spending/Shopping”](#)

<https://bit.ly/3B1lIsw>

[“The Four H’s of Self Destruction: When Hobby becomes Habit”](#)

<https://bit.ly/3utUPw5>

Books: [“Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life”](#) by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

[“Counterfeit Gods”](#) by Timothy Keller

[“12 Ways your Smartphone is Changing You”](#) by Tony Reinke

[“Atomic Habits”](#) by James Clear

Other: [Real Battle Ministries](http://www.realbattle.org) ([www.realbattle.org](http://www.realbattle.org))

Numerous resources on digital media, it’s impact and creating healthy boundaries.

*\* Note: Some of the articles and books above are not written from a Christian perspective. The use of this resource is to help you think with Jesus about these issues and to better understand how they impact the bodies God has given us. The use of the article does not imply that the author is necessarily a reliable source of information in other areas, or that we agree with everything the author has written.*

## Week 8: Letting Go of Divorce

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Slowly repeat these words from Exodus 34:6. “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.”

### Opening Prayer:

*Father, you are faithful. Your Kingdom teaches us how to love and be faithful. Help me to practice and value faithfulness in my relationship with you, with your people, and in honoring the gift of marriage.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

Jesus replied. “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

- Mark  
10:6-9

### Scripture Reading:

*Read slowly. How does this passage connect to what Jesus is saying about love and faithfulness in marriage in Matthew 5:31-32?*

#### **Daily: Matthew 5:31-32**

Monday: Mark 10:2-9

Tuesday: Isaiah 54:5-6

Wednesday: Jeremiah 3:19-22

Thursday: Proverbs 2:12-19

Friday: Malachi 2:13-16

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 7:1-11, 17

**Daily reflection questions:** *Write or sketch responses on blank journal pages.*

*These questions can be tied specifically to marriage, or to other relationships where God has called us to be faithful.*

**Day 1:** What are specific relationships where God has called me to be faithful (spouse, parents, coworkers, friends, community)? Pray for those people by name.

**Day 2:** In the relationships listed in day 1, what does faithfulness look like specifically? What am I doing well in these relationships?

**Day 3:** In the relationships listed in day 1, what does unfaithfulness look like specifically? What are areas I need to be aware of or can improve in this relationship?

**Day 4:** Reflect with God on one specific way you can grow in faithfulness in this relationship. Write it in your journal and begin to practice it.

**Day 5-6:** Continue to pray for these people by name. Spend time reflecting and letting God help you see more of what He sees and do what is right and good towards this person or these people.

**Closing:**

*God, you are the faithful God. Your faithfulness comes not from our performance but your never-ending love. Help me to see the people you have put in my life and the relationships that you have given me—particularly with my family—with your same fierce love and faithfulness. Reveal any areas where I am tempted to be unfaithful and help me to lay them down. I choose faithfulness because you are faithful. Amen.*

**Quotes:**

*When Jesus himself comes to deal with the rightness of persons in divorce, he does not forbid divorce absolutely, but he makes it very clear that divorce was never God's intent for men and women in a marriage. The intent in marriage is a union of two people that is even deeper than the union of parents and children or any other human relationship. They are to become "one flesh," one natural unit, building one life, which therefore could never lose or substitute for one member and remain a whole life (Mt 19:5, Gen 2:24).*

*It is the hardness of the human heart that Jesus cites as grounds for permitting divorce in case of adultery. In other words, the ultimate grounds for divorce is human meanness. No doubt what was foremost in [Jesus'] mind [when speaking to the men of the culture of his day] was the fact that the woman could quite well wind up dead, or brutally abused if the man could not "dump" her. It is still so today, of course. Such is "our hardness of heart." Better, then, that a divorce occur than life be made unbearable. Jesus does nothing to retract this principle. As in the phrase "adultery in the heart," Jesus speaks of being forced into "adultery" to point out the degraded sexual condition that was, then if not now, sure to be the result of divorce.*

- Dallas Willard <sup>16</sup>

*So many families break up these days; you'd think you might be prepared for the shock when it happens to yours. But you can't prepare yourself for something like that, not really, especially if everything feels fine until the moment [your parents] tell you it's happening. Dad would come visit us whenever he could, bringing with him the pain I preferred to avoid.*

- Matthew Forsthoefel <sup>17</sup>

*I can't emphasize enough the importance of commitment in sustaining lifelong love. Three doctors who studied six thousand marriages and three thousand divorces concluded, "there may be nothing more important in a marriage than a determination that it shall persist. With such a determination, individuals force themselves to adjust and to accept situations which would seem sufficient grounds for a breakup if continuation of the marriage were not the prime objective." Commitment is the mortar that holds the stones of marriage in place.*

- Les and Leslie Parrott <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p169-70.

<sup>17</sup> *Walking to Listen*, 11. This book is not written from a Christian perspective. The use of this quote is to help you think with Jesus about marriage and to better understand how they impact our lives and those of others. The use of the quote does not imply that the author is necessarily a reliable source of information in other areas, or that we agree with everything the author has written.

<sup>18</sup> *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*, p63, kindle.



**Go Deeper:**

Songs: “[Dancing in the Minefield](#)” by Andrew Peterson

<https://bit.ly/3iDfeKm>

“[See the Light](#)” by Toby Mac

<https://bit.ly/3lgyK1f>

“[Love Anyway](#)” by Drew & Ellie Holcomb

<https://bit.ly/3FKK3H6>

Articles: “[326 Years of Successful Marriage](#)” by Richard Foster

“[The Most Significant Thing We Do on Earth](#)” by Nathan Foster

“[Adultery, Abuse, Abandonment are Biblical Grounds for Divorce](#)” by  
Gretchen Baskerville

Books: “[The Divine Conspiracy](#)” by Dallas Willard, p168-173.

“[Loveology](#)” by John Mark Comer, p263-5, kindle.

“[Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before—and After—You Marry](#)” by Les and Leslie Parrott



## Week 9: Letting Go of Verbal Manipulation

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Read Psalm 19 as a prayer, confessing the character of God revealed in his words.

### Opening Prayer:

*Father, You are true and good. I can trust what you say to be right. I confess I am tempted to use the gift of words to speak wrongly or to try to manipulate others. This is not the way of your Kingdom and will not bring good but rather wounds and shame. Teach me to allow others to freely respond to my words. Teach me to simply let my “yes” be “yes” and my “no” be “no.” Teach me to be content, for in your Kingdom you provide all that is needed.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all... All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. - Matthew 5:34a, 37

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Read each of these in light of Jesus’ teaching on oaths. How does each scripture talk about how words are used improperly or properly?*

### Daily: Matthew 5:33-37

Monday: Genesis 3:9-13

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 23:21-22

Wednesday: Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Thursday: Matthew 26:69-75

Friday: James 3:1-12, 5:12

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13



**Daily Practice:**

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page

**Each day:** Be aware of temptations to be manipulative in your speech, instead of speaking simply and in love. Use the 7-steps model and habit journal, if helpful, to track these instances, your responses, and progress you are making.

(These pages are available at <https://ggle.io/5x6M>)

**Day 1:** Words have great power and can be used to pressure or manipulate people into doing what we want. Where do I use words in anger or contempt? Where do I use words to get what I lust for or obsessively desire? Why do I do this?

**Day 2:** Where do I use words to overwhelm another person? Where do I use words untruthfully? List examples. Why do I do this thing?

**Day 3:** Words can be used to violate the freedom and choice God gives people. List some examples of when people have attacked or tried to pressure or manipulate you with their words. How did you feel or respond?

**Day 4:** In the examples from days 1-2, how do people respond when I speak to them in this way? How does it impact our relationship?

**Day 5:** Go back to the examples from days 1-2. In a few of the examples, write what would have been a better way to speak to the other person.

**Day 6:** Continue to reflect on the previous day's questions and write down new ideas and discoveries. Practice speaking simply and in love.

**Closing:**

*Father, you spoke creation into being. You speak your love and truth to us that we may have life. You have given us the gift of words to direct our lives—our kingdoms. Holy Spirit, help me to practice speaking truth in love without using many words, strong words, or harsh words to try to force or manipulate others into agreement. May my words be a reflection of your love seen in Jesus. Amen.*

## Quotes:

*“But Jesus goes right to the heart of why people swear oaths. He knew that they do it to impress others with their sincerity and reliability and thus gain acceptance of what they are saying and what they want. It is a method for getting their way. It is simply a device of manipulation, designed to override the judgment and will of the ones they are focusing upon to push them aside, rather than respecting them and leaving their decision and action strictly up to them. The evil of it that he addresses is that it is an inherently wrong approach to other human beings. This is wrong. It is unlike God.”*

- Dallas Willard <sup>19</sup>

*“Jesus is saying to us: “When you are truly living, you are truthful and genuine in all your words.” Then you will not hide as soon as you hear something unfavorable about yourself, but you will come forward courageously and face what you have done. You will own up to what you are, for you no longer seek your own honor.”*

- Eberhard Arnold <sup>20</sup>

*“In the end, the problem of sincerity [—of honesty—] is a problem of love. A sincere person is not so much one who sees the truth and manifests it as he sees it, but one who loves the truth with a pure love. But the truth is more than an abstraction. It lives and is embodied in people and things that are real. And the secret of sincerity is, therefore, not to be sought in a philosophical love for abstract truth but in a love for real people and real things—a love for God apprehended in the reality around us.”*

- Thomas Merton <sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p174.

<sup>20</sup> *Following the Call*, p128, kindle.

<sup>21</sup> Same as above.



## Go Deeper:

Songs: "[Speak Life](#)" by Toby Mac

<https://bit.ly/3AUUPXL>

"[Make Me an Instrument](#)" by A Ragamuffin Band

<https://bit.ly/3oFNiJJ>

"[Words](#)" by Trent Hawk

<https://bit.ly/2Ypgl9a>

Articles: "[What Does the Bible Say About the Power of Words?](#)"

<https://bit.ly/3aR7iB1>

"[What Power are Your Words Packing?](#)" by Eric Reid

<https://bit.ly/3mr8ale>



## Week 10: Letting Go of Retaliation

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Notice the plants outside. Even when they are destroyed by weather, fire or warfare, God brings them back to life. What does this say about God's character?

### Opening Prayer:

*Father, You are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. You do not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our wrongs (Ps 103:10). I confess I am tempted to hurt others who have hurt me, to retaliate and get even. This is not the way of your Kingdom and will not bring good but rather wounds and shame. Show me where I try to retaliate. Amen.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person... Give to the one who asks you.

- Matthew 5:38-39a, 42a

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Read each of these in light of Jesus' teaching on retaliation. How does each scripture talk about retaliation (physical or verbal)?*

#### **Daily: Matthew 5:38-42**

Monday: Psalm 103:6-22 (v10)

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 24:1-22

Wednesday: Romans 12:9-21

Thursday: Mark 15:16-32

Friday: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Saturday: Proverbs 15:1-4

### Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page

**Each day:** Be aware of temptations to retaliate and not respond in love when you feel someone has wronged you. Use the 7-steps model and habit journal, if helpful, to track these instances, your responses, and progress you are making. (These pages are available at <https://ggle.io/5x6M>)

**Day 1:** Reactions, retaliation, and negative responses are ways we physically deal with emotions of anger or desire. When someone imposes on me: Where do I try to get even (Mt 5:39)? Why? What was the result?

**Day 2:** Reactions, retaliation, and negative responses are ways we physically deal with emotions of anger or desire. Where do I do the least required (Mt 5:40-1)? Where do I refrain from giving (Mt 5:42)? Why? What was the result?

**Day 3:** Looking back on the list from day 1, pray for the individual(s) who you felt imposed on you (by their actions, their demands, or their requests). Ask God to help you understand why they acted as they did. Think about the person and let God begin to show you what he sees and how he loves them.

**Day 4:** With God, go back through the situations from day 1 and 2. How could you have responded better, in Kingdom love (i.e. turning the other cheek, going the extra mile, giving or loaning)?

**Day 5:** If it's possible, go to the individual and ask forgiveness.

**Day 6:** Continue to reflect on the previous day's questions and write down new ideas and discoveries.

## Closing:

*Jesus, you knew that no person, no structure, no sin, and no evil could overcome the loving power of God's Kingdom. So you loved, personally and creatively in each situation. Give me grace and wisdom when people impose on me or mistreat me. Give me grace and wisdom to see them and respond to them in active love, just as you did, my Lord and master. Amen.*

**Quotes:**

*"The narcissist loves only himself.*

*The nationalist loves only his tribe.*

*The activist loves only his cause.*

*The idealist loves only his thoughts.*

*The humanist loves only his concept of humanity.*

*The Christian loves the irritating person right in front of him."*

- Skye Jethani <sup>22</sup>

*"In every concrete situation we have to ask ourselves, not "Did I do the specific things in Jesus' illustration?" but "Am I being the kind of person Jesus' illustrations are illustrations of?"*

- Dallas Willard <sup>23</sup>

*"And this is what Jesus means when he says "love your enemy." It's significant that he does not say "Like your enemy." Like is a sentimental something, an affectionate something. There are a lot of people that I find it difficult to like. I don't like what they do to me. I don't like what they say about me and other people. I don't like their attitudes. I don't like them. But Jesus says love them. And love is greater than like. Love is understanding, redemptive goodwill for all men, so that you love everybody, because God loves them. Hate for hate only intensifies the existence of hate and evil in the universe. If I hit you and you hit me and I hit you back... it just never ends. Somebody must have religion enough and morality enough to cut it off and inject within the very structure of the universe that strong and powerful element of love."*

- Martin Luther King Jr. <sup>24</sup>

*"Jesus is not teaching passive resistance but an active resistance on a higher level. [Turning the other cheek] is this audacious offense of love that forces the man to go further and thus to break down. He tries to break your head, and you, as a Christian try to break his heart. In turning the other cheek you wrest the offensive from him and assume moral charge of the situation. If a man compels you to go with him one mile you are his slave; but if you voluntarily go with him two, then you rise from your slavery, confer a bounty on him and thus become his master. Love gives the method life. [Jesus' prayer] "Father forgive them," that spirit [of love] wrested the offensive from [his enemies'] hands and turned the tragedy into a triumph."*

- E. Stanley Jones <sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *What if Jesus was Serious?*, p.72.

<sup>23</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p200.

<sup>24</sup> *A Knock at Midnight*, p49-50

<sup>25</sup> *Following the Call*, p135-7.





## Go Deeper:

Songs: “[In the Night](#)” by Andrew Peterson

<https://bit.ly/3m1M2yO>

“[Turn the Other Cheek](#)” by Peter Rowan

<https://bit.ly/3C7BIAi>

“[Love Your Enemies](#)” by Kyle Sigmon

<https://bit.ly/3Cg6Rwe>

Articles: “[Love your Enemies](#)” by Martin Luther King Jr.

Books: “[Toyohiko Kagawa: Apostle of Love and Social Justice](#)” by Robert Schildgen

Video: [Jesus Goes the Extra Mile](#), from The Chosen

<https://bit.ly/49an7IN>

[Jesus’ Teaching on Retaliation](#) in “Living Without Anger” by Dallas Willard

(1:09:43-1:19:25) <https://bit.ly/3jpQvK4>



## Week 11: Loving Enemies

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Take deep breaths letting God make you aware of his presence, his goodness, and his love for you.

### Opening Prayer:

*Jesus, you are my Savior, Lord, Master and friend. When I was your enemy you died for me. When I rejected you, you still called me. You offered forgiveness before I was sorry. Thank you, Jesus. Help me to treat my enemies—those who oppose me in small or large ways—as you have treated me. I choose to love them as you have loved me. Teach me how to truly love them in attitude and action. Amen.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

- Matthew 5:44-45a

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Read each of these in light of Jesus' teaching on loving your enemies. How does each scripture talk about the theme of enemies?*

### Daily: Matthew 5:43-48

Monday: Psalm 23

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 18:1-29

Wednesday: 1 Peter 2:18-25

Thursday: 1 John 3:13-18, 4:19-21

Friday: Psalm 13

Saturday: Nehemiah 9:6-37

## Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page

**Each day:** Be aware of temptations to treat others as enemies instead of praying for and loving them. Use the 7-steps model and habit journal, if helpful, to track these instances, your responses, and progress you are making.

(These pages are available at <https://ggle.io/5x6M>)

## Daily reflection questions:

**Day 1:** Who are (or have been) your enemies (individuals, groups, nations, etc.)?

Why are (were) they your enemy? These may be people who are out to get you, or people whom you love and are close to but experience conflict at a particular moment or over a particular issue.

**Day 2:** How do (or did) you think about, talk about, and treat those people or groups you listed on Day 1?

**Day 3:** Divide your Day 1 list into 4 groups so you can focus on one person or a smaller group of people each day. Pray by name for those in group 1. What are specific ways you can love them? Do not rush this. Give God time. It takes time for God to help us become open to loving our enemy.

**Day 4:** Pray by name for those in group 2. What are specific ways you can do good to them? What are specific ways you can love them?

**Day 5:** Pray by name for those in group 3. What are specific ways you can do good to them? What are specific ways you can love them? Give God time. It takes time for God to help us become open to loving our enemy.

**Day 6:** Pray by name for those in group 4. What are specific ways you can do good to them? Do not rush this. Give God time. It takes time for God to help us become open to loving our enemy.

## Closing:

*God, when I was your enemy, you did not hate or destroy me, but loved me. Would you help me to see my enemies in your eyes of love? Forgive me for times I make someone who opposes me into an enemy. Help me know how to respond to people who think of me as their enemy. Give me grace to recognize and lay aside anger, contempt, obsessive desire, unfaithfulness, manipulative words, and retaliation in how I think about and treat those who oppose me. In the Kingdom with Jesus, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, that I might share with my enemies. Give me grace to do that today, as Jesus does that for me. Amen.*

**Quotes:**

*"It was some time ago after a church service in Munich a man came to me and said, "Miss Ten Boom, I am glad to see you, don't you know me?" I saw that man who was one of the most cruel guards in the concentration camp. And suddenly it was all there – the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, [as we marched naked past them. My sister] Betsie's face [covered in pain]. He said, "I am now a Christian, I have found the Lord Jesus. I have forgiveness for the cruelties I have done. But I have asked God's grace for the chance to ask forgiveness from one of my victims. Miss Ten Boom, will you forgive me." And he extended his hand to me. And I could not shake it. I remembered the suffering of my dying sister [because of] him. I could only hate him. And then I took one of these beautiful scriptures, Romans 5:5 which says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us." And I said "Thank you Jesus that you have brought into my heart God's love, through the Holy Spirit who is given to me. And thank you Father that your love is stronger than my hatred and unforgiveness." That same moment I was free and I could say, "Brother give me your hand." As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on [God's]. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself. You never touch so much the ocean of God's love as when you forgive your enemies."*

- Corrie Ten Boom <sup>26</sup>

*"[Jesus] understands that we cannot genuinely pray for another and continue to hate him. In prayer, our vision of the person is transformed as we see him in the light of God's presence."*

- Skye Jethani <sup>27</sup>

*"Many things are set in motion through rebellious action and the spirit of dispute. As for me, however, I cannot conceive of this being life at its best. The life that moves me most is the life that so abounds in love that it forgives even its enemies. When I see a [person] whose attitude is wrong but who concedes that he is at fault and offers an understanding heart, or when I behold the great love of a [someone] who makes amends for the failure of [someone who wronged him] as though they were his own, I cannot refrain from tears. Someone will doubtless ask, "Is such a foolish thing possible?" Yet One there was with as great a soul as this who trod this earth of*

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<sup>26</sup> The Hiding Place.

<sup>27</sup> Following the Call, p128, kindle.



*ours. His name was called “Wonderful.” He was called Jesus. A son of a carpenter and a carpenter himself. I have found the highway which I must walk in his atoning life. Love is mightier than rebellion.”*

- Toyohiko Kagawa <sup>28</sup>

### **Go Deeper:**

Songs: “[Love Your Enemies](#)” by Jon Guerra

<https://bit.ly/4p5Apon>

“[Canyon](#)” by Ellie Holcomb

<https://bit.ly/3B4jJnC>

“[Love Our Enemies](#)” by Rick Lee James

<https://bit.ly/3CimROd>

“[Be Kind to Yourself](#)” by Andrew Peterson

<https://bit.ly/3E4g637>

Books: “[The Hiding Place](#)” by Corrie ten Boom

Video: [Summary of a Kingdom Person](#) in “Prayer” by Dallas Willard  
(0:00-7:56) <https://bit.ly/3C4tC6f>

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<sup>28</sup> Kagawa, p127 by William Axling



## Week 12: Giving for God Alone

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Spend a moment in silence. Thoughtfully recite Psalm 103:10-12 (*personalized*)  
“You do not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.  
For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is your love for those  
who fear you; as far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed our  
transgressions from us.”

### Opening Prayer:

My God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all things are made by your hands. You  
have called us by name. You are generous to the good and the evil and promise  
to take care of all who trust in you. I will practice generosity in love, not for others  
to know or for their approval, but for yours alone. You are loving and generous,  
and I love you. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

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

- Matthew 6:1

**Scripture Reading:** Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Mon-Wed: How  
does each scripture talk about doing the right things not for reputation but for God  
alone? Thu-Sat: How does each scripture talk about giving?

### Daily: Matthew 6:1-4

Monday: Isaiah 1:10-17

Tuesday: 1 Sam 8:1-22 (esp v5)

Wednesday: John 12:37, 42-43

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 9:1-15

Friday: Mark 12:41-44

Saturday: Acts 5:1-11



## Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page

## Daily reflection questions:

- Day 1:** Re-read Matthew 6:1. Spend some time reflecting and journaling how God has blessed you (physically, spiritually, etc) and what He does for you.
- Day 2:** Re-read Matthew 6:1. What are some of the good things—“acts of righteousness”—that you do? When or how do you want these to be noticed by others?
- Day 3:** Re-read Matthew 6:2. Where and how does God invite you to give—financially and physically—from all he has given you? Where are places you give in order to be seen and appreciated by others?
  - Quietly meet a need around you today.
- Day 4:** Re-read Matthew 6:2. Where are places where there is need but you do not give because it would not be noticed or appreciated?
  - Give to God’s church financially and personally by asking where help is needed. ([www.keystonenaz.com/give](http://www.keystonenaz.com/give). See “Go Deeper” for other giving opportunities)
- Day 5:** Re-read Matthew 6:3-4. What is the joy of doing what is right for God alone that only God will notice?
  - Quietly meet a need in your workplace (or school) today.
- Day 6:** Re-read Matthew 6:3-4. Learning to give without thinking about it (not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing) takes practice. Let God show you ways that you are already doing this and write them in your journal. Thank God for helping shape you in these ways.
  - Quietly meet a need in your family today.

## Closing:

*God, you constantly give and are generous whether or not people notice or thank you. You do this because you are good and you are love. May I share your character and the way of your Kingdom by choosing to be generous financially and with my time and energies in places you have put me and where you show me there is need. Amen.*

**Quotes:**

*“Jesus does not draw a dichotomy between “outward” and “inward.” Furthermore, true righteousness is expressed, says Jesus, in the disciplines of the believer. He does not say, “Be careful not to do acts of righteousness,” [but] “Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them.” In saying this Jesus is directing attention to motives. Why we do something is significant as well as what we do. Jesus does not assume that [the disciplined acts of giving, praying, and fasting] will come “naturally.” Rather, he sees them as quite deliberate activities in the life of his disciples. To an unusual degree today, Christians mistakenly think... we simply “do what we feel,” and “be ourselves.” Jesus, on the other hand, assumed that these disciplines are basic to any spiritual vitality. Each illustration indicates that our fundamental relationship is to God.*

- Sinclair Ferguson <sup>29</sup>

*“We all want our lives to matter, but in our celebrity-saturated culture, we’ve come to believe that our lives matter only if they are noticed. This deep longing to matter by being seen is what fuels social media. We want someone, anyone, to take notice, to take care about us, to see us and like us. We go online to find a witness to our life, but what we’re really searching for... is someone to tell us, “you matter. Your life counts.”*

*In this selfie-culture, we must hear Jesus’ reminder that what is done in secret is what matters most. Real intimacy—whether with God or another person—requires privacy and shuns publicity. This is why Jesus calls us to conduct our charity, or fasting, and our praying without being noticed by others. God is to be our only witness because he has become our only desire. “And your father who sees in secret will reward you.”*

*The more we develop this intimacy with God, the less we will strive for the affirmation and attention of others—including strangers via social media. We will also discover a secret that eludes so many: our lives do matter. Not because someone noticed our post and “liked” yet, but because God is always with us, noticing every moment of our lives.*

- Skye Jethani <sup>30</sup>

*“The one who gives without regard to who is looking and does not even notice it as anything special themselves, is the very one who has God’s attention and becomes God’s creative partner in well-doing. He or she will know the fellowship of God and see the effects of these deeds multiplied for good in the power of God.”*

- Dallas Willard <sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Following the Call*, p.158-9.

<sup>30</sup> *What if Jesus was Serious*, p84-5.

<sup>31</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, 193.





## Go Deeper:

### Opportunities to Give:

Shechem Children's Home for child survivors of exploitation

<https://www.ncm.org/shechem>

Child Sponsorship - feed, educate, and love children in need in Jesus' name

<https://cs.ncm.org/>

Songs: "[More of You](#)" by Glad

<https://bit.ly/3C4y1Fv>

"[Make me an Instrument](#)" by A Ragamuffin Band

<https://bit.ly/3Eucp7c>

Books: "[Investing in the Heavens: Escaping the Deceptions of Reputation and Wealth](#)" in *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard, p187-193.

<https://bit.ly/3mmd30c>

"[Service](#)" in *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, p126-140

<https://bit.ly/3CtQw7o>

Video: [Not Performing for Human Consumption](#) by Dallas Willard

(7:35-13:34) <https://bit.ly/2ZveHnl>





## Week 13: Praying for God Alone

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Spend a moment in silence letting God settle and wake your spirit.

### Opening Prayer:

*My God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all things are made by your hands. You have called us by name. You invite us to learn to lay things down and experience that you are what satisfies our deepest longing. You invite us to enjoy listening and talking to you in prayer. Teach me to pray to you because I love you and not for others' approval. Amen.*

### Weekly memory verse(s):

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

- Matthew 6:5-8

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. How does each scripture talk about praying, not for reputation, but for God alone?*

### Daily: Matthew 6:5-8

Monday: Psalm 23

Tuesday: Colossians 1:9-12

Wednesday: Luke 5:16

Thursday: Philippians 4:4-9

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Saturday: John 17



## Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page

## Daily reflection questions:

**Day 1:** Pray Psalm 23:1. Since God is your shepherd, you have everything you need today. That's a picture of his Kingdom surrounding you now!

Ask God to help you understand the importance of listening to him. In your prayer, practice being silent and learning to enjoy being with God and listening to him. Do not always fill times of prayer with words. Writing your prayer in your journal might help slow you down and open space to listen.

**Day 2:** Re-read Colossians 1:9-12. Continuous prayer is like being with a friend all day. You don't really start or stop the conversation, it naturally flows.

Today, practice prayer not as a specific time but as an ongoing conversation. Perhaps write some reminders on paper or your phone to remind yourself to talk with God about the day and what is happening.

**Day 3:** Re-read Matthew 6:5-8. Where in your life can prayer become about how you sound to others? How can you practice praying for God alone instead of thinking of what others hear? Today, try to take a walk alone and just have a conversation with God about what you see, what is happening in your life, and what he cares about.

**Day 4:** Re-read Philippians 4:4-9. Write a prayer in your journal of all that you are thankful for. Write a list giving God the things you are worried about. Write a list of things that are true, noble, right, and lovely, thanking God.

**Day 5:** Re-read Matthew 6:7. When you pray, where can you babble—using thoughtless words, many words, or coercive words to either fill the space or to try to get God to do what you want? Ask God about this, and have a conversation about why you do this and how to improve.

**Day 6:** Slowly personalize John 17 as a prayer to Jesus, re-wording it, reflecting on who Jesus is and what he and the Father want for you.

## Closing:

*God, your word created the world. Your words give me life today. Teach me to pray, to use my words to honestly come before you and to listen and love your words throughout the day. Your words and presence will guide, comfort, encourage, correct, and empower me. Amen.*

## Quotes:

*“Prayer catapults us onto the frontier of the spiritual life. Of all the Spiritual Disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father.*

*To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ.*

*Real prayer is something we learn. It was liberating to me to understand that prayer involved a learning process. I was set free to question, to experiment, even to fail for I knew I was learning.”*  
- Richard Foster<sup>32</sup>

*“ When you come to God in prayer, open your Bible to where you have been meditating. Remember at this point that your main objective is to focus on God’s presence. Your Scripture verse will keep your mind from straying to other things.*

*When you have settled into a peaceful spirit and are fully aware of God’s presence; when earthly distractions are not your primary thoughts; when your soul has properly fed on God’s Word and you have chosen by an act of your will to believe it, you are now ready to communicate with your heavenly Father.”*

- Jeanne Guyon <sup>33</sup>

*“We should reject the idea that our prayer must be “good enough” to merit God’s attention. Some Christians think that their fervor, their sincerity, or their technique may gain them God’s ear. But such prayer performances may not be seeking God at all. They may be seeking God’s benefits or may even be trying to manipulate him. Instead of pleading for mercy, they attempt to force God to be merciful. Persistent prayer is certainly good, but God does not answer prayer because our persistence impresses him. He answers prayer because he loves us. True prayer seeks to commune with God, not to extract benefits from him. True prayer rests in God’s generosity, not in our efforts to earn rewards. True prayer waits on God’s wisdom, rather than assuming that we can accurately assess our needs. True prayer trusts God and finds its confidence in him.*  
- Daniel M. Doriani<sup>34</sup>

*“Remember, before you speak, it is necessary to listen, and only then, from the fullness of your heart you speak and God listens.”*  
- Mother Teresa<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Celebration of Discipline, p33, 36.

<sup>33</sup> Experiencing God Through Prayer, p17.

<sup>34</sup> Following the Call, p170-1.

<sup>35</sup> Following the Call, p172.

## Go Deeper:

Songs: “[Prayer of St. Francis](#)” by Sarah McLachlan

<https://bit.ly/30qtkbQ>

Books: “[With Christ in the School of Prayer](#)” Andrew Murray

Read online: <https://bit.ly/3cm0r37>

“[Experiencing God Through Prayer](#)” by Jeanne Guyon

Read online: <https://bit.ly/3cgSL2c>

“[Prayer](#)” in *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, p33-46

Read online: <https://bit.ly/3CjmlJF>

“[Prayer](#)” in *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton, p62-77

Read online: <https://bit.ly/3wNk5Pb>

## Week 14: Fasting for God Alone

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Open your hands before you and repeat, “Father, I do not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from your mouth.” Matthew 4:4 paraphrase

### Opening Prayer:

Father, by your Word you created the world from nothing. You have created me as a physical being with physical needs, but my deepest longings are that my body and work would be a part of something eternal. Help me to seek first your Kingdom desires, to discover that you provide all things I need, and let me be a part of your eternal work. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

[God] humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

- Deuteronomy 8:3

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. How does each scripture talk about fasting, and what God provides through fasting?*

### Daily: Matthew 6:16-18

Monday: John 4:27-35

Tuesday: Matthew 4:1-11

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 8:1-19

Thursday: Exodus 34:27-28

Friday: Acts 13:1-3

Saturday: Esther 3:13-4:17

*Note: Exodus and Esther are two examples of absolute fasts: not eating or drinking. This is not a standard for fasting. You should drink water for health.*

**Daily Practice:**

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page

**Daily reflection questions:**

- Day 1:** Decide with God what and when you will fast this week (preferably earlier than later). Write it in your journal. *(If necessary, rearrange the days below to match the timing of your fast.)*
- Day 2:** Reflect on Matthew 4:4. How do you feel when you hear that God provides physical needs in non-physical ways?
- Day 3:** In your own words describe what fasting is. Why has God given us fasting as a practice to experience his Kingdom? What do you not understand about fasting? Pray or Journal to the Lord about these things.
- Day 4:** When you fast, journal your experience. How did it go? What was difficult? What did the fast bring up in your attitude, spirit, actions?
- Day 5:** Reflect on your experience of fasting. What did you think it would be like? What was it actually like?
- Day 6:** Reflect on your experience of fasting. How did God provide for you? What did God show you? There may not be clear lessons, and that is okay. Like anything, we grow better with practice.

**Closing:**

God, I confess today that you have power and provide all that I need. I admit that I often misunderstand what I need. I trust you, Jesus, and will let you take me into times of fasting to show me, like you experienced in the wilderness, God's great care for me as I put him above all other things. Amen.

**Quotes:**

*"[Jesus] told us that he was to be "eaten": "He who eats me shall live by me,...and shall live forever" (John 6:51). He, not the manna, is "the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die" (John 6:48-50). The practice of fasting goes together with this teaching about nourishing ourselves on the person of Jesus. It emphasized the direct availability of God to nourish, sustain, and renew the soul. It is a testimony to the reality of another world from which Jesus and his Father perpetually intermingle their lives with ours (John 14:23). And the effects of our turning strongly to this true "food" will be obvious."*

*- Dallas Willard <sup>36</sup>*

*"Fasting also can simplify the impulsive, distracting, grasping nature of our appetites. When we fast intentionally, one of the first things we notice is how little food we really need, yet how much we have been wolfing down. We see that we really are capable of not responding to that grasping wave of appetite that clicks in our brain. This freedom can have a multiplier effect on our other appetites. We find we need to respond less to other waves of aggressive, grasping desire that shoot up. We become more and more simply present, able to see more clearly the concrete situation we are in, and care more gently and concertedly for it.*

*My own and others' experience leads me to recommend not a full fast, but a "juice fast": [fruit or vegetable juice] three times a day. The juice provides a basic, simple, appropriate nourishment. It can save you from the complicating distractions of headaches and hunger pangs that more easily accompany total fasting. Take plenty of water in addition to the juice throughout the day to prevent dehydration."*

*- Tilden Edwards*

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*Our body is given to us that we may sacrifice it. It is ours so that we, like Christ, may have something to offer. We should not torment it but deny it. We should not constantly battle with it but abandon it. Then our body will not be in control. What does this mean "to abandon"? It means this, we must intentionally deny ourselves completely as a ruling or life-determining part in us. Our body is no longer the master of our actions. In doing so we no longer think "What should I like to do?" but instead, "What would God have me do?"*

*- a paraphrase of George MacDonald <sup>38</sup>*

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<sup>36</sup> *Divine Conspiracy, p199.*

<sup>37</sup> *Disciplines for the Inner Life, p127.*

<sup>38</sup> *Disciplines for the Inner Life, p128. Paraphrase by Brian Woolery.*



## Go Deeper:

Songs: “[Fill Me Now](#)”

<https://bit.ly/3HuLR7P>

“[I Give Myself Away](#)” by William McDowell

<https://bit.ly/2YTylzE>

“[Because of Who You Are](#)” by Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

<https://bit.ly/3DosHhy>

Article: “[Fasting: A Practical Guide](#)” by Adele Calhoun

<https://bit.ly/32bauqb>

“[Fasting as a Spiritual Discipline](#)”

<https://bit.ly/3oAinwM>

“[Fasting](#)” in *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, p47-61

Read online: <https://bit.ly/3Fme0fA>

Video: “[The Lost Art of Fasting](#)” by Geoff Heath

*This video is for a specific church but has sound advice for fasting.*

<https://bit.ly/3ckP1wL>

## Week 15: Treasuring God and His Activity

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Open your hands before you and repeat, “Father, you treasure me, and I treasure you.” Spend some moments in silence reflecting on this with God.

### Opening Prayer:

God, you have made us in your image and you treasure all that you have made. In Jesus, you have chosen us out of all the peoples in the world to be your treasured possession<sup>1</sup> and to be your blessing to the world, if we will obey and practice the ways of your Kingdom. Today I choose to treasure you, because you treasure me first and most. Help me to arrange the other treasures of my life under you in ways that are right and good. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

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

- Matthew 6:19-21

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. Read each scripture in light of the reflection question of that day.*

### Daily: **Matthew 6:19-24**

Monday: Malachi 3:7-12

Tuesday: Psalm 8

Wednesday: Genesis 22:9-12

Thursday: Psalm 127:1-2

Friday: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

Saturday: Zephaniah 3:17

<sup>1</sup> Ex 19:5, Dt. 7:6, 1 Pt 2:9

## Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.

## Daily reflection questions:

**Monday:** Money. Reread Matthew 6:24. Thank God for the gift of money and ask him to help you use it in ways that honor him. Write down the money you have in any or all of your accounts. How do you feel about this money? How can or do you treasure your money? Money's power is only broken when we are willing to give it for what God wants.

- When you receive your paycheck/allowance, give the first 10% to God. If you are already tithing, look for an opportunity to financially give this week above your tithe to a place where there is need.

**Tuesday:** Possessions. Thank God for the gift of things and ask him to help you enjoy and use them in ways that honor him. Write down a list of things you own that are important to you. How do you feel about these things? How do you treasure them? The power of "our" things is only broken as we recognize we are a steward of them and are willing to release them to God's direction and control.

- This week give some of your things to someone who could use them or would appreciate them.

**Wednesday:** Relationships. Thank God for the gift of relationships and ask him to help you to enjoy and serve in ways that honor him. Make a list of ten people in your life. Why is it hard to release people we treasure to God?

- By name ask God what he wants for this person and release them to God.
- Write down how God might want you to be a part of what he wants for these individuals, either by actively serving them or letting go of your influence or control.

**Thursday:** Work/school. Thank God for the gift of work and ask him to help you engage and serve in your work in ways that honor him. How do you treasure your work? In what way does your work give you an identity? What do you feel should happen in your job or organization?

- Release your work, work identity, and desires for your work to God.
- Ask what God wants in your workplace and how he is inviting you to treasure it as he does, doing your work with and for him.

**Friday:** Interests/hobbies. Thank God for the gift of hobbies and ask him to help you learn, enjoy, and engage them in ways that honor him. Write down a list



of your major interests or hobbies. How do you treasure these? In what way do they give you an identity?

- Release your hobbies and interests to God, being willing to do them with God. Be willing to adjust the time, effort, or resources you spend on them or even to set them down if God asks.

**Saturday:** Review what you have written this week. How is God helping you to treasure these things rightly by treasuring and offering them to him? Where are you hesitant to trust God with one of your treasures? Why? What action steps do you need to take that you have not already?

### Closing:

*God, I confess today that you have created and given all things. Everything is yours. You give me things in order to enjoy them and to use them, but not to possess them. Help me to treasure you and to then treasure the things and people around me as you do. I admit that I often treasure things and people above you, and so feel tempted to hoard or secure them. Help me, Father, to enjoy your creation without trying to possess it. This is the way of Jesus, my Lord and Master. Amen.*

### Quotes:

*“Treasures are things we try to keep because of a value we place on them. Of course we may also treasure things other than material goods: for example, our reputation, or our relationship to another person... or the security or reputation of our school or our business or our country. Everyone has treasures. This is an essential part of what it is to be human. We reveal what our treasures are by what we try to protect, secure, keep.*

*Invest your life in what God is doing, which cannot be lost. Of course this means that we will invest in our relationship to Jesus himself, and through him to God. But beyond that, and in close union with it, we will devote ourselves to the good of other people—those around us within the range of our power to affect [our kingdom]. These are among God’s treasures. And we care for this astonishingly rich and beautiful physical realm, the earth itself, of which both we and our neighbors are parts.*

*Thus, to “lay up treasures in heaven” is to treasure all of these intimate and touching aspects of heaven’s life, all of what God is doing on earth. It is to do so in the order and manner heaven has indicated, and especially as we see it illuminated in Jesus himself. And when we live in this way, our treasures are absolutely secure. All that we do counts and counts forever. It is preserved in our life within God’s eternal life. ”*

*- Dallas Willard <sup>39</sup>*

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<sup>39</sup> Divine Conspiracy, p203-205.





*“The wealth you handle belongs to others; think of it accordingly. Who gave it to you so that you could bring it into life with you? That’s what the rich are like; having seized what belongs to all, they claim it as their own on the basis of having got there first. Whereas if everyone took for himself enough to meet his immediate needs and released the rest for those in need of it, there would be no rich and no poor. And are you not both covetous and defrauding when you keep for private use what you were given for sharing? The bread in your larder belongs to the hungry. The cloak in your wardrobe belongs to the naked. The shoes you allow to rot belong to the barefoot. The money in your vaults belongs to the destitute.”*

*- Basil the Great*

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*“God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of using things - but only so far as necessary; and he has determined that our use of them should be shared. It is monstrous for one to live well-off, while many are in want. How much more glorious it is to serve many, than to live sumptuously! How much wiser to spend money on human beings, than on jewels and gold! How much more valuable to acquire friends than lifeless things!*

*- Clement of Alexandria <sup>41</sup>*

### Go Deeper:

Songs: “[Christ our Treasure](#)” by Sovereign Grace Music

<https://bit.ly/3Dxj4gE>

“Where Your Treasure Is” by Jon Guerra

“[Jesus, my Treasure](#)” by Canyon Hills Worship

<https://bit.ly/3wUyk4N>

“[The Sower’s Song](#)” by Andrew Peterson

<https://bit.ly/3DvSnc4>

“[Give it Away](#)” by Michael W. Smith

<https://bit.ly/3CsA3zx>

Article: “[The Bondage of Wealth](#)” in *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard

<https://bit.ly/3kSBb9t>, p203-206

“[Christ the Center](#)” by Richard Foster

<https://bit.ly/3kRN0g5>

Video: “[Treasure vs. Money](#)” by Tim Keller

<https://bit.ly/3CvjhzF>

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<sup>40</sup> *Following the Call*, p248-9.

<sup>41</sup> *Following the Call*, p249-50.



## Week 16: Trusting God's Care (Sermon on the Mount Review)

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Take a deep breath and let God reveal to you what is true: His presence, love, and goodness filling the room and filling you.

### Opening Prayer:

My heavenly Father, through Jesus your Kingdom is coming on the earth, healing, redeeming, and restoring your creation. Jesus found me and you have touched, healed, and saved my life. You invite me now to trust and join your ways and activity in this world. Your Kingdom alone makes life abundant and good. I lay down old ways of anger, lust, manipulative words, and getting even and choose to obey your way of engaging situations in love. You are my security, not my reputation, money, or possessions. You treasure me, so I choose to treasure you back and let you teach me how to treasure all the gifts of life in the right way. And in so doing you help loosen the cords of worry, for you are with me and you go before me.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- Matthew 6:33-34

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. The daily questions will correspond to the daily scripture passage.*

Monday: Matthew 4:1-17

Thursday: Matthew 5:17-32

Tuesday: Matthew 4:17-25

Friday: Matthew 5:33-48

Wednesday: Matthew 5:1-16

Saturday: Matthew 6:1-24

### Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.

## Daily reflection questions:

- Monday:** Matthew 4:1-17: What worries might Jesus have faced in the wilderness? What did God and his Kingdom do for Jesus in these verses? How is 4:17 a summary of this?
- Tuesday:** Matthew 4:17-25: Jesus proclaims the good news of the nearness and power of God's Kingdom. What does God do for people in these verses? What has God done for you? How does it relate to worry?
- Wednesday:** Matthew 5:1-16: When did Jesus bring hope and blessing in the midst of a difficult circumstance in which you were able to release worry? Who is a person whose life is like the salt and light of Jesus and God's kingdom to you? Being blessed by God even in the midst of difficulty (seen in the beatitudes) and being a blessing to others (seen in Jesus' illustrations of salt and light) are examples of "the good life". This is the life that people try to create and secure through choices, worries, and actions, but that is freely given in Jesus.
- Thursday:** Matthew 5:17-32: What is your experience of the difference between religious ("the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees") and genuinely good and righteous people? Where have you recently experienced anger/contempt and/or lust/obsessive desires? How are you putting Jesus' words to trust him and lay these aside into practice? What are you discovering as you practice what Jesus says? How does this free you from worry?
- Friday:** Matthew 5:33-48: Where have you recently used or been tempted to use manipulative words, retaliation, and making enemies? How are you putting Jesus' words to trust him and lay these aside into practice? What are you discovering as you practice what Jesus says? How does this free you from worry?
- Saturday:** Matthew 6:1-24: What good things are you practicing (i.e. giving, praying, fasting) and what has God been showing you? Where are areas you still look for others' approval before God's? When you release control of your treasures to God, how is this impacting worries in your life?

## Closing:

*God, you are close, good, loving, and powerful. Your Kingdom—what you are doing— is the good life I was made for. You teach me the character of Kingdom love which is better than my way of living. As I learn to live for an audience of One, you free me from worry. Thank you! I trust you Jesus, and will practice what you teach. Amen.*

## Quotes:

*“The beatitudes show the effect God’s kingdom has upon anyone who submits to Christ’s rule. But is it not the rich who are blessed, the carefree who are happy, the assertive and aggressive who get ahead? Doesn’t the “good life” consist of getting what you want? Not according to Jesus. To be meek, poor in spirit, merciful, and peace-loving is the key to happiness. Appearances to the contrary, the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who thirst and hunger for righteousness are already experiencing God’s kingdom. Through such people God can work and accomplish his will. They, not the religious elite or the powerful or the highly esteemed, play the decisive role in God’s redemptive history.”*

- Charles E. Moore<sup>42</sup>

A letter from Takashi Nagai to his small children as he neared his death. Nagai was a Christian and medical pioneer who survived the Nagasaki atomic bombing.

*“You are small children and have already lost your mother. That is an irreplaceable loss. A father’s death is not anywhere near the loss of a mother. My death will leave you orphans, vulnerable and alone in the world. You will weep. Yes, you might even weep your hearts out, and that will be good – provided you weep before your Father in heaven. We had it on the authority of his Son, and I have experienced the truth of it personally: “Happy are those who weep, for they shall be comforted.” Spill your tears before him, and he will always dry them. That is the Sermon on the Mount, the place where you can find all the answers. Climbing this mountain can be hard going, and at times through mists, rain and snow. But when the mist and clouds lift, what is the vista of beauty, peace and love! Yes, a vista of the values that last and give meaning to our lives and worth to our struggles. Right now all I have to leave you in the way of possessions is this hut. But Jesus tells us to love our eternal selves rather than our material possessions. Yes, each of us is a child of the heavenly Father! That gives us tremendous worth. Do you realize that you are of more worth in your Fathers eyes than that beautiful bright star that keeps our earth alive, the sun? You are his very own son and daughter, and so are all the people around you. Love everyone and trust his providence, and you will find peace. I have tried it and can assure you it is so.”*

- Takashi Nagai<sup>43</sup>

*“The Sermon on the Mount has been a mystery impossible for many of its advocates to understand. There is no new set of laws here, no new commandments or prohibitions replacing the old Ten Commandments. Here is the new tree, the new light, the new salt, the new essence reveal[ing] God’s heart as it was given to humankind in Jesus Christ, and as it will rule in his coming kingdom.”*

- Eberhard Arnold<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Following the Call, p3.

<sup>43</sup> A Song for Nagasaki, by Paul Glynn p204.

<sup>44</sup> Following the Call, 82.



## Go Deeper:

Songs: "[The Sermon on the Mount](#)" by Merle Haggard

<https://bit.ly/3rBSwYy>

"[Seek Ye First](#)" by John Cable

<https://bit.ly/3GoT1JH>

"[Make Me an Instrument](#)" by Beckenhorst Singers

<https://bit.ly/3GkvzND>

Article: "[Why Bother with Discipleship](#)" by Dallas Willard

<https://bit.ly/3dqy347>

Video: "[Love your Enemies](#)" by Martin Luther King Jr.

<https://bit.ly/3llcqgB>





## Week 17: Letting Go of Worry

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Spend a few moments in silence confessing this quote from St. Augustine, “You made me for yourself, O Lord, and my heart is restless until it rests in you.”

### Opening Prayer:

God, throughout scripture you say to not be afraid, but often I am worried and afraid. I admit that these worries come from my own insecurities. But your Kingdom is secure. You care for birds and flowers, how much more will you care for me if I let you? You know what I need. So I give you my worries, and I ask you to lead me in what is good and right, just like Jesus. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

- Matthew 6:31-33

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. How does each passage reveal why we do not need to worry?*

### Daily Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

Monday: Psalm 23

Tuesday: Joshua 1:1-9

Wednesday: Philippians 4:1-9

Thursday: Psalm 46

Friday: 1 Peter 5:5-9

Saturday: Jeremiah 17:5-10



**Daily Practice:**

As you encounter moments of worry or anxiety throughout the week use the 7-steps (if helpful) and the habit journal to help you direct your mind to God and to practice laying aside worry. Available at: <https://ggle.io/5x6M>

**Daily reflection questions:**

**Monday:** What do you worry about? What have been common things you have worried about in your past? Spend some time reflecting and writing these in your journal. When you recognize yourself thinking or worrying, “stop” and ask God’s help.

**Tuesday:** Look back at the list from Monday. How do each of these worries reveal something you treasure? Ask God this and write in your journal things that he shows you. Yesterday and today’s answers are part of the “Admit” step of the 7-steps this week.

**Wednesday:** Looking back at the scriptures from this week, why does God say that we do not need to worry about these things? Write this in your journal. Today is the “Confess” step of the 7-steps.

**Thursday:** Choose 1-2 of your worries from Monday’s list and spend time with the Lord. Worries are often connected with our desire to control and make things good. Release this/these worries to God. Admit your lack of control. Confess God’s care and promises. End in silence, reflecting on his promises.

**Friday:** Repeat the exercise from Thursday with other worries from Monday’s list.

**Saturday:** Repeat the exercise from Thursday with other worries from Monday’s list.

**Closing:**

*God, you are my shepherd, and because of this, I confess I have everything I need. I admit my worries to you and admit my desire to control these situations. I confess that you care for the sparrows and even more for me. I will not be afraid though it may feel like the world or my life is coming apart. I will seek first your Kingdom and your righteousness—your way of love—and trust you will take care of all these*



worries in your ways and your timing. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit I pray. Amen.

### Quotes:

*"Sickness and trouble are not a sign that we are far from God or that he has rejected us. No, we don't believe in a God of small deeds who lets his favorites win lotteries and capriciously ignores the others. He is too great to act like that.... He will always respond to real prayer, though! You'll often see sick people, who know how to pray, getting better. That's not necessarily miraculous. It is often the natural result of living in the milieu of his peace and grace. I could be cured miraculously of leukemia, and that would be good. If I'm not cured, that's good too, and it won't bother me a scrap. All that I am concerned about is what his plans are for me: the only life that interests me is one lived for him... one day at a time, supported by prayer."*

- Takashi Nagai (Atom bomb survivor) <sup>45</sup>

*"What fear-filled thought is Satan using to suffocate your faith? Name it. Say its name."*

*"I'm afraid that I won't be able to withstand whatever the future might hold."* I choose to believe God will not allow me to be tempted beyond what I can endure and will always give me the strength to overcome temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)

*"I'm afraid that everyone will abandon me."* I choose to believe God has promised not to leave me, and He always keeps His promises (Hebrews 13:5-6).

*"I'm afraid of losing everything and everyone I love."* I choose to believe God will sustain me in my brightest moments of victory and my darkest moments of suffering (Psalm 54:4).

*"I'm afraid of being found out."* I choose to believe God knows every thought before I think it and loves me (Psalm 139:1-2).

*"I'm afraid that I'm really not capable of doing this job."* I choose to believe God has given me everything I need to live a godly life (2 Peter 1:3).

*"I'm afraid of being rejected."* I choose to believe God has accepted me as His child and will never leave me (1 John 3:1-2).

*"I'm afraid of not living up to their expectations."* I choose to believe God wants me to seek His approval only and release the pressure to please people (Galatians 1:10).

*"I'm afraid of failing miserably for everyone to see."* I choose to believe God specializes in taking weakness and using it for his glory (2 Corinthians 12:9-11).

*This is how we fight the spiral, we pull the thoughts out of our heads, and we steal all their power and then replace them with what is true!*

- Jennie Allen <sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> A Song for Nagasaki by Paul Glynn, p237-8.

<sup>46</sup> Get Out of Your Head, p118-9.





*“[W]hen our trust is in things that are absolutely beyond any risk or threat [—God’s Kingdom activity in the world], and we have learned from good sources, including our own experience, that those things are [present and can be relied upon], anxiety is just groundless and pointless. It occurs only as a hangover of bad habits established when we were trusting things—like human approval and wealth—that were certain to let us down. Now our strategy should be one of resolute rejection of worry, while we concentrate on the future in hope and with prayer and on the past with thanksgiving.”*  
- Dallas Willard <sup>47</sup>

## Go Deeper:

App: “One Minute Pause” from John Eldridge

Songs: “[I See the Birds](#)” by Jon Guerra

<https://bit.ly/3JZ2GxE>

“[Psalm 46](#)” by Jenny and Tyler

<https://bit.ly/31L2c8k>

“[Psalm 34](#)” by The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

<https://bit.ly/3y1XIG8>

“[Do Not Be Afraid](#)” by 曾怡蓉

<https://bit.ly/3y3ppy0>

“[Stronger](#)” by Ellie Holcomb

<https://bit.ly/3Gkg4W9>

“[Loop Cycle](#)” by Gray Havens

<https://bit.ly/46B8iqv>

Book: “[The Divine Conspiracy](#)” chapter 6 by Dallas Willard

Read online: <https://bit.ly/3mmd30c>

“[Get Out of Your Head: Stopping the Spiral of Toxic Thoughts](#)” by Jennie Allen

<https://amzn.to/3ow18hd>

Article: “[Seven Ways Christians Should Deal With Stress and Anxiety](#)” by Aaron Loy

<https://bit.ly/303H2BB>

“[Five Biblical Ways to Control Anxiety](#)” by Bellevue Christian Counseling

<https://bit.ly/3DxhBWH>

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<sup>47</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, p212.



## Week 18: Letting go of Condemnation (part 1)

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

**Opening Practice:** *Confess these words from Psalm 103 to God and yourself.*

Loving Father, you do not treat me as my sins deserve, or repay me according to my wrongs. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is your love for those who honor and respect you.

**Opening Prayer:**

Loving Father, you are wonderful. You created the world and know how you intended it to grow and flourish. You have created me as a free being to choose to love, trust, and learn from you. Apart from you, I confess that I struggle to judge what is right and wrong, and I easily fall into self-righteousness and condemnation in my interactions with others. Condemnation is not your way, and it hurts and damages others and myself. Teach me, Jesus, the way of your Kingdom, and help me let go of condemnation.

**Weekly memory verse(s):**

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

- Matthew 7:1-2

**Scripture Reading:** *Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. The daily questions will correspond to the daily scripture passage.*

Monday: Galatians 5:13-15

Thursday: Proverbs 15:1

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Friday: Luke 18:9

Wednesday: Ephesians 4:25, 29-32

Saturday: Colossians 3:5-14



## Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.

## Daily reflection questions:

**Monday:** Judgment is truth-telling in love while condemnation is an attack which devalues. When have I been condemned by others (parents, teachers, friends, society)? When have others challenged me in love? How did I respond to each of these groups (Mt 7:2)?

**Tuesday:** How does today's passage from Corinthians speak to condemning or judgmental statements? How is God's love a necessary component in healthy interactions?

**Wednesday:** Ask God to reveal where you condemn or look down on others (family, co-workers, politics, social media, in the news).

**Thursday:** One way that we condemn is by speaking harshly. When do I speak harshly? Where? To whom?

**Friday:** Condemnation always has seeds of self-righteousness and contempt towards others. Reflect on the situations where you condemn others (Tuesday's question). How are you being self-righteous? How are you being contemptuous or acting in anger?

**Saturday:** Where do I condemn others by closing my heart, or withdrawing my love, until they are willing to change?

## Closing:

*Loving Father, even when I was in sin you did not condemn me but loved and invited me through Jesus. Give me grace to see where I try to help or change others by using condemnation. Give me grace to set aside my condemnation and be silent. Give me grace to see the other in love, and then to speak truth in love as you lead me. Amen.*

## Quotes:

*"If we would really help those close to us and dear, and if we would learn to live together with your family and "neighbors" in the power of the kingdom, we must abandon the deeply rooted human practice of condemning and blaming. This is what Jesus means when he says, "Judge not." He is telling us that we should, and that we can, become the kind of person who does not condemn or blame others. And as we do so, the power of God's kingdom will be more freely available to bless and guide those around us into his ways.*

*"But what is it, exactly, that we do when we condemn someone? When we condemn another we really communicate that he or she is, in some deep and just possibly irredeemable way, bad—bad as a whole, and to be rejected. In our eyes the*





*condemned is among the discards of human life. He or she is not acceptable. We sentence that person to exclusion. Surely we can learn to live well and happily without doing that.”*

*“Now a moment’s reflection is all that is required to make one realize how terribly powerful condemnation is. It knifes into vulnerable areas at the core of our being. That is why it hurts so badly and at the same time we rely upon it so heavily. The decision to step aside from it, neither giving it nor receiving it, is a major turning point in one’s life. If, as Christians often say, we really are “different” as followers of Christ, this is a point where it should be most obvious. We would not condemn, nor would we “receive” condemnation directed upon us.”*

*- Dallas Willard <sup>48</sup>*

*“[Jesus’ words on judging] forces you to go into the heart of the gospel and walk away changed from that experience. The reality is not “me and Jesus” and then “this person” with a line between us. The reality is, I am on the other side of the line.... I am a kind of person who is in desperate need of God’s grace that comes in Jesus. And condemning is precisely what Jesus does not do to me. When I [understand that] first, it has the capacity to utterly change a human being.*

*- Tim Mackie <sup>49</sup>*

*“There I was, convinced that I was defending Jesus by condemning Wrong Christian, when I saw that Jesus was beckoning both Right Christian and Wrong Christian and inviting all of us to know more of his heart. As I read through the Gospels, I noticed that he had a habit of connecting with everybody: conservative theologians, liberal theologians, prostitutes, divorcees, children, politicians, people who party hard, military servicemen, women, lepers, ethnic minorities, celebrities, you name it. He was pretty serious about connecting, in spite of natural and ideological differences. And it doesn’t end in the Gospels. He repeatedly disregards my Right Christian and Wrong Christian labels and continues to beckon me, even though I still tend to cling to such earthly distinctions. He’s relentless.*

*- Christena Cleveland <sup>50</sup>*

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<sup>48</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy* p217-18, 221.

<sup>49</sup> *Sermon: To Judge or Not to Judge, (31:12-32:22)* <https://bit.ly/3fsrtaA>

<sup>50</sup> *Following the Call*, 82.





## Go Deeper:

Songs: "[Jesus, Friend of Sinners](#)" by Casting Crowns

<https://bit.ly/3rBSwYy>

"[Heaven on My Mind](#)" by Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

<https://bit.ly/3rAxtEf>

"[Broken Things](#)" by Matthew West

<https://bit.ly/33iDe0T>

Book Excerpt: "[The Community of Prayerful Love](#)" in *The Divine Conspiracy*

by Dallas Willard, p215-231, <https://bit.ly/3nm7u1F>

Article: "[A Simple Method to Avoid Being a Judgmental Christian](#)" by Alex Tran

<https://bit.ly/31XFTfT>

Video: "[To Judge or Not to Judge](#)" by Tim Mackie

<https://bit.ly/3fsrtaA>





## Week 19: Letting go of Condemnation (pt 2)

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

**Opening Practice:** Confess and reflect on this saying, “God you do not condemn us, but you love and accept us and invite us to learn and change.”<sup>51</sup>

### Opening Prayer:

Loving Father, you are wonderful. You do not condemn me or treat me as my sins deserve. I admit that I easily condemn others or seek to force “good” upon them. I do so to help them or in an attempt to make life as I think it should be. Take the plank of condemnation out of my eye, Lord so I can see others with compassion as you did, and thus be able to genuinely help them. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”  
- John 3:17

**Scripture Reading:** Read slowly. Imagine what you are reading. The daily questions will correspond to the daily scripture passage.

Each day: Matthew 7:1-6

Monday: Rev 3:14-22 (esp 20)

Tuesday: John 3:14-21

Wednesday: Matthew 18:23-35

Thursday: Ephesians 4:29-5:2

Friday: Romans 12:9-21

Saturday: Prov 25:15, 18-22

### Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.

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<sup>51</sup> John 3:17, 4:1-42; Matthew 9:9-13



## Daily reflection questions:

**Monday:** It is easy to use condemnation as a way to try to help people. In today's scripture (Rev 3:14-22) what is Jesus' way of helping his people? Who are people that you love and want to help by using condemnation?

**Tuesday:** We often try to help people, take the speck out of their eye, with the plank of condemnation blinding us. In John 3:14-21, how did God seek to help us? What are the "specks" or the issues in the people you listed yesterday?

**Wednesday:** How has God treated you in your sins and debts? How do Jesus' words speak to the people and situations where you use condemnation? Spend some time in prayer for the people and issues you listed from Monday and Tuesday. Ask God to help you see them and the situations with his eyes and his desires.

**Thursday:** How are judgmentalism and condemnation examples of "unwholesome talk" (Eph 4:29)? Think of a person or situation where you have been or are tempted to be judgmental. How would Jesus "build them up according to their needs" (Eph 4:29)? In dealing with the people and issues you listed on Monday and Tuesday, what attitudes or words would help build them up according to their needs? Practice these today.

**Friday:** Today's scripture (Romans 12:9-21) talks about the process of loving people with God through change. It takes time. You will be tempted to become impatient and to speed things up by anger or judgmentalism. Who are people you have tried to help through condemnation? Contact them to apologize.

**Saturday:** How do these verses (Prov 25:15, 18-22) explain how loving engagement or condemnation work in the situations you mentioned Monday and Tuesday? Pray for the people and situations where you know you can easily become judgmental.

## Closing:

*Loving Father, I want my life to have influence and be a blessing. I long to be salt and light. Condemnation is a curse, not a blessing and this is not how you treated me. Help me to see situations through your eyes, and trust in your Kingdom way of patience, encouragement, and love. Use me and make me a blessing. Amen.*



### Quotes:

*“Condemnation is the board in our eye. [Jesus] knows that the mere fact that we are condemning someone shows our hearts does not have the kingdom rightness he has been talking about. Condemnation, especially with its usual accompaniments of anger and contempt and self-righteousness, blinds us to the reality of the other person. We cannot “see clearly” how to assist our brother, because we cannot see our brother. And we will never know how to truly help him until we have grown into the kind of person who does not condemn. Period.*

*“Our practice of “condemnation engineering,” as it might be called, usually goes hand in hand with another device mistakenly used to manage the lives of those we truly care about. This is the practice of pushing the things of God upon them whether they want or are ready for them or not. [This is the meaning of the illustration of pearls and pigs.] Our good intentions make little difference. The needy person will finally become angry and attack us. The point is not the waste of the “pearl” but that the person given the pearl is not helped.”*

- Dallas Willard <sup>52</sup>

*“But if we have all these riches in God, at the same time we need to remember that human personality is by no means completed.... Since God is a perfect, a complete personality, we can only indistinctly see Him through our broken personalities. In proportion to the completion of our personalities He is revealed to us.... Each [person] has some lack in his or her personality. Neither can be completed alone.... We have to learn that since we ourselves have faults we must also forgive one another.”*

*“Many people do not see each other’s good points, but only their weak points, and speak ill of them, saying, “But So-and-so has such-and-such faults.” The very word “but” is often used with this criticizing meaning in Japan. They think that unkind gossip is valuable criticism. Some people speak ill of the Churches. But we should always be seeing the better sides of things. Paul said, “Hold such in reputation,” and often praised others. We must always be forgiving each other’s sins. This is the best way for the completion of personality.*

- Toyohiko Kagawa <sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy* p224, 228-9.

<sup>53</sup> *The Religion of Jesus*, 53-4, available at <https://bit.ly/3lel6nO>





## Go Deeper:

Songs: “[Don’t Throw All the Good Things Away](#)” by NeedtoBreathe  
<https://bit.ly/3tACTI7>

“[Let Mercy Lead](#)” by Rich Mullins  
<https://bit.ly/3tGcBOM>

Book Excerpt: “[The Community of Prayerful Love](#)” in *The Divine Conspiracy*  
by Dallas Willard, p215-231, <https://bit.ly/3nm7u1F>

“Constructive Correction” in [Parenting is Heart Work](#)  
by Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, ch 13.

Article: “[How to Stop Judging Others](#)” by Keir Brady <sup>54</sup>  
<https://bit.ly/3nzj4qs>

Video: “[To Judge or Not to Judge](#)” by Tim Mackie  
<https://bit.ly/3fsrtaA>

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<sup>54</sup> Note: This article is not written from a Christian perspective. The use of this resource is to help you think with Jesus about these issues. The use of the article does not imply that the author is necessarily a reliable source of information in other areas, or that we agree with everything the author has written.





## Week 20: Learning to Ask Others

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

*Notice something from God's creation, either around you or in a photograph. Take some moments to truly consider it, it's intricacy and beauty. Let yourself be amazed at the majestic imagination, creativity, and goodness of God.*

### Opening Prayer:

My good Father, you are always present in the heavens, as close as the air I breathe. There is so much that I do not know or understand. You invite me to not make incomplete judgments but to ask questions of others and of you. Help me be curious about what is happening around me. Help me to honor others and you by asking questions and learning. May this act of obedience to your teaching be a way I see and love others as you do. And may you use these questions to help your kingdom come and your will be done here on earth just as it is in heaven. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. - Matthew 7:7-8

**Scripture Reading:** *Each scripture contains a question Jesus asked. How does Jesus use questions to love the people he was interacting with?*

*Each day: Matthew 7:7-12*

*Monday: John 20:11-15*

*Thursday: Mark 4:35-40*

*Tuesday: Luke 7:36-48*

*Friday: John 5:1-8*

*Wednesday: Mark 5:1-15*

*Saturday: John 21:15-19*

### Daily Practice:

Spend some time in silence reflecting on the following questions. As you reflect, write on the blank journaling page.





### Daily reflection questions:

**Monday:** The goal today is to practice thinking of and asking questions. In your journal write the name of a person you will interact with today and a number of simple questions you can ask them. During the day see how long you can keep the conversation going with them by asking questions and follow-up questions. See this video: <https://bit.ly/3AKXzIC>.

**Tuesday:** How did yesterday's activity go? What went well or did not go well? Write your thoughts in your journal. Today select either the same person or a different person and repeat the process.

**Wednesday:** Today we want to work on replacing wrong judgments with questions. Identify a situation in the recent past where you were judgmental, or you forced "good" on another (perhaps look back in the previous week's journal responses). In your journal write your judgment or the thing you were forcing. Change each into an honest open-ended question. *Example: You should read your Bible every day. What do you feel would be a good goal for you to read your Bible each week? Or, How do you feel about reading your Bible?*

**Thursday:** Today, look for situations where you are quick to make a statement, judgment, or quick conclusion. Stop. Reframe this as a question. Listen fully to the other person and ask a follow-up question. Do not make your "point."

**Friday:** In the journal, write your experience from yesterday's activity. Repeat the activity today, focusing on active listening (giving full attention through eye contact, not allowing your mind to jump ahead, and clarifying that you understood through repeating key phrases and summarizing).

**Saturday:** Write your experience from yesterday's activity. Take a moment to reflect over the practices this week with God, writing your thoughts and takeaways in your journal.

### Closing:

*Jesus, you asked so many questions: "What are you looking for?"<sup>55</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?"<sup>56</sup> "Who do you say that I am?"<sup>57</sup>. Help me to practice replacing my judgments with questions. I will practice today, trusting that this is good, right, and the way I can join your Kingdom's activity to love those around me. Amen.*

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<sup>55</sup> John 1:38, 18:7, 20:5

<sup>56</sup> Matthew 20:32, Mark 10:36, 10:51, Luke 18:41

<sup>57</sup> Mark 8:27, Luke 9:18, Matthew 16:13



## Quotes:

“As long as I am condemning my friends or relatives, or pushing my “pearls” on them, I am their problem. They have to respond to me, and that usually leads to their “judging” me right back, or “biting” me, as Jesus said. But once I back away, maintaining a sensitive and non manipulative presence, I am no longer their problem. As I listen, they do not have to protect themselves from me, and they begin to open up. I may quickly begin to appear to them as a possible ally and resource. Now they begin to sense their problem to be the situation they have created, or possibly themselves. Because I am no longer trying to drive them, genuine communication, real sharing of hearts, becomes an attractive possibility. The healing dynamic of the request comes naturally into play.”  
- Dallas Willard <sup>58</sup>

*“Judgment and empathy live in two different houses. Living in judgment rarely allows me to learn or see anything new. If I want to leave the house of judgment, a place I can go is the house of empathy, and curiosity will be what gets me there, even when I disagree with what I see when I arrive.”*  
- Will Wise <sup>59</sup>

*“Jesus is a questioner. Jesus is not the ultimate Answer Man—he’s more like the Great Questioner. Jesus asks many more questions than he is asked. In the four gospels Jesus asks 307 different questions. By contrast, he is only asked 183 questions.*

*Easy answers can give us a sense of finality. By entertaining questions God has a chance to change us. Answers can be offered as a conclusion. Questions are an invitation to further reflection. For the most part, answers close and questions open. The goal of the question and the parable... is not to communicate knowledge but to elicit new understanding in the listener. Information is not the goal. Transformation is.”*  
- Martin Copenhaver <sup>60</sup>

*“[God] wills that I should come to him day by day with distinct requests; he wills day by day to do for me what I ask. It was in his answer to prayer that the saints of old learned to know God as the Living One, and were stirred to praise and love (Ps 34). Our Teacher waits to imprint this upon our minds: prayer and its answer, the child asking and the father giving, belong to each other. There may be cases in which the answer is a refusal, because the request is not according to God’s Word, as when Moses asked to enter Canaan. But still, there was an answer: God did not leave his servant in uncertainty as to his will.... God will teach those who are teachable and*

<sup>58</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy* p224, 228-9.

<sup>59</sup> *Ask Powerful Questions*, 177.

<sup>60</sup> *Jesus is the Question*, Introduction, Kindle.

*give him time, by his Word and Spirit, whether their request be according to his will or not.... It is in prayer that the interchange of love between the Father and his child takes place.”*  
- Andrew Murray <sup>61</sup>

### Go Deeper:\*

Songs: “[Ask](#)” by Anthony Evans  
<https://bit.ly/35x2rpl>

Book: “[Jesus is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered](#)” by Martin Copenhagen, <https://amzn.to/3rDFOHa>

“[Ask Powerful Questions](#)” by Will Wise  
<https://amzn.to/33RWTUV>

Video: “[How to Ask Good Questions in Conversations](#)” by Alex Lyon  
<https://bit.ly/33RWHWG>

“[Master the Art of Conversation](#)” by Alex Lyon  
<https://bit.ly/3AKXzIC>

“[6 Reflective Listening Skills Combined](#)” by Bruce Lambert  
<https://bit.ly/3KGm8uS>

“The Question Formulation Technique” by Right Question Institute

Explanation: <https://bit.ly/3g5RKMg>

QFT cheat sheet: <https://bit.ly/3G2BUwt>

*\* Some of these resources are not written from a Christian perspective. The use of this resource is to help you think with Jesus about these issues. The use of the article does not imply that the author is necessarily a reliable source of information in other areas, or that we agree with everything the author has written.*

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<sup>61</sup> *Following the Call*, 293-4.



## Week 21: Learning to Ask God

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

*Spend a few minutes taking deep breaths, letting God quiet your heart and mind, and show you his presence with you. Allow yourself to rest in his loving presence.*

### Opening Prayer:

My good Father, you are always present in the heavens, as close as the air I breathe. There is so much that I do not know or understand. You invite me to not make incomplete judgments but to ask questions of others and you. Help me be curious about what is happening around me. Help me to honor others and you by asking questions and learning. May this act of obedience to your teaching be a way I see and love others as you do. And may you use these questions to help your kingdom come and your will be done here on earth just as it is in heaven. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.

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

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

for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen

- Matthew 6:9b-13

### Scripture Reading: Each scripture relates to one part of the Lord's Prayer.

Monday: Father near us

- Psalm 68:4-10

Tuesday: Hallowed be your name

- Psalm 34

Wednesday: Your Kingdom come

- Revelation 21:5, 22-27; 22:1-5

Thursday: Daily bread

- Exodus 16:1-3, 11-24

Friday: Forgive us

- Matthew 18:21-35

Saturday: Deliver us

- Psalm 31:1-5

### Daily Practice: <sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> All daily practice activities are quoted from "The Basics and the Lord's Prayer" by John Mark Comer, <https://bit.ly/3s5GLIs>





**Monday:** “Our Father in the heavens”- Take a moment and think about the idea of God as your Father, with good intentions toward you. If you want, imagine God in your mind’s eye. Picture his face. Make eye contact with him. Take a moment to think about the idea that God is all around you. As you breathe in and out, imagine yourself breathing in and out more of the Holy Spirit.

**Tuesday:** “Hallowed be your name”- Spend a few minutes just sitting with the Father in joyful, grateful, worship. You might want to sit in silence for a few moments. Or sing a chorus. Or rattle off a list of things you’re grateful for. Or praise God with specific things you love about him.

**Wednesday:** “Your kingdom come”- Spend a few minutes asking for God’s will to be done in your city/church/community/life. Think of specific things to pray for. One at a time, give to God specific things in your life that you’re wrestling with control over. A simple prayer of, “Your will be done in \_\_\_\_\_,” is a great place to start.

**Thursday:** “Give us daily bread”- Spend a few minutes praying for specific needs and wants in your life or that of your community: a job, healing, wisdom to make a decision, etc.

**Friday:** “Forgive us as we forgive”- Spend a few minutes in quiet asking God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life, and releasing others to forgiveness.

**Saturday:** “Deliver us”- Spend a few minutes praying against temptation (the word can also be translated trouble) in your life. Pray against specific sins. Pray against any kind of evil - spiritual evil (demonic), human evil, natural evil, etc. Pray against bad things in your life or community, and for God’s blessing - the divine flow of good things into your life and community.

## Closing:

*Dear Father always near us, may your name be treasured and loved, may your rule be completed in us—may your will be done here on earth in just the way it is done in heaven. Give us today the things we need today, and forgive us our sins and impositions on you as we are forgiving all who in any way offend us. Please don’t put us through trials, but deliver us from everything bad. Because you are the one in charge, and you have all the power, and the glory too is all yours—forever—which is just the way we want it!* <sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy*, 269.



## Quotes:

*“Prayer is never just asking , nor is it merely a matter of asking for what I want. God is not a cosmic butler or fix-it man, and the aim of the universe is not to fulfill my desires and needs. On the other hand, I am to pray for what concerns me, and many people have found prayer impossible because they thought they should only pray for wonderful but remote needs they actually had little or no interest in or even knowledge of. Prayer simply dies from efforts to pray about “good things” that honestly do not matter to us. The way to get to meaningful prayer for those good things is to start by praying for what we are truly interested in. The circle of our interests will inevitably grow in the largeness of God’s love.... Accordingly, I believe the most adequate description of prayer is simply, “Talking to God about what we are doing together.”... Prayer is a matter of explicitly sharing with God my concerns about what he too is concerned about in my life. And of course he is concerned about my concerns and, in particular, that my concerns should coincide with his. This is our walk together. Out of it I pray.”*

- Dallas Willard <sup>64</sup>

*“[T]he end of your praying is not to inform God, as though he knew not your wants already; but rather to inform yourselves; to fix the sense of those wants more deeply in your hearts, and the sense of your continual dependence on Him who only is able to supply all your wants. It is not so much to move God, who is always more ready to give than you to ask, as to move yourselves, that you may be willing and ready to receive the good things he has prepared for you.”*

- John Wesley <sup>65</sup>

*“Our praying can and should arise above all from our heart, from our needs, our hopes, our joys, our sufferings, from our shame over sin, and from our gratitude for the good. It can and should be a wholly personal prayer. But we also constantly need to make use of those prayers that express in words the encounter with God experienced both by the church as a whole and by individual members of the church. For without these aids to prayer, our own praying and our image of God become subjective and end up reflecting ourselves more than the living God. [The Lord’s Prayer is] a “school of prayer” that transforms and opens up our life. Jesus thereby involves us in his own prayer... It aims to form our being, to train us in the inner attitude of Jesus.*

- Pope Benedict XVI <sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> The Divine Conspiracy p242-3.

<sup>65</sup> Sermon 26. <https://bit.ly/3gmQZPd>

<sup>66</sup> Following the Call, 185-6.





## Go Deeper:

Songs: “[Our Father](#)” by Don Moen

<https://bit.ly/3B4RLdi>

“[The Lord’s Prayer](#)” by Citizen Way

<https://bit.ly/3gmWAoH>

“[The Lord’s Prayer](#)” by Soul Support

<https://bit.ly/3Gor2cz>

“[The Lord’s Prayer](#)” by Michael W. Smith

<https://bit.ly/3B91UFM>

Book: “The Lord’s Prayer” in *The Writings of Toyohiko Kagawa* by Toyohiko Kagawa,

<https://bit.ly/3GqGUv2>

“The Discipline of Prayer” in *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster

<https://bit.ly/3CjmlJF>

“The Lord’s Prayer” in *Disciplines for the Inner Life* by Bob & Michael Benson

<https://bit.ly/3L8FtVB>

Video: “The Non-Condemning Community of Prayer” by Dallas Willard

<https://bit.ly/3HrcWsr>

“The Lord’s Prayer [Matthew]” by Tim Mackie

<https://bit.ly/3GvS69H>



## Week 22: Doing What Jesus Says (Pt 1)

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Imagine yourself on a path that splits at two gates. The wide way looks flat, comfortable, and safe. The narrow way goes steeply uphill and will require thought and effort. Imagine Jesus at the narrow gate inviting you. He begins to walk up, and you immediately follow him onto the steep ground.

### Opening Prayer:

Jesus, you have found me, loved me, forgiven me, and invited me to you and your Kingdom. In you, I experience God's nearness and power, his Kingdom which I can count on. You invite me to join you and God's Kingdom activity redeeming all creation. You teach me how to live in the Kingdom. But I must learn and consistently practice this way with you, Jesus. It is a narrow way of doing what you have told me in the Sermon on the Mount. Help me to decide, engage, and practice today. This is good! You are with me! Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

- Matthew 7:21

### Scripture Reading:

Monday: Psalm 23:1, Matthew 4:18-5:16

Thursday: Matthew 6:1, 19-34

Tuesday: Matthew 5:17-30

Friday: Matthew 7:1-12

Wednesday: Matthew 5:33-48

Saturday: Matthew 7:13-27

**Daily Practice:** This week we will be reviewing the 7-steps to practice Jesus' teachings.

**Monday:** Truth: In Jesus, God's Kingdom is available and makes life good.

The Goodness of the Kingdom is illustrated in Matthew 4:18-5:16. Today write as many bible promises in your journal as you can. An internet search can be helpful. These scriptures are important for Step 5: Confess what is true.



**Tuesday:** Truth: Because God's Kingdom makes life good we can practice setting aside anger, contempt, lust, obsessive desire, and instead learn to deal with situations with God's kingdom love and understanding.

1. Decide: to do this activity.
2. Stop: Think of a recent situation where you used anger, contempt, lust, or obsessive desire, and write it here:

*Trigger: What triggered, or caused these emotions or desires to come up?*

3. Ask God's help
4. Admit what was wrong (or questions you have):
5. Confess what is true (refer to today's scriptures and/or the promises you wrote on Monday):
6. Obey: What is something you can do in response to this that is right and good? Write it here then put it into practice.
6. Accountability.
  - *Timing: Did you recognize the issue and engage God:*
    - 4) after you acted                      2) after thoughts, but before action
    - 3) during the action                      1) at the moment of thought
  - Look for someone this week to share this with who will pray for you and follow-up to encourage you.
  - Write future instances in your journal.



**Wednesday:** Repeat the exercise from Tuesday with today's scripture topics of using manipulative words (oaths) and getting even.

**Thursday:** Repeat the exercise from Tuesday with today's scripture topics of worry, and treasuring reputation or things.

**Friday:** Repeat the exercise from Tuesday with today's scripture topics of condemning and asking.

**Saturday:** Review what you have written this week. How can the 7-steps, identifying triggers, and habit timing be ways the Holy Spirit changes you into a person of the Kingdom, like Jesus?

## Closing:

*Holy Spirit, practice is hard. It is easy to listen to Jesus, easy to assume I know these things. But Jesus has told me to do what he says. There are many reasons why I do not want to: it is uncomfortable, it takes time, it is frightening. But you say that doing this is the way to become a person of the Kingdom, with a character that is becoming more like Jesus. It is the narrow way that leads to your eternal living here and now (Mt 7:13-14). It is the way that I know you, and you recognize me (Mt 7:21-23). May I be willing to put your words into practice and to find others to help me who are doing the same (Mt 7:13-20). You are with me today, and I choose to practice today with you. Amen.*

## Quotes:

*"Plainly, in the eyes of Jesus there is no good reason for not doing what he said to do, for he only tells us to do what is best. In one situation he asks his students, 'Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?'" (Luke 6:46). Just picture yourself standing before him and explaining why you did not do what he said was best.... He has made a way for us into easy and happy obedience—really, into personal fulfillment. And that way is apprenticeship to him. It is Christian "discipleship." His gospel is a gospel for life and Christian discipleship.*

*In other words, his basic message, "Rethink your life in the light of the fact that the kingdom of the heavens is now open to all" (Matt. 4:17), presents the resources needed to live human life as we all automatically sense it should be and naturally leads one to become his student, or apprentice in kingdom living.*

*Therefore the practice of routine obedience for the heart is the final topic of his discourse on the Hill [Sermon on the Mount]."*

*- Dallas Willard <sup>67</sup>*

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<sup>67</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy* p242-3.

*"It is so easy to overestimate the importance of one defining moment and underestimate the value of making small improvements on a daily basis. Too often, we convince ourselves that massive success requires massive action.... Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement. They seem to make little difference on any given day and yet the impact they deliver over the months and years can be enormous.... This can be a difficult concept to appreciate in daily life. We often dismiss small changes because they don't seem to matter very much in the moment... the results never seem to come quickly and so we slide back into our previous routines. Unfortunately, the slow pace of transformation also makes it easy to let a bad habit slide.... A slight change in your daily habits can guide your life to a very different destination....It doesn't matter how successful or unsuccessful you are right now. What matters is whether your habits are putting you on the path towards success.... Your outcomes are a lagging measure of your habits."*

*- James Clear<sup>68</sup>*

*"Jesus was a carpenter, but in the midst of that simple life he revealed God to people. He was born in a manger in a stable.... This one humble laborer has moved the world! Herein lies the realization of religion. Many think while they hold the throttle or the rudder, God is not near or needed. "While we are praying, God is near; but when we are working, God is not," they say. It is a mistake to think that although God is present in church, God is not present when we are making [food]. We cannot call anything true religion unless through it God may be found at the counter, in the kitchen, or in the shop. Jesus Christ revealed the image of God to the world, and his religion was in his everyday living. The Christian religion includes not only his teachings and ideals, but also his daily life."*

*- Toyohiko Kagawa<sup>69</sup>*

## Go Deeper:

Songs: "[Your Will be Done](#)" by CityAlight

<https://bit.ly/3rTMHWg>

"[Move \(Keep Walkin'\)](#)" by Toby Mac

<https://bit.ly/3LCq4gv>

"[Screen Door](#)" by Rich Mullins

<https://bit.ly/3uTvo9r>

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<sup>68</sup> *Atomic Habits*, p15-18.

<sup>69</sup> "God's Love in our Lives" from *The Writings of Toyohiko Kagawa*. Kindle.





## Week 23: Doing What Jesus Says (Pt 2)

Decide how much time you will spend. Do not rush or be rushed. Remove distractions.

### Opening Practice:

Read through Psalm 23 as a prayer and a confession.

### Opening Prayer:

Jesus, you teach me the way of God and his Kingdom. Because I love you and trust you, I will do what you say. Holy Spirit, make me aware of the red flags. Help me stop and remember I do not need to act or respond in old ways. Because of your Kingdom, I have everything I need, so I can respond in Kingdom love. As I put your words into practice I will be building my life upon a solid rock. Amen.

### Weekly memory verse(s):

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

- Matthew 7:24-5

### Scripture Reading:

Monday: Matthew 4:17-25

Tuesday: Matthew 5:1-16

Wednesday: Matthew 5:48

Thursday: Matthew 6:33

Friday: Matthew 7:7-12

Saturday: Matthew 7:24-25

### Daily Practice:

**Monday:** Look back in your journal and/or reflect. How have you become more aware of God's nearness, power, and resources over this series?

**Tuesday:** Look back in your journal and/or reflect. After this series, how do you see or understand the Sermon on the Mount differently?

**Wednesday:** What are you learning (or recognizing) about yourself from going through the Sermon on the Mount?



**Thursday:** Look back in your journal and/or reflect. How have you been practicing what Jesus taught?

**Friday:** Look back in your journal and/or reflect. How are you getting better at doing what Jesus taught?

**Saturday:** Look back in your journal and/or reflect. What has been challenging about this journey through the Sermon on the Mount?

## Closing:

*Father, thank you for Jesus who makes the Kingdom open and teaches me to live in it. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who reminds and alerts me to temptation, reminds me of Jesus' words, and empowers me to obey. Help me to look for opportunities to practice today, trusting you to help me. As I practice, help me see others as you do and to encounter situations as Jesus would. Use my life that your Kingdom may come and your will be done here on earth just as it is in heaven. Amen.*

## Quotes:

*"My hope is to gain a fresh hearing for Jesus, especially among those who believe they already understand him. In his case, quite frankly, presumed familiarity has led to unfamiliarity, unfamiliarity has led to contempt, and contempt has led to profound ignorance. [Jesus] is not generally regarded as a real-life personality who deals with real-life issues but is thought to be concerned with some feathery realm other than the one we must deal with, and must deal with now.*

*Individual Christians still hear Jesus say, "Whoever hears these words of mine and does them is like those intelligent people who build their houses upon rock," standing firm against every pressure of life (Matt 7:24-25). How life-giving it would be if their understanding of the gospel allowed them simply to reply, "I will do them. I will find out how. I will devote my life to it! This is the best life strategy I have ever heard of!" and then go off to their fellowship and its teachers, and into their daily life, to learn how to live in his kingdom as Jesus indicated was best."*

*- Dallas Willard<sup>70</sup>*

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<sup>70</sup> *The Divine Conspiracy* pxiii, xvi.

*“Let me summarize: Let your religion be from the heart. Let it penetrate the deepest part of your soul. Though you may be small, wrong, petty, and sinful (beyond what words can express) in your own eyes; be amazed and humbled to the dust by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. So take life seriously!.... Let your soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering towards all men and at the same with every fiber of your being thirst for God, the living God, desperate to become more like him and satisfied with Him! Be a lover of God and of all mankind! In this attitude live, and respond to all life brings! In this way, show your faith by your habitual actions. This is what it means to “do the will of your Father in heaven!” And so you can be assured that as you now live interactively with God here on earth, you will also reign with him in the new heavens and the new earth!”*

*- John Wesley (paraphrased by Brian Woolery)<sup>71</sup>*

*“We hear of building castles in the air. The problem is how to get the foundation under your castle in the air so that it can stand upon the earth. The way to put foundations under our castles is by paying attention to the words of Jesus Christ. We may read and listen and not make much of it at the time, but by and by we come into circumstances when the Holy Spirit will bring back to us what Jesus said — are we going to obey? Jesus says that the way to put foundations under spiritual castles is by hearing and doing “these sayings of mine.” Pay attention to his words, and give time to doing it.*

*Build up your character bit by bit by [paying] attention to my words, says Jesus, then when the supreme crisis comes, you will stand like a rock. The crisis does not come always, but when it does come, it is all up in about two seconds; there is no possibility of pretense, you are unearthed immediately.*

*- Oswald Chambers<sup>72</sup>*

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<sup>71</sup> *The Sermon on the Mount, Sermon XIII.*

<sup>72</sup> *Following the Call, 324-5.*



## Go Deeper:

Songs: “[I am Reminded](#)” by Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir  
<https://bit.ly/3sZxMsS>

“[Trust and Obey \(Acapella\)](#)” by Jehovah Shalom Acapella (African Edition)  
<https://bit.ly/3h61oz6>

“[I Will Follow](#)” by Jon Guerra  
<https://bit.ly/3h6oENo>

“[You Make Me Brave](#)” by Bethel  
<https://bit.ly/352hmrF>

“[Create in Me](#)” by Rend Collective  
<https://bit.ly/3JKVCzc>

