

Greetings friends,

I ask that as we begin our spiritual journey together we begin to take some time daily (if you are not already) to read the Scripture and pray. I thought it would be beneficial for us to focus on the same passage of Scripture for the week. This week, we will focus on Sunday's text, Matthew 6:5-13. If you were not in present on Sunday and have not yet watched it, I encourage you to do so.

Format (this is a repeat from last week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all):

Find a quiet place and time to focus on the Word, and to hear from God through it. It doesn't have to be long, for some it will be longer than others. I encourage you, if possible, to do this practice in the morning. You will then find that God brings it to your mind throughout your day.

For greater impact I encourage you to get some paper and a pen and journal daily what thoughts and impressions God brings to mind. Write out also your own thoughts and your own prayers, making sure to leave space within your time for God's response. Listen intently, and notice what rises up within you- what you are thinking, feeling, memories that arise and ideas that spring up. It may be something God would want you to address within yourself and/or with others. It may be something God is inspiring you to begin or end. God's possibilities are infinite! After time, it is often beneficial to go back and read what you have written, and notice how God has been moving in your life (and praise God for it!).

Begin with prayer, quieting yourself within and opening up to hearing what God would like to reveal to you. Praise God for who he is, for loving you, being with you, and more. Then ask God to speak to you; to open your heart and mind to hear his message. (if you are journaling, you could write out the prayer)

Read the Scripture passage over twice; once as a read through, and the second time slowly, meditatively. Notice what God illuminates for you. Notice what words or ideas are "jumping off the page at you," impacting you from the Scripture. Ask God why that is being highlighted for you. What is God saying to you? What is God asking you to say, do, change, pray about, etc.? What is the application for my life today? **Most importantly- what am I going to do about it? (If you are journaling you could write it all out, which reinforces it in a greater way)

I have put together some daily questions based upon the Scripture. You may use those, but also feel free to deviate away from it if God is leading you there. They are simply offered to prompt contemplation with God. There is much more in this passage, feel free to delve in more!

At the end of your time pray again. I recommend praying throughout, but the ending prayer would include praise, thanking God for revelation, and asking for the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal, bringing to mind God's will. Ask God for the courage, empowerment, and opportunity to do what you have determined God is asking you to do.

Matthew 6:5-13

“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. 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. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“This, then, is how you should pray:

“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.’

*The King James Version of the prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.

*then a doxology is added: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

****Weekly Challenge-** pray for God to give an opportunity to pray for someone, in person. Take a risk and step into that opportunity and ask that person if you could pray. If they say yes, pray with them right then and there, remembering to fill the prayer with empathy, love, and grace. If they say no, make sure to still pray on your own- don’t just tuck it away and forget about it!

****Begin to journal the experiences,** “God moments” that are beginning to happen, the answers to prayer, the words that you are hearing God speak to you. Save it. Some day in the future it will be very good to look back and read and remember!

DAILY QUIET TIME WITH GOD:

Monday: Jesus said, and “when you pray” which implies that praying is something that would be a customary, usual, practice to participate in. The activity of praying is something Jesus assumed of his hearers and especially of his followers. As a believer, consider your own practice of prayer. Do you have time set apart when you can focus on prayer? If not, ask God to show you how to make that happen. God asks us to have set apart time to pray and to also pray unceasingly- basically having an open line of communication with God throughout our day. Which do you find easier and why? When and how are you most able to hear God? How can you grow in that? If you don’t know how, ask God!

Tuesday: “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.” Although this seems like a harsh criticism and we would like to believe that we would never pray or participate in other Godly activities for our own benefit and praise from people, most of us, if we were to really dig deep, have done so at some point in our lives. Maybe not outwardly praying on a street corner, but somehow using God for our own purposes. Consider how doing so relates to the commandment to not take the Lord’s name in vain. Ask God to show you any times when you have had a self-serving attitude with God. If/when God reveals it, ask for forgiveness and pray about how to do things differently.

Wednesday: “Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Imagine what that “reward” could be. An answer to prayer perhaps. Consider, if the reward was an answer to pray in a form that was different than what you prayed for or imagined. How would that make you feel? Why? What if the “reward” was simply the presence of God, spending time in God’s presence? How would that make you feel? Would you feel satisfied, or perhaps unsatisfied? What does your response indicate about your own spiritual depth and growth that is needed? What new step is God leading you into?

Thursday: Jesus said, “your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” How does that make you feel? Does that bring forward feelings of comfort because God knows everything? Or does it bring forward feelings of frustration because God knows and yet you may not perceive God acting in response to your need? Or does it bring forward a different kind of response altogether? How willing and how wanting are you toward spending time in prayer with God if God already knows the need? What do you perceive would be the benefit and reason to do so? If you are struggling in this area, confess it to God and listen for God’s guidance and love to speak into your life.

Friday: Jesus gives what is referred to as the “Lord’s Prayer.” Read the prayer slowly and carefully, reflecting on the words. What are some words or phrases that stand out to you? God may very well be highlighting something for you. Take a moment and ask God why that word or phrase is standing out. Wait for a response- listen! God often speaks through a word or phrase that may come to mind, or an image, or an idea, or a feeling- something spontaneous that

comes to you (and which the character of it aligns with Scripture!) Ask what that would indicate in your life and which areas of your life it applies to. Ask God for wisdom and discernment, and then ask God for guidance in following through wherever that prayer pattern is pointing.

Saturday: Jesus said, “This, then, is how you should pray,” indicating that the prayer Jesus gives is a model for our prayers. Take a moment and create your own prayer using what you have discovered so far as the pattern or model for prayer. Remember to begin with the right motivation and attitude. If, for whatever reason, you are not feeling loving and are finding it difficult to pray with the love of God as a base for your prayer, confess that. You may also worship, which fills the heart and soul and reminds us of who God is and how much we are loved. After crafting your prayer, pray it aloud and let your own words fuel your faith.