

MAY

Prayer Guide

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HOW TO USE **THIS PRAYER GUIDE**

These devotions with prayer prompts are intended to assist our church family as we seek Christ personally in our daily time with Him and corporately during our monthly family prayer service. It is vital that we pursue the Lord in prayer with a humble heart and depend on His guidance and leadership.

DEFINED BY THE WORD

DEVOTED TO PRAYER

DEPENDANT ON THE SPIRIT

ALL PREVIOUS PRAYER GUIDES ARE LOCATED ON OUR WEBSITE

WWW.RICHLANDCREEK.COM

Day 1

Introducing Dr. Mike Powers:

The Vision & Preaching Pastor of Richland Creek Community Church!



Pastor Mike was affirmed by the Creek family on March 21, 2021, by a vote of 634–0, a unanimous affirmation that represents the largest recorded vote count in the church’s history. This vote comes after Pastor Mike was unanimously recommended by the 8-person Pastor Search Committee and the

Pastoral Body of Richland Creek. Praise the Lord for the faithfulness and unity of the body of Christ!

As Vision and Preaching Pastor, Pastor Mike’s primary ministry will be the weekly teaching of the Word of God from the pulpit. He will also lead the church, and particularly the Pastoral Body, by giving guidance and wisdom in overall vision and purpose in collaboration with the directional team.

He is married to Candi, his wife of more than 15 years, and the biggest joys of their lives are their children: Lilly, 12; Zeke, 9; and Kate, 5. He has served Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte as a pastor for 15 years—first as student pastor, then discipleship pastor, and most recently as campus pastor of the church’s main campus on Harris Boulevard.

A North Carolina native, Pastor Mike received his undergraduate degree from North Carolina State University, Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Doctor of Ministry in Leadership from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Pastor Mike’s first day in the pulpit was Sunday, April 25, 2021. He would describe his preaching style as strongly biblical and expositional, centered on the gospel. He will primarily preach through texts of Scripture, letting the shape of the biblical text drive the shape of his sermon. The central truths of the gospel will be woven throughout the sermon, as they are throughout Scripture, rather than tacked onto the end of the sermon.

Over the next several days of this prayer guide, we will learn how we, as a congregation, can be praying for Pastor Mike and his family as they begin their time here at Richland Creek.

Day 2

A Word from Pastor Mike - Abounding in Hope

Key Scripture: *Romans 15:13* “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

From the earliest days when my wife, Candi, and I heard about Richland Creek, we began to pray for all of you. The Lord has used those prayers to bind our hearts with yours and the ministry here. Some of the verses that the Lord has brought to us have been in Romans 15.

One of the verses from Romans 15 that speaks especially to the future of Richland Creek is verse 13. We all believe that Richland Creek has a bright and hopeful future. There are many reasons to believe this, but the primary reason for this hope comes from the God we serve. He is a God of BIG hope- not just for small plans and a future, but of abundant hope like the verse says.

The flow of the verse shows us that as we believe in God, he fills us by the power of the Holy Spirit to experience an unexplainable joy and peace. This joy and peace in turn enables us to abound in hope.

Since our God and the hope He gives is so big, we can rejoice, pray and dream big. We can rejoice as we worship a holy and mighty God. We can pray that our investments in others’ growth will produce radical disciples of Christ. We can dream that God will use Richland Creek to reach people for Christ in our area and throughout the world.

We unite with you in prayer in eager anticipation of the ways the Lord will use Richland Creek Community Church to take the gospel to the ends of the earth!

Questions to Consider:

What do I base my hope for the future on? Are you experiencing a life full of joy and peace? If not, why? What big hopeful prayers are you praying for Richland Creek?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, Remind me that You are the God of hope and fill me so that I abound in that hope in my speech, thoughts and actions
- Fill me with all joy and peace as I believe in and trust You and Your sovereignty
- Fill me with the power of Your Spirit
- Use Richland Creek for Your glory throughout the world

Day 3

Praying for Hickory Grove Baptist Church

As we welcome Pastor Mike, we want to remember our sister church, Hickory Grove Baptist Church during this transition. Below is the letter that the elder body of Richland Creek, on behalf of our church body, sent to Hickory Grove.

Please keep them in your prayers as they have now entered into their own pastoral transition.

Dear Pastors and Leaders of Hickory Grove Baptist Church,

On behalf of the entire congregation of Richland Creek Community Church, we desire to thank you for the Christ-honoring investments you have made, over the last 15 years, in Mike and Candi Powers and their family. As we have gotten to know the Powers family over the last few months, and called him as our Vision and Preaching Pastor, the marks of effective and godly leadership have been obvious. We recognize, and rejoice, that God has used many of you to instill and impress those marks in Pastor Mike.

In his first letter to the Thessalonian church, Paul writes, “We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Lord’s work in and through Hickory Grove shines forth, because in the providence and grace of God, as you invested in Pastor Mike, you were simultaneously investing in us. In fact, we know and trust that your investment will continue to pay gospel dividends at Richland Creek for years to come. Glory to God for His amazing and unmistakable providence!

We are so thankful for, and can absolutely feel, the prayers that you have been offering up to the Lord for our church family. We, in turn, are praying for you as you enter into a pastoral transition of your own. May our Lord guide your every decision, your every step, as you continue as a congregation to honor and glorify Him.

Yours in Christ,

The Pastoral Body of Richland Creek, on behalf of her congregation

Day 4

Prayer for Candi Powers and their Children

Key Scripture: *Titus 2:3–5* “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

Though these verses specifically address women, the surrounding verses 1–8 and the use of the word “likewise” reveal many of the same general expectations of men and women. All of the characteristics are to be rooted in and flowing from sound doctrine.

In verse 3, we see God’s expectations of more mature women. However, when we look at verses 4–5, we realize the older women cannot teach the younger women something they do not already know and do. So, even though some characteristics are age-specific, these are all aims of godly character as women grow in Christ-likeness.

What does a maturing woman look like? She exhibits surrender to the Lord by being dignified, honest, self-controlled, a good caregiver of her family, blameless, marked by kindness and respect, teachable, and a trainer of other women in these things. Her “why” is important. This is not for her recognition. She embodies these traits so God is honored and the gospel goes forth.

Questions to Consider:

Is God’s glory my chief aim? Do others observe these characteristics in me? In which area do I struggle the most? Am I intentionally coming alongside someone younger for his or her spiritual good?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would be glorified as Candi radiates Christ-likeness.
- Pray that God would provide Candi with deep godly relationships with women, as well as godly relationships for Lilly, Zeke and Kate.
- Pray that God would give her joy in the use of her spiritual gifts.
- Pray that Candi will be a source of stability for her family during this time of transition.
- Pray that God would be her greatest treasure and comfort.
- Pray that her relationship with God would encourage her husband, doing him good. (Prov 31:12)
- Pray that God would give her strength as her husband’s helper (Gen 2:18).
- Pray that God would protect their marriage and strengthen their unity, as well as their family’s unity.
- Pray that God would grant her and the children peace through their transition here. Pray that our church body would embrace their family well.

Day 5

Prayer for Unity in the Church and Staff

Key Scripture: *Psalm 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.”*

It is always difficult to step into a leadership role from the outside. It's just as difficult for a group of people, who have been working together for years, to invite someone new to lead them. As believers, however, there is a unity that already binds us together. We are all family in Christ. We are brothers and sisters who are bound to common goals—namely, Love God and Love People. This is how we differ from the rest of culture. This bond is what gives us strength and the ability to truly enjoy the goodness of unity.

Ephesians 4:3 “to be diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”

As Pastor Mike steps into his role of working alongside our other pastors, elders, deacons and ministry leaders, we must be diligent to preserve unity. We must be diligent to maintain the bond of peace that is only found through Christ Jesus. Through unity and the bond of family, the church leadership will be able to unite and guide us with the wisdom that only God can grant, guarded by a peace that only He can give.

Questions to Consider:

Is there anything in my life that would cause disunity among the brethren? Will you commit to praying for unity in the body as Pastor Mike begins his work with the staff and congregation? How may I better pursue unity?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for a spirit of unity amongst Pastor Mike and all leadership within the church.
- Pray for humble hearts, unity, wisdom, and peace amongst the church body.
- Pray for revival in the hearts of the church family.

2 Corinthians 13:11 “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”

Colossians 3:14 “And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Day 6

Dedicated & Dependant on God's Word

Key Scripture: *Joshua 1:8–9* “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

As we read these verses, it is plain to see that God is commanding Joshua to be a man deeply dedicated to the Word of God. This command comes as part of a commissioning to lead Israel into the Promised Land. Moses has passed on and Joshua is now the one who will guide God’s people. It won’t be easy. He faces difficult battles and decisions to be made in those battles. God knows this, so He reminds Joshua of His promises: Study My Word. Be strong. Be courageous. I am with you! Wherever you go, I am with you!

Our prayer is that Pastor Mike will be a man dedicated to and dependent on the Word. He will meditate on it. He will memorize it. He will draw his strength and courage from God through His Word. His delight is the presence of God as he dwells in the Word.

Psalm 1:1–2 says, “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.”

Questions to Consider:

Are we a people of the Word? If so, am I meditating on His Word daily? Do I try to take control of things myself rather than turning to the Lord in reliance upon Him?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that Pastor Mike will be a passionate man of the Word.
- Pray that he meditates daily on the Word of God.
- Pray that his dedication and delight in the Word would give him strength and courage.

Bold and Unashamed in the Preaching of the Word

Key Scripture: *2 Timothy 4:1–5* “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Earlier in this letter, Paul affirmed for Timothy God as the source of Scripture and Scripture’s usefulness (2 Tim 3:16–17). In Matthew, Jesus says the Word of God is the source of man’s spiritual life. Since the Word of God is holy, the matter of preaching the Word is no small thing. Using courtroom language in 2 Timothy 4:1, Paul testifies of these truths to Timothy and all future pastors.

We can only love and desire the Word by God’s grace. The world will reject it. And even Christians, at times, will struggle to desire it when it convicts. The temptation exists in congregations today for a pastor to appease us. A pastor faces a world that hates the Word, and generations that call themselves Christians, but deny truth. He faces his pride, pressure to put numbers above God’s Word, and pressure to not offend. When a pastor gives in and carries this weight with him to the pulpit, he no longer preaches the Word of God, but his own version of truth, attempting to make everyone happy.

A lead pastor who loves the Word will know to leave that weight at the foot of the cross, will make no compromises to truth, and will preach and teach the Word in the face of affliction, suffering, or persecution. As believers, we need Scripture and the gospel preached boldly by a man who loves God more than he fears man.

Question to Consider:

Do you listen to sermons to feel better or to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would increase Pastor Mike’s passion for preaching the Word of God.
- Pray that he will boldly and unashamedly proclaim the truth, without compromise.

Day 8

Pray for the Pastoral Body as they Shepherd the Flock

Key Scripture: *Acts 20:28* “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

In Acts 20, Paul urges the overseers (elders or pastors) of the Ephesian church to be on guard. False teaching, false doctrines, “fierce wolves” as Jesus put it, all seek to destroy sound biblical truth. The pastors must guard against this. They must first be willing to self-examine their own walk. How does their own life compare to the truth of Scripture? Effective ministry is not a mere outward activity; it is the overflow of a deep, personal relationship with God and a passion for the truth of His Word.

The pastors are then called to guard the flock—the people placed under their authority and direction. Flock, shepherd, and wolves are all terms that bring the idea of hard work, sweat, and vigilance. As shepherds, Pastor Mike and our pastoral body will feed, care for, and guard the flock—a flock that holds great value, purchased by the blood of Jesus. As shepherds, they do not stand on the outside looking in, but are in the midst, proactively working with and guarding the believers in their care.

“A minister may fill pews, his communion roll, the mouths of the public, but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is and no more.” - John Owen

Questions to Consider:

Am I guarding myself? Am I consistently examining my walk with Christ and pressing it up against Scripture? Am I submissive to the authority and protection of our pastoral body?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that Pastor Mike will have a love and desire to protect the congregation.
- Pray we would come alongside him and his family – praying for their needs of friendship, housing, schooling, etc. as they settle in.
- Pray for the stresses of their transition.
- Pray that Pastor Mike and his family would feel at home at Richland Creek.

Day 9

Happy Mother's Day - Praying for Our Sisters in Christ

Key Scripture: *Titus 2:3–5* “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

On Mother's Day, we pause to praise God for our co-laborers in Christ. We are thankful for our mothers and for all women in our church family, as they are both daughters of the King and our sisters in Christ. Our church beautifully reflects creation and the New Testament church as we fulfill God's discipleship mission together.

All Christians share the same gospel mandate. As spiritual mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers in God's church family, pray for and teach one another. Pray our sisters would bring God glory as they grow in obedience to His Word as women who love God and love others (Matt 22:37–39). Pray they would pour themselves into those around them as models of Christ-like character—in respectable living, self-control, truthfulness, submission, wise management, sound teaching, purity, love, and kindness. A woman's behavior and speech affects how others view God, His Word, and the gospel. We are thankful for ladies who uniquely bear God's image and live as worship to Him. We are grateful for their eternal impact. May we encourage these dear ones to walk in Christ-likeness.

Questions to Consider:

How am I living as a biblical brother/sister and mentor in this church family? How may I encourage my sisters in Christ to be spiritual nurturers?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, thank You for your good creation—male and female. Thank you for the women in our church—teachers, prayer warriors, friends, mothers, co-laborers, disciples who develop disciples.
- I pray for faithful women to be witnesses of God's grace in the home, church, and community. Root them deeply in sound doctrine (Col 2:6–7). Grow this church through our sisters as they spur us on to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24–25). May we continuously train up spiritually mature women to disciple women for Your glory.

Day 10

The Lord's Prayer

Key Scripture: *Matthew 6:9–13 Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day 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 evil.”*

For the rest of this month's prayer guide we will look at prayer in the Bible—namely, Jesus' instruction on prayer and Paul's prayers. If you would like to learn more about prayer, please see the March 2020 prayer guide. There you will find highly practical teaching on what prayer is and how to incorporate prayer into your daily life. As we have stated in our church transition, spiritual disciplines (such as prayer) are not a means to themselves. They are a means or a tool by which we look more like Jesus everyday as we engage in these habits. We don't drift towards holiness; so if we want to be like Jesus, we have to make up our minds to be intentional about doing certain things and developing certain habits that will help us be more like Christ. Moreover, as Dr. Ewart taught us, we must be:

***Defined by the Word, Devoted to Prayer, and
Dependent on the Holy Spirit.***

The Lord's Prayer is embedded in the center of Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7. As we recall from last month's prayer guide “the character and conduct described here (in the Sermon on the Mount) are a description of those already in the kingdom.” Jesus has come to teach His followers. Consequently, the instructions for prayer are for those who recognize Him as Lord and Savior. In v. 5 Jesus says, “And when you pray ...” indicating that His followers will pray. A prayerless disciple was inconceivable (Quarles).

The Lord's Prayer gives six petitions in two parts:

- Verses 9–10 focus on God: God's name, kingdom and will.
- Verses 11–13 focus on man's needs: man's daily bread, sin debts and deliverance from evil.

It is the prayer of the prayer guide team that as we walk through the Lord's Prayer (and Paul's prayers) your prayer life will be broadened and strengthened. As we move through Jesus' teaching, try incorporating what you learn into your own prayer time.

Questions to Consider: Do you have a regular time of prayer built into your week? What do you pray about?

Prayer Prompt: Father, thank You for teaching us how to pray. Help me learn and grow in my prayer time.

Day 11

A Rightly Directed Prayer

Key Scripture: *Matthew 6:9* “Pray, then in this way: ‘Our Father, who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.’”

Jesus teaches His disciples to “pray then in this way,” meaning to pray like this. Jesus is not instructing the disciples to repeat these same words all the time, but rather to model your prayer in this way.

First, He teaches us to direct our prayer to “*Our Father, who is in heaven.*” We are not praying to some false idol or to some dead god. We are praying to the Living God who is in heaven. If we are praying with the intentional focus being on ourselves, that is like praying to a false god, and our prayers will be ineffective. In order for us to be effective with our prayers we must direct them to the right person. How effective would your letter be if you directed it to the wrong address? We must direct our prayer to the one true God who is in heaven.

The second thing Jesus teaches is how to approach God in our prayer. We are to approach Him correctly, and He is worthy of praise. When Jesus says, “*Hallowed be Your name,*” He is saying that the name of God is worthy to be praised. We should rightly approach the God of heaven with praise and recognition of how great He is. We should not approach Him half-heartedly or inappropriately but humbly, recognizing that when we pray, we are speaking to God. We should not take our conversation with God flippantly.

Think about how important it is when writing a letter that you get the address and the greeting right. The way you view the person you’re writing to matters in how you approach them in your letter.

Questions to Consider:

Are you directing your prayers appropriately? Are you giving God your highest praise when you pray? How do you view your relationship with God?

Prayer Prompts:

- Think about how you view God, and imagine you are entering into His throne room in heaven to speak with Him, and then pray accordingly.
- Offer up to God all the praise that you can think of.
- Pray as if you love God, not like you are trying to negotiate a business deal.

Day 12

A Rightly Focused Prayer

Key Scripture: *Matthew 6:10* “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”

Jesus teaches that we are to pray for His kingdom’s sake and for His will to be done. What Jesus is teaching in this passage is that we are to align our thoughts and desires with the Lord’s. Many times we approach the Lord only concerned with our own motives and desires and not His. Jesus displays a desire to have God work in the way that God would want to work. He wants to pray for the things God desires. It seems fitting that once we have addressed the Father in heaven appropriately and then praised Him for who He is, the next thing would be to desire what He desires.

It is common for us to rush to our list of things that we need the Lord to do for us without stopping to ask what He wants us to pray for. When we stop and ask the Lord to align our thoughts with His, then we pray more like He wants us to pray. Jesus does not start His model for prayer by talking to God about His own personal laundry list of concerns; rather, He teaches us to first focus on what God wants to accomplish. We would find ourselves having a more fruitful prayer life if we prayed for what God wants us to pray for. We would find ourselves seeing God move and would accomplish more if we were more attentive to His desires.

Questions to Consider:

When you pray, are you more concerned with your agenda or God’s? When you pray, do you typically jump right into your list or stop and ask God what He would like you to pray for? When you pray, are you focused on His kingdom work?

Prayer Prompts:

- Begin your prayer by addressing the Father appropriately, lift up His name, and then pray for His kingdom’s sake, for His will to be done, and for His sovereign plan to be accomplished in His way.
- Pray and ask the Lord what He would like for you to pray for and then pray accordingly.
- Pray and try not to get to your list of things until you have first prayed about God’s list of things.

Day 13

Our Daily Bread

Key Scripture: *Matthew 6:11* “Give us today our daily bread.”

This short verse packs a powerful punch in our daily prayers. First and foremost, it reminds us we are created, dependent beings, in need of Our Father’s help every day. Practically, “*daily bread*” is referencing the daily physical needs we have that will be met by God. However, the deeper implication here is that God cares about our daily needs as well. He is not a distant Father who merely provides what is needed, with no interest in the one for whom He provides. He is a God who desires to commune with us every day as He provides. He desires what He provides to be used for His glory on a daily basis. We can approach God with confidence, knowing He will provide, then ask Him how to use what He has provided for His glory.

This is not a selfish verse for daily physical and material needs, but a selfless verse, asking God to use all He blesses us with day to day for our good and His glory. Finally, this verse reminds us to focus on what the Lord has for us that day, not that week, month or year. We can pray for and plan for future events; however, we must be rejoicing in the day God has given us, recognizing the blessing of our met needs.

Questions to Consider:

Do you spend daily time in prayer, communicating with God, asking Him how to use the blessings He provides that day?

Have you considered how God cares especially for your daily needs, not as a distant, uninvolved provider, but as a close, caring Father?

Are you sometimes worried about your future, forgetting to focus on the day to day ways in which God meets your needs?

Prayer Prompts:

- Read Matt. 6:24–35. We are exhorted not to worry about tomorrow. Note all the ways God reassures us in these verses.
- Thank You Lord, You are the provider of all my needs on a daily basis. You remind me in Your Word: “*This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it*” (Ps 118:24).
- Help me to recognize Your daily blessings, be thankful, and glorify You with my actions.

Day 14

Acknowledge and Confess!

Key Scripture: *Matthew 6:12* “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

In order to be forgiven, we must first acknowledge and confess our wrongdoing. This is true not only when we ask God for forgiveness but also when we ask others for forgiveness. We must be willing to forgive others (whether they have asked for it or not) if we expect to be forgiven by the Father. In prayer, we must make a habit of confessing our sins to our Heavenly Father.

Jesus was nearing the middle of His great “Sermon on the Mount” and decided that the best way to help people understand how to pray was to show them by example. He emphasized in vv. 9–10 that our prayers should include praising the Father’s name, exalting His Kingdom, and seeking His will above our own. Following this time of focus during prayer, Jesus reveals our next item on the “prayer agenda.” In verse 12, Jesus teaches that before coming to the Lord with specific prayers, we must first acknowledge our sins and confess them. Only then can we ask God for forgiveness. Jesus wants us to do this EVERY time we pray so that we are reminded not only of our perpetual sin nature, but also of the eternal provision of the gospel. Only by the blood of Jesus is God’s forgiveness possible and has the wide gap between us and God been completely erased only by this same blood has the barrier between us and God been completely repaired. Now we can readily come before the throne and confidently petition God with a pure heart.

Questions to Consider:

Will you humble yourself before God and others each day by making it a habit to ask for forgiveness when needed? Will you make it a habit to focus on God first, then ask for forgiveness before you jump into requesting prayers from Him?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise God for sending Jesus to die on the cross so that we can be forgiven of our sins of the past, present and future.
- Help us to forgive others even when we don’t feel like it. Remind us that a grace-oriented person forgives and forgets. Open our eyes to your great example of grace in Jesus and help us each day to forgive others with a pure heart.

Mark 11:25 “And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” *Psalm 32:5* “I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity: I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”

Day 15

Temptation

Key Scripture: *Matthew 6:13* “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Jesus teaches us to close our prayers by petitioning God to protect us from not only Satan’s temptations but also temptations springing from our own sin nature (James 1:14). God is not the One who will ever tempt us to do evil, but He certainly is the One who can deliver us from it! We are constantly surrounded by brokenness and the sins of this world and must learn to live with discernment—with our biblical worldview on at all times. God extends His protection over us when we seek and ask Him in earnest prayer to protect us from temptations that will ultimately destroy us. I am convinced that Jesus included this plea as the final statement made in the Lord’s Prayer so we would not forget to ask for that specific covering from evil each day. Specifically we should ask that we would not fall into a temptation that would weaken us to the point we could not endure—unless God is willing to give us the strength to endure in a way that glorifies Him.

Satan uses temptation to entice us to sin in hopes that we will fall out of grace by doubting, or worse, by rejecting God. Yet, although God Himself does not tempt, God will allow temptations to come into our lives in order to build us up in the faith. *James 1:13* says, “When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.” God gives us the ability to endure temptations and to stand firm in Jesus’ name when we come boldly before Him in prayer each day.

Questions to Consider:

Do you consistently ask the Lord to deliver you from temptations each day or do you rely on your own will power? Will you consider revamping your daily prayers to follow the pattern of the Lord’s Prayer where Jesus is giving us a model to follow: God focused followed by man’s needs.

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, help me to come before You each day, giving praise to You first, then by confessing my sins, asking for forgiveness, so that You will strengthen me to endure temptations.
- Father, help me to turn my eyes and ears away from worthless things that would lead me into the path of destruction and give me the strength to overcome Satan’s temptations.

Day 16

Introduction To Paul's Prayers

Key Scripture: *Romans 12:12* “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

The Bible contains numerous prayers and teachings about prayer, including those from the apostle Paul. In fact, Paul beautifully weaves his prayers into his letters with other topics such as the gospel and difficult doctrines of the faith. Paul's prayers have been classified by modern commentary writers into four groups: Simple prayer (where Paul appears to pray as he pens a letter), Prayer reports (where Paul tells his readers of his prayers), Prayer wishes (where Paul refers to God in the third person), and Encouragements to pray.

Throughout the 13 books in the New Testament authored by Paul, he has written 42 prayers (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon). Some were written from house arrest or from a prison while being chained to a guard. By the will of God, the body of Christ has been given Paul's prayers so that we may learn from his prayer habits and imitate them. Focusing on how Paul prays will reorient our thoughts to a more godly and eternal perspective.

Most of us pray for the everyday “fix it” needs that we have without considering what God wants to do in every situation. Paul would pray for unity, for wisdom, for knowledge of the greatness of the love of God, and much more. Nineteen prayers have the two little words “so that.” For example, Paul prays for unity “so that” the church may bring glory to God (Rom. 15:5-6). Also, read Ephesians 1:17 where Paul prays for the Spirit of wisdom “so that” believers may know God better.

Likewise, Paul consistently thanks God for signs of His grace at work in people's lives, such as faithfulness in times of adversity (see 2 Thess. 1:3-4). He also consistently asks God for those things that carry eternal weight, such as believers' deepening knowledge of God, growing spiritual maturity, and increasing love for one another.

Questions to Consider:

Are you willing to pray for God's will to be done in each prayer you utter? Will you consider examining the apostle Paul's prayers as a model of what to pray for?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, help me plan and set aside time to pray, just like Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and believers in the early church (see Dan. 6:10; Luke 5:16; Acts 2:42; Eph. 1:16).

Day 17

Prayers from Ephesians 1:15–17

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 1:15–17* “For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him...”

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the faithful believers living in western Asia Minor. Though imprisoned in Rome, Paul was moved by reports of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for others. He wanted his brothers and sisters in Christ to know how grateful he was for them. Paul also wanted them to know that he remembered them in his prayers—praying that the “Spirit of wisdom” would help them grow in their knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ.

God’s people were surrounded by worldly influences and pagan culture. Home to the temple of Artemis (Greek goddess of fertility), the city of Ephesus was the largest trade hub in the region, providing access to major shipping and land routes. Imagine the variety of people they encountered each day! Paul prayed for these believers to know Christ better because he knew that knowledge of the truth is power in an ungodly world. The more a person gets to know Jesus and matures in his faith, the more he will love Christ. That love will fill his heart to overflowing and leave no room for worldly affections to take hold. The only problem is that we do not generate true faith, love, or the knowledge of God on our own.

Read the passage that precedes these verses (Eph. 1:1–14). Notice that v. 13 identifies the “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” about whom Paul is speaking. When we accept the gift of grace and the redemption God offers us through the blood of Jesus Christ, we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. He is the source of true faith, love, the knowledge of God, and understanding of the Word. Praise God for “the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom” in Christ.

Questions to Consider:

Do you possess the “Spirit of wisdom and revelation”? Are you growing in your knowledge of Christ? In what ways is the faith others have in the Lord Jesus an encouragement to you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise God and give thanks in prayer for the example of those whose faith in the Lord Jesus Christ encourages you.
- Ask God to bring to mind those for whom you could pray Ephesians 1:17.

Day 18

Prayers from Ephesians 1:18–20

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 1:18–20* “... having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly places.”

Yesterday, we looked at Ephesians 1:15–17. The Apostle Paul wanted the faithful in Christ to continue to grow in their knowledge of the One in whom they had already placed their hope. Today’s passage (vv. 18–20) tells us that Paul also prayed that his brothers and sisters in Christ would better understand the work of the Holy Spirit within them—that is, that they might know the immeasurable greatness of the power they already possessed.

What does Paul mean when he prays for the enlightening of “the eyes of [their] hearts”? John Calvin writes, “Till the Lord opens them, the eyes of our heart are blind. Till the Spirit has become our instructor, all that we know is folly and ignorance.” The things of the Lord are spiritually discerned. It is the Holy Spirit who gives insight. He helps believers understand and appreciate every spiritual blessing available by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ. Those who are not in Christ cannot understand the assurance we have that God is at work in us—in the present—to conform us to the image of the Son. Likewise, unbelievers cannot appreciate the hope we have for the future—namely, the fullness of all that awaits us when Jesus returns.

Remember, the “great might” at work in both the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus Christ (the power that raised Him from the dead and later seated Him at the Father’s right hand) is at work in us! “To them God chose to make known how great ... are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).

Questions to Consider:

What does it mean to you to know that the same Spirit, and the same power that raised Christ from the dead, is at work in “us who believe”? Are you living as one who believes? Why, or why not?

Prayer Prompts:

- Read Ephesians 1:1–14. Praise God for every spiritual benefit and blessing you have in Christ.
- Pray that God will help you (and your brothers and sisters in Christ) to understand the greatness of His power at work in you. Ask Him to help you rest in His strength today.

Day 19

Prayers from Ephesians 1:21-23

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 1:21–23 “...far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”*

As Paul closes this prayer over the people of Ephesus he speaks about rule and authority. As ruler, Jesus is the head, which translates from the Greek word *kephale* as “top, chief, one to whom others are subordinate.” Jesus is above all, at that time and forevermore, above everything that was, is, or will come. He is superior and was given this all encompassing authority by His Father, God. Jesus is far above and over all rulers, authorities, powers, kingdoms, and titles.

In the next verse Paul speaks to the relationship Jesus has with His church—the body of Christ. By being the body of Christ we all are to work together for a common purpose, as we follow the directions that come from the head. Christ is the head of the church, and we are the body of the church.

“Paul claimed the church exists and functions only by reason of its vital relationship to its head, Christ Jesus. As the resurrected and exalted Christ, He is without need and is independent of anything. Yet as head, He is incomplete without the body, which is the church that fills up Christ. So the body and the head are one in the truest sense.” (Holmon Study Bible)

Questions to Consider:

Knowing that Jesus gives us His power, how should that make you go about your day?

Will you be as one downcast or as one who understands the authority of Jesus?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, I am grateful for the power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that saved me. Help me to live in that Spirit-filled power daily.
- Father, help me to utilize this power and love that You have given to help meet every challenge or trial I face.

Day 20

Prayers from Ephesians 3:14-21

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 3:14–21* “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Paul picks up his intercessory prayer from Ephesians 3:1. Focusing on the first three verses, Paul reminds us of the reason we bow. We pray remembering who God is and what He’s done (Eph. 1:1–3:13). Our triune God is sovereign, gracious, faithful, generous, just, victorious, kind, and worthy; He is Creator, Redeemer, Reconciler. This all-powerful One gives enduring strength.

Christians love one another by upholding one another in prayer. As we individually grow in Christ-likeness, all things become less about me, myself, and I. Instead it becomes, about the good of the church body, our family in Christ. Engage in spiritual battle on one another’s behalf (Eph. 6:10–20). The strength we pray for is an internal fortitude that comes solely through the Spirit. Plead with the Father for unified power for His glory.

Questions to Consider:

How does God’s character both humble and embolden prayer? For whom should I pray today for God’s “strength with power through the Spirit”?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, thank You for being all-powerful and still desiring my prayer. I confess the times when I depend on myself and steal Your glory. Humble me. You alone are worthy of praise.
- I pray for my church family to be strengthened to walk in obedience to Your Word so the world may bow in submission to You. May we be strong in the Lord and in the power of Your might (Eph. 6:10).

Prayers from Ephesians 3:17-19

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 3:17–19 “... so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*

As followers of Christ, we have been saved by grace through faith and this is a gift of God, not from anything we have done (Eph. 2:8–9); however, we do have a responsibility to grow in that faith by studying God’s Word daily and being in prayer to Him daily. As we grow in maturity as Christians (through Bible study, prayer, and corporate worship), we will start to grasp the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ. We are indwelt by God as a result of our salvation and God is at work in us.

Paul writes in Philippians 2:12–13 “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

The more we know the God of the Bible, the deeper the relationship will become and we will be able to have the peace that surpasses all understanding no matter the trials we face.

As Christians we can be confident that we will have the spiritual resources to meet the demands of life, “casting all your anxiety on Him for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). We are complete or fulfilled in Christ—the resources we need are there—we just need to accept them and enjoy them.

Questions to Consider:

Have I fully grasped the depth of Christ’s love for me? Are the demands and worries of the world making me forget the promises of God?

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank you, Father God, for Your great blessings and mercy. We pray for Your blessing and for the power of the Spirit, that we may know You better and to grow in our knowledge of the depth and breadth of the love You have for us.
- Father God, reveal to us any sin in our lives that is preventing us from worshiping You fully.
- Read and meditate on Ephesians 2:1–10.

Day 22

Prayers from Ephesians 3:20-21

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 3:20-21 "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*

As followers of Jesus, our greatest desire should be to bring God glory and honor in all that we do. At the moment of our salvation—by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross—the Holy Spirit dwells within us. We have the power living inside of us that raised Jesus from the grave. 1 Corinthians 3:16 "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" Unbelief and unconfessed sin in our lives will rob us of this power; we do not lose our salvation, but we do lose our effectiveness in God's kingdom. We must confess our sins, repent, and turn from them to be in right relationship with the Father.

In order to recognize the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we must study the Word of God and be in prayer to Him daily to know the promises of God in our lives. We can then rejoice as Paul in Romans 5:3-5, "and not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that the tribulation brings about perseverance and perseverance proven character and proven character hope and hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Warren Wiersbe states, "The Spirit of God was given to glorify the Son of God. The church on earth is here to glorify the Son of God. If our motive is to glorify God by building His church, then God will share His power with us. The power of the Spirit is not a luxury; it is a necessity."

Brothers and sisters, we have the opportunity and responsibility as the Church to glorify God by making disciples who make disciples.

Questions to Consider:

Is there unconfessed sin in my heart? Will God accept my worship today?

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank you, Father God, for making a way for us through the shed blood of Your Son Jesus that we may come boldly before Your throne with our prayers and petitions. We pray that our lives will glorify You in what we say and do, not for our glory but because You alone are worthy of all praise and honor.

Day 23

Prayers from Philippians 1:3-6

Key Scripture: *Philippians 1:3-6* “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Paul opens this letter of rejoicing to the Philippian church with thanksgiving and praise to God. Paul says that every time he remembers the Philippian church and prays for them, he does so with joy. This church in Philippi was a source of great encouragement for Paul. Specifically, the reason he gives is because of their “partnership in the gospel.”

This church took the groundwork that Paul laid during his missionary journey and ran with it. Throughout the rest of the letter, you can read about how they were loving one another, regularly preaching the gospel, and even enduring mistreatment. Because of their consistent faithfulness to the work of ministry Paul considered them dear friends and partners.

As believers we are united together in one work. It is often important in our walk as believers to remember that we have brothers and sisters walking the same road beside us. It is a beautiful thing when I can scan across the sanctuary on a Sunday morning and see everyone else there who also loves the Lord and desires to see Him glorified. It strengthens my heart and builds up my faith to see the body of Christ singing in unison the praises of God. Take time this week to praise God for the church body. Give Him thanks for all the friends and ministry partners you have there.

Questions to Consider:

What is different about unity in the church than unity in any other human-made institution? How do we prioritize and guard this unity?

Prayer Prompts:

- Give thanks for your church family, other faithful local churches, and believers around the world as the kingdom of God strengthens and expands.
- Pray that Richland Creek would continue in the unity of the Spirit and bonds of love, and that we would protect our purity and unity.

Day 24

Prayers from Philippians 1:7-11

Key Scripture: *Philippians 1:7-11* “It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

Continuing on from verse 6, the “good work” that God has started in the Philippians is continuing to blossom. As they continue to minister alongside Paul, he prays for ongoing spiritual growth. This prayer has two parts to it—the end goal of their growth and the path towards that goal.

The end goal of this spiritual growth is two things: to be “pure and blameless on the day of Christ” and to be “filled with the fruit of righteousness.” These two goals are parallel, meaning someone who is pure and blameless will undoubtedly be filled with righteousness. However, one is a state, while the other is an action. I am pure but act righteous. So, Paul wants both their inner person and their actions to be completely holy.

The path to this goal is to grow in three specific things: love, discernment, and approving or judging. What Paul means is that when we grow in love, we begin to know what is good, true, and holy. When we grow in discernment, we begin to see these truths played out in everyday life. If we put both truth and love together, we can know and pursue holiness in all areas of life. If you want to be blameless and filled with righteousness, then you need both love and discernment, which leads you to approve of what is excellent.

Questions to Consider:

How do we grow in love? How about discernment? What does it look like to disciple someone else in these areas, and how can you make that happen?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise God for the spiritual growth you’ve already seen in your life.
- Pray through Proverbs 3:3-8. Ask the Lord for a deeper understanding of both love and wisdom.

Day 25

Prayers from Colossians 1:3-5

Key Scripture: *Colossians 1:3-5* “We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope reserved for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel ...”

Paul speaks at the beginning of Colossians about the abundant times he prays for the church at Colossae. He is reporting his prayers for them as Christ followers. Through this report he also points them to the One who is worthy of their prayers and praise. Paul explains that God is the Father of the One they follow. This rightfully ascribes Jesus, who they already saw as Lord, the deity that was hard for some to understand.

Two specific things cause Paul to pray and praise God for this church.

First is their faith in Christ Jesus. MacArthur explains faith as “to be persuaded that something is true and to trust in it. Far more than mere intellectual assent, it involves obedience.” Understanding faith in these terms helps us to understand that when Paul uses this word he is implying that this church has faith and also puts it into action through obedience.

Second, Paul praises God for their “love for all the saints.” These phrases about their faith in Jesus and love for others shows that they are fulfilling what Jesus said in Matthew 22—the great commandment. Paul talks about the reason the church at Colossae can follow through with this obedience is because they are looking to the gospel for hope and trust, knowing we will be restored with God in heaven.

Just like the church at Colossae, we as a local body can and should have this same faith which results in obedience. We, as growing disciples in Christ, should be striving to love God and love others well—not to check something off but rather as an overflow of hope from the gospel.

Questions to Consider:

Would your mentors be able to say they praise God because of your faith in Jesus and love for others? Does your faith result in obedience?

Prayer Prompt:

- Lord, help me to be someone who has faith that results in obedience to the word of truth and love for those around me.

Day 26

Prayers from Colossians 1:6-8

Key Scripture: *Colossians 1:6-8* “... which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth; just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.”

If you remember from yesterday, Paul just finished talking about the church at Colossae being confident in the gospel. He tells them that the gospel has come to them and is spreading around the world, multiplying and bearing fruit. The analogy of good fruit is often used in Scripture. It shows that what is produced from the gospel is sweet and delightful just like a fruit from a tree. Here it is implied that the fruit being produced is good fruit because it is also increasing. Paul points out that the church in Colossae is not alone and others are learning and growing in Jesus as well. He recounts the thankfulness he has that this church continues to grow since the first day they heard and understood the gift of God's grace.

Paul then reminds this church they learned about the gospel from Epaphras, who was now with Paul in prison. Epaphras was sharing with Paul that this was a church growing in their understanding of Christ and being a sweet example to those around them. He and Epaphras believed they could stay faithful knowing that the gospel was going forth—even when it felt like they were defeated because of their chains.

Just like the church at Colossae we should be striving to bear good fruit and increase the kingdom of God through the gospel. We have been given the gift of knowledge and the Holy Spirit to help others learn about the love and truth Jesus offers through His sacrifice on the cross and the hope of an eternity spent with Him.

Questions to Consider:

Have you stopped recently to thank God for allowing you to hear and respond to the gospel? How often do you thank God for the spread of the gospel? What are you doing with the knowledge of the gospel?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for your own personal evangelism.
- Pray for the global church and the good fruit and expansion of the gospel.

Day 27

Prayers from Colossians 1:9-10

Key Scripture: *Colossians 1:9–10* “And so from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

In view of the Colossians’ faith and their love of one another, Paul prays for further spiritual development through gospel transformation. Specifically, he prays for their spiritual maturity.

Spiritual wisdom and understanding are a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Knowledge of God isn’t only head knowledge but also a deep comprehension of who God is, and what God wills. Paul prays first that the Colossian believers would be filled with a knowledge of God’s will; Paul then circles back around asking that knowledge of God increase.

Knowledge of God comes through study of the Word as the Holy Spirit opens spiritual eyes and ears. When we pray, study, meditate, and seek to know the Word of God, the Spirit opens our eyes to “see” (Psalm 119:18). God must give us a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear His Word (Deut 29:2–4). Without regular intake of the Word, increase in the knowledge of God will not occur.

Just as with the Colossians, as our knowledge of God increases, we are better equipped to walk worthy of the Lord. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to live in right relationship with God and others. We don’t have to guess at how to please God. God has revealed His will in His Word. As we depend on the Holy Spirit to help us live a life pleasing to the Lord, spiritual fruit is borne. When we live in the power of the indwelling Spirit, our faith will be manifested in works that please God. Increase in the knowledge of God, walk worthy, so be fruitful.

Questions to Consider:

Do I spend time in the Word so as to increase in the knowledge of God? As I evaluate my life, do I see spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22–23)?

Prayer Prompts:

- God, I pray to desire the Word and grow in my intake, understanding, and obedience of it.
- God, help me to increase in the knowledge of Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Day 28

Prayers from Colossians 1:11-14

Key Scripture: *Colossians 1:11–14* “Being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Paul’s request for the Colossians is for strength according to the abundant power of God through His Spirit. This power is not reserved for “when the time comes,” but is based on the superabundant supply from God. Empowerment of the Holy Spirit provides strength and patience to the believer for long-suffering in trials—the ability to endure.

As Paul often does, he throws “joy” right in with suffering. Joy in suffering is nonsense to the natural man; however, this truth is reality for those who depend on the Holy Spirit. It is a joy that has nothing to do with circumstances but everything to do with the knowledge of God and His character and a dependence upon His Spirit.

Another element demonstrated in the life of a Christian is gratitude. Paul reminds the Colossians of the great and glorious truth—that is, they have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of the Son of His love.

So too are we! Because of that truth, gratitude wells up from the depths of the heart at the understanding of Christ’s substitution in our place, which provided the way for us into God’s Kingdom. Before faith in Christ, we were in the kingdom of darkness, or realm of Satan and evil (Acts 26:18); but God has liberated and re-established us into the Kingdom of His beloved Son. We have inherited eternal life, a kind and quality of life lived in Christ for all who are redeemed by His blood (i.e., forgiven of sins). Christians are beneficiaries of God’s strength; they are rescued, redeemed and qualified for His inheritance. All praise to God!

Questions to Consider:

Do you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit? (Gal. 3:1–5; Gal. 5:16–25; Rom. 8:4). Does the fact that you have been rescued from darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of God generate a heart of thanksgiving?

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank God for the indwelling Holy Spirit that empowers you to live with endurance, patience and joy.
- Thank God that He has rescued you from darkness, forgiven your sins, and transferred you into His Kingdom.

Praying for Leaders and Those in Authority

Key Scripture: *1 Timothy 2:14 "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

Do you find it hard to pray for a political figure if he or she does not share your same views? Do you find it hard to pray for Law Enforcement Agencies in our country because of recent events? In the verses above we are urged to pray—actually, the word in Greek means to *ask, beg, plead, for those in authority and positions of power*. So how do we pray for them? What kinds of prayers do we offer God on their behalf?

Our verse instructs us to pray prayers of supplication. This type of prayer is one of humble, earnest requests or petitions as if begging on bended knee. Moreover, we are to pray intercessory prayers for our leaders. As believers, we have the privilege of interceding for others, praying prayers they may not be able to voice themselves.

The last thing our verse says is we should pray prayers of thanksgiving. This may be the hardest prayer for us to pray especially if we don't agree with their platforms. Nevertheless, we should direct our gratitude toward God for His sovereignty and faithfulness to our government and to our land.

Questions to Consider:

What kind of prayers are you praying for our leadership and those in authority? How does reading 1 Timothy 2:14 change the way you have been praying? Do you have a day set aside each week that you pray for our country, our government, and those in positions of authority?

Prayer Prompts:

- Using prayers of supplication, intercession and thanksgiving, use the following suggestions as your prayer prompts for today.
- Pray for our leaders and those in authority to come to know the one true living God through hearing the gospel.
- Pray that they would be surrounded by believers who will not be ashamed of the gospel but will proclaim it boldly to them and will help them to make godly decisions.
- Pray that our leaders would have a biblical view and not a worldly view.

Day 30

Pray for Spiritual Heritage

Key Scripture: *2 Timothy 1:3-5 "I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."*

As Paul's time on earth nears an end, he continues to pour himself into his spiritual son, Timothy. Through prayer and teaching, Paul does spiritual good for Timothy with a focus on disciples coming after Timothy as well.

The relationships given, as examples for us, are both physical and spiritual parents passing down the teaching of the Word within discipleship relationships, documented to the fourth and fifth generation. First, Timothy's grandmother and mother, Lois and Eunice, taught him the Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14–15); then Paul further trained Timothy to be a disciple who develops disciples. Spiritual maturity replicated (2 Timothy 2:1-2, 15 and 3:10, 14–17). Consider the legacy impact of 2 Timothy 1:5 and 2:2—Lois, to Eunice, to Timothy, to faithful men, and to others also. Imagine the ripple effects of obedience. God in His grace has brought us His message, through the Lois' and Timothy's, all the way through the centuries to Richland Creek Community Church. Indeed, great is God's faithfulness to us! May we, in turn, be faithful to Him.

Questions to Consider:

Have I thought about spiritual children and grandchildren? Why or why not? How does this alter my application of our church's Discipleship Goals?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, may You be glorified in our ministry. Thank You for the genuine faith I see lived out by other Christians. What a joy it brings and endurance it spurs!
- Father, by Your grace and in Your strength, entrust all I've learned in Your Word and from Your people to other men and women so they too may be a disciple to others.
- I pray for a spiritual lineage (2 Timothy 2:1-2). May You receive praise for Your good work in Your people.

Thank You

We praise the Lord for all those who contributed to make this prayer guide possible. We are so grateful for the faithful servants who have dedicated their time and talents to writing this prayer guide.

To God Be the Glory!

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1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

But we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who diligently labor among you and are in leadership over you in the Lord, and give you instruction, and that you regard them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.