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My Daily Devotion for
my family's
Spiritual Growth
Issue 3



"We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." Psalm 78:4

How Does “My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth” Time Work?

Welcome to My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth, a weekly devotional designed to help your family reflect on a story from God’s Word, pray together, and connect. These devotions will take you through the Bible. The idea is simple: discover together how God’s Word is relevant to your family each week. We think the spiritual results in your family alone can impact generations to come.

We know your family is busy with work, school, ballgames, and all that life throws you, so the devotion is designed to be flexible and mobile. You can use this at the dinner table, before bed, or in your car. You decide what works best for you.

1. Decide on a time when your family can pull together for a few minutes each day.
2. My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth is available at Freedom. They are free.
3. Family members can take turns reading the daily verses and devotion.
4. After the devotion talk about prayer requests as a family and spend a few moments praying for each other.
5. At the end of the week, reflect together on the discussion questions.
6. Finally, don’t be intimidated by having spiritual conversations as a family. This could easily be the most important few minutes you have all day.

We hope you enjoy this journey through God’s Word as a family. Our prayer is that it will transform your family spiritually in ways never expected!

In Christ,
Pastor Larry

Week 1

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture **Monday**

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

For over 1,500 years the Holy Spirit inspired men to write down God's instructions and the stories of His people. Set a timer for 15 seconds and see how many of those 40 writers your family can name. Go!

Wednesday

Read 2 Peter 1:20-21

Many books of the Bible are named after the men who wrote them (like Isaiah and Luke) or for the group of people they were written to (like Romans and Ephesians). The Apostle Peter tells us how the writers of the Old Testament knew what to say to the nation of Israel. Take a moment to read **2 Peter 1:20-21** before continuing. God's Spirit rested on godly men and told them what God wanted His people to know.

Thursday

Read John 5:39-40

The books of the Old Testament were copied onto scrolls and taught to the Jewish people year after year, yet they still didn't understand what God was trying to teach them. Many Jews thought they would go to Heaven if they could obey exactly what Scripture said – but it was impossible for even the best person to live without sinning. What did Jesus tell them in **John 5:39-41**?

Friday

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

They would go to Heaven believing that Jesus is God's Son and by trusting Him as Savior, not by trying to be good people. The Holy Spirit guided some of Jesus' disciples to write about things Jesus said and did, about what happened after He went back to Heaven, and about how He expects His followers to live. Ask a family member to read **2 Timothy 3:16-17** before you continue.

For hundreds of years, scribes and monks continued to copy the writings, of the Old and New Testaments by hand, but there were so few copies that only priests and pastors could read them. Then, in 1456, a man named Johann Gutenberg invented a way to print whole books much faster. The collection was known simple as "the Book" (Biblos in Greek) – and is what we know today as the Bible.

Saturday

Let's Discuss:

1. The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called "the Gospels" because they tell us about the life and teachings of Jesus. Discuss what you know about God from these four books.
2. What have you been taught from the Bible? How has the Bible helped you to correct a wrong attitude or to better obey God?

Let's do it.

Today, each of us can own a copy of God's Word. You may even have instant access to the Bible on a tablet or cell phone, but knowing that we can read it any time can lessen our appreciation of it. Make a commitment as a family to treat Scripture with the importance it deserves by reading and obeying it.

First, make an appointment with God each day to read His Word and talk to Him through prayer. Ask each family member to share when they plan to have their time alone with God. Parents and younger children can set aside time together.

Next, decide what time each day you can have a family devotion. Choose a time when everyone can be there, and you won't be rushed. The Bible is the most important book ever written. How will you show God this week that His Word is important to you?

NOTES/PRAAYER REQUESTS:

Week 2

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Why is the Bible a treasure?

The Bible is no ordinary book; it is true information from the heart of God. Scripture tells us how to have a right relationship with God, how to protect ourselves against Satan, and how to have a joyful life. What could possibly be valuable than that?

Have each family member name one treasured possession and tell why it is so valuable to him or her.

Some of the most exciting stories ever told are found in the Bible, but it is much more valuable than a history book. The words of Scripture are not just words on a page, like the words in other books, because they are God's words. The Bible is God speaking to us! His promises, warnings, and commands are alive with power. Check out **Hebrews 4:12** and **Ephesians 6:17**. What is the Word of God compared with in these verses? God's Word is such a powerful weapon that Jesus used to defeat the devil (**Matthew 4:1-11**). When you read and memorize Scripture, you are using the sword of the Spirit to protect yourself against the devil's plan to trick you into believing his lies.

Wednesday

The more you read Scripture and go over it again in your thoughts, the better you will understand why you do the things you do. Following God's instructions will change how you think and what you think about. Your own thoughts – which can be very foolish sometimes – are replaced by thoughts that the Holy Spirit gives to you, helping you to make wise choices that please God.

Thursday

Take a moment to read **Psalm 19:7-11** together before continuing.

The Bible warns us that sin is dangerous because it is thinking something or doing something that God says is wrong. That's why it is so important to read and study Scripture every day. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to correct us when we make wrong choices. The Holy Spirit also uses the Bible to teach us the right things to do. You can always depend on God's Word to be right and to tell you the truth, even about yourself. As followers of Jesus, we are always happier when we choose to obey Him. The things His Word tells us not to do are things that will harm us in some way.

Friday

Let's discuss:

1. See how many of God's warnings and instructions you can remember as a family. For each one, name a way that heeding that warning or following God's instructions is a valuable or rewarding.
2. What are some things you've learned about yourself from reading the Bible? How has knowing the truth been valuable by changing a wrong thought or attitude?

Saturday

Let's do it.

Think back to a precious possession you named on Tuesday. Do you treat that belonging differently than you treat your other stuff? Now that we've learned the value of the Bible, we see that our material stuff isn't nearly as valuable as knowing and obeying what God has said in the Bible. What are some ways you can show how much you value God's Word this next week?

We've learned that God's Word is alive, powerful, perfect, trustworthy, right, pure, sure, and righteous. Write these words down on a piece of paper and put them on your refrigerator, so everyone can see them all of next week. When you're trying to make a difficult choice, remember that God's instructions are always right. He knows what is best for us because he loves us completely and knows everything fully. How do we know this? Because we know the Bible is God's Word, and the Bible tell us so!

NOTES/PRAYER REQUESTS:

Week 3

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

You probably have schoolbooks that give you information on subjects like math, science, and history. Lots of books can help to make you smart, but only God's Word can make you wise. Having wisdom means seeing the world and your life through God's eyes and doing as He says to do. But how can we do this?

Ask members of your family to tell about something they have learned from reading a book.

The Old Testament tells us about a king named Solomon. He is often called the wisest man who ever lived. Many of the thoughts that God gave to Solomon are found in the book of Proverbs. Read **Proverbs 1:1-7** aloud.

Wednesday

Proverbs is like an instruction manual for becoming wise and living to please God. It encourages us to do what is right, warns us not to do what is wrong, and teaches us to have self-control. Solomon's father, King David, taught him to turn to God's Word for guidance. What did David say about Scripture in **Psalms 119:97-105**? The Bible gives us wisdom and understanding because the One who gave it

to us also created the entire world, including us. That doesn't mean, though, that you become wise by simply opening the Bible and casually reading the words.

When you love someone, you want to hear what he or she had to say. The psalmist loved God, so he also loved God's Word. He spent time reading God's law and then meditated on them by thinking about what each one meant. He went over them again and again in his thoughts. When you meditate on what God's Word says, the Holy Spirit will help you to understand what it means.

Thursday

Knowing facts about the Bible still doesn't guarantee that you'll be wise. True wisdom comes from choosing to obey what God says – not because you have to, but because you love what is right and hate what is wrong. When you're not sure what to do, God uses His Word to guide you. It's like a bright light shining on a dark path so you can see where you're going. You can become wiser than the smartest people you know, simply by following God's instructions. You see, there's a difference between being "smart" and being "wise." Information from books give you knowledge, and we all need knowledge; but godly wisdom is knowing how to use that information in the right way every day.

Friday

Share something you've learned from the Bible, and name ways you can wisely use that information in your life this week.

Do you have a problem with a friend or a situation at school that you don't know what to do about? What warning, promise, or command from the Bible guides you and helps you know what to do?

Saturday

Wisdom comes from spending time in God's Word and then following the instructions you find there. We learned today that the book of Proverbs is especially helpful when you need wisdom. How many chapters are in Proverbs?

Try reading one chapter of Proverbs each day for a month. Each chapter is packed with ideas you can put into action each day. Write down the things you learn so you can remember to use them at school, at church, at your work, and in your neighborhood. Don't just read about wisdom this week – pray for God to make you wise. Then practice doing what He shows you?

NOTES/PRAYER REQUESTS:

Week 4

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

How can I have a closer friendship with Jesus?

Enjoying the same things as you spend time together helps you to build strong relationships with classmates, co-workers, and neighbors. Growing a strong friendship with Jesus is done the same way. This week we'll explore how God's Word brings you closer to Christ.

Tell your family about your best friend. How are you alike? What have you learned about that person by spending time with him or her?

Wednesday

The first building block to a strong friendship with God is simply to spend time with Him, learning what He is like and what pleases Him. We've already learned that God talks to us through His Word – the Bible. God even tells us about His Word in His Word! It's so important that the longest chapter in the Bible has only one topic – Scripture. Read **Psalm 119:9-16** together to see what the psalmist said about God's Word.

The writer of **Psalm 119** had such a deep love for God's law that he memorized it. We can't always stop and read the Bible the exact moment we're tempted to sin or when we need encouragement. So,

the Holy Spirit brings God's Word back to our minds – if we've stored it there by reading and memorizing it. Taking time to think carefully about God's promises, warnings, and commands will help you to remember them.

Thursday

The Bible is like a map that directs your thoughts and behavior to please God. Following that map leads you to enjoy the same things Jesus enjoys and dislike what he dislikes. As you put Scripture into your mind, the Holy Spirit will show you where you're wrong and will urge you to make it right. When you sin, it's like your heart gets dirty and needs to be washed. What does **John 1:9-10** say about how to clean sin from your heart?

Friday

A wonderful thing happens when you keep a clean heart. Have a family member read **James 4:8** aloud to learn what that is. Did you hear that? When we come near to God by asking Him to forgive our sins. He moves closer to us!

How can you have a stronger friendship with Jesus? Meditate on God's Word and memorize it. Use the Bible like a map to direct your thoughts and behavior to please God. When you do sin, immediately ask God to forgive you and then change that behavior. Remember to use **1 John 1:9** like a bar of soap to keep your heart clean.

Discuss some things that God's Word says He likes and dislikes. How can you show that you like and dislike the same things in your life this week?

Take turns sharing parts of God's Word that you've stored in your mind. Have someone ready to look up those passages to check your accuracy.

Saturday

Did you know more verse of Scripture than you thought you knew? It's great to be familiar with the Bible, but nothing can replace the benefits of intentionally memorizing God's Word. Ask each member of the family to memorize at least one verse from today's Bible readings. Older kids and parents may even be a good reminder throughout the week to come near to God and to keep your heart clean.

Ask everyone to bow their heads and share in a silent prayer while one family member reads **1 John 1:9**. Silently, ask yourself this question, "What ungodly thought, attitude, or behavior have I been guilty of this week?" Admit that sin to God right now and ask Him to forgive you. If that attitude or action hurt someone else, make sure you ask that person to forgive you, too. Just like taking a bath, you'll feel better when your heart is clean and pure?

NOTES/PRAAYER REQUESTS:

Week 5

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

How do I show my love for God?

This month we've learned that the Bible is true and trustworthy information from the heart of God. We've talked about how to meditate on Scripture with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we've discussed ways to practice what the Bible says. It's clear that we should build our lives on a commitment to Scripture, but today's devotion unlocks the key reason for our obedience to God's Word.

Ask each family member to share a favorite verse or passage of Scripture and tell why it means something special to him or to her. (Type key words into a search engine if you need help finding a verse.)

Wednesday

Begin by reading **Deuteronomy 6:1-9** together. Moses had just reminded the Israelites of the Ten Commandments and the other laws God had given to His people (**Deuteronomy 5:6-21, 31**). God's law was to be in their hearts and always in their thoughts as a reminder of how He wanted them to live. Moses told them to love God completely and to show that love by honoring Him with everything they said and did.

Parents had the added responsibility to teach their children to know the Lord and to love and obey Him. Moses encouraged parents to repeat the truths of God's Word at every opportunity, so children would understand and obey His commandments. Scripture was to be taught in their day-to-day experiences at home so it would influence every part of their lives. Their love for God was shown by how well they obeyed His Word.

Thursday

Your reason for obeying the Bible says a lot about you. Maybe you follow the Lord's instructions simply because He's God, and you always try to follow the rules. Perhaps you obey in hopes of getting the things you want from God. It's good to recognize God's authority, but He wants more than just your outward obedience. God wants you to obey Him because you love Him with every part of your being. It's impossible to love God completely if you ignore His Word. As a matter of fact, truly loving the Lord with your whole heart is the best motivation for obedience.

How does your family show love for God and His Word?

Friday

Think back on this last week. What situation gave you a natural opportunity to talk about what God says in the Bible? Did you take that opportunity?

How can parents teach their kids to know, love, and obey the Lord? Name ways that your parents have taught you to honor God.

Saturday

Like the Israelites, we constantly need to be reminded of what God's Word says. One of the best ways to do that is to put verses of Scripture where you can see them every day. Think of ways you can display the Bible verses you mentioned on Tuesday so the entire family can see them this week. You can use a verse in an art project, put it on a T-shirt, or simply write it on an index card for the refrigerator. You may even choose a special verse to display on the wall in the kitchen or family room.

Parents, will you take seriously the responsibility to teach God's Word to your children? Kids, will you show your love for Jesus by obeying your parents and obeying Scripture? Try your best this week to honor the Lord with everything you say and do.

NOTES/PRAYER REQUESTS:

Week 6

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

What do followers of Christ have in common?

If you've decided to follow Christ, then it's both wise and helpful to have friendships with people who help you to grow in your relationship with Jesus. This month we'll explore what Scripture says about strengthening your family and your relationship with Christ by connecting with a community of believers. We'll begin by discovering what followers of Christ have in common and how we're all connected to one another.

Take turns naming a part of the human body and what job that part has. What do you think would happen if each part was injured or wasn't working properly?

Wednesday

Ask a family member to read **John 1:12** aloud. What phrase is used to describe Christians? You became a child of God when you chose to receive Jesus' gift of salvation. As a member of God's family, you are related to other believers as their spiritual brother or sister in Christ. You've probably even heard someone refer to your church as a "church family." You may also have noticed that you have more in common with people you meet at church than with the people you meet who do not know Christ. That's because the Holy Spirit lives within every person who has received Christ. Pause and read

Romans 8:14-16 become continuing. When you meet and spend time with other believers, the Holy Spirit gives you sense of connection to many different members of God's family.

Thursday

The Apostle Paul used another illustration about the church to describe the close connection of the members of God's family. Check out what he says about Christians in **Romans 12:4-5** and **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**. Followers of Christ are all parts of the body of Christ – the church. Both the church and the human body are made up of many members with important jobs. Members of a church should work together in harmony, just like the parts of your body have to work together for you to be healthy. We should care enough to help when another member isn't doing well or is hurt in some way.

Friday

What does **Galatians 6:2** tell us to do?

If you are a follower of Christ, then you are connected to every other person who has received Jesus. Think about that for a moment – you have spiritual brothers and sisters all over the world! Each member of the family of God and the body of Christ is needed. In our local church, we talk about how God is working in our lives, and we worship and serve Jesus together. You are not only connected to the people in your church – they need you!

Saturday

Let's discuss this.

1. Name some things you have in common with other followers of Christ.

2. How has being connected with other believers in a church family helped you?

3. Look back at the parts of the human body listed in **1 Corinthians 12:14-17**. How are people in your church filling each of those roles? What role can you fill in the body of Christ?

Let's do it.

Have you ever smashed your thumb with a hammer, closed a door on your toe, or had a terrible toothache? When one part of your body hurts, the rest of your body knows about it. Who in your church family is hurting right now? Think of ways that you can act as the hands of Jesus to help them this week.

NOTES/PRAAYER REQUESTS:

Week 7

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

How can I help?

Last week we learned that each believer is part of the body of Christ with a job to do. Did you know there are so many ways that we can help our community of believers? This week we're going to talk about how we can make a huge difference in the lives of others if we decide to jump in and be an active part of the body of Christ.

Have each person name things that other family members are especially good at doing. Don't be shy; now is the time to brag on each other!

Wednesday

At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit gives every follower of Christ at least one spiritual gift. These gifts are not natural talents – they are special abilities that the Spirit of God gives us. He also gives us the skills and strength to use those gifts to do God's work. Go ahead and open your Bibles or your app to **Romans 12:4-8** and **Ephesians 4:11-13**. This is a great opportunity to learn to find passages in your Bible.

Thursday

There are speaking gifts, and there are serving gifts. It's a little easier to spot some of the speaking gifts; many of those people are often in front of others. For example, God gives us evangelists, pastors, and teachers with the ability to clearly explain what the Bible means. They help us to grow in Jesus and prepare us to serve each other in the church.

The serving gifts are a little harder to see. Just think of all the people who work behind the scenes to help with your student and children's ministries, or think of the people who make it possible for your pastor to preach each week. Others give generously to mission work and to people in need. That doesn't mean that only people with the gift of giving should give or that only those with the gift of encouraging should ever encourage. It just means that those things are easier for them to do, so they should work hard to use their gifts as God directs them. Ask a family member to read **1 Peter 4:10-11** to discover the purpose of spiritual gifts.

Friday

Your spiritual gifts are meant to help the family of God and bring praise to Jesus Christ. Each member of the body of Christ needs the other members to fulfill his or her purpose. When the people in your church use their spiritual gifts to cheerfully minister to the other members, the body of Christ is healthy and the Lord is honored.

As we discussed this week, different parts of the human body are connected with roles in the church (for example, mouth suggests teachers and preachers). As a family, try to match parts of the body and roles in the church with the spiritual gifts listed in today's Bible passages (**Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:11-13, and 1 Peter 4:10-11**).

Saturday

What spiritual gifts do you think members of your family have been given?

It's very important to use your spiritual gifting in the power of the Holy Spirit. You will draw attention to yourself rather than to Jesus when you try to use your gift(s) without God's help. Since God gave you the gift, He will also help you to use it with humility and to appreciate the spiritual gifts of others. How can you use your gifts to contribute to your community of believers this week?

NOTES/PRAYER REQUESTS:

Week 8

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Why should followers of Christ love one another?

So far we've learned that followers of Christ are connected in a community of faith and serve one another as the body of Christ. This week we'll look at how members of God's family should speak and behave.

Take turns finishing the following sentence, "God is..."

Since the people in our church family are a group of Christ followers, it would make sense to follow His teachings in the Bible – right? Well then, let's read what Jesus said in **John 13:34-35**.

Wednesday

Jesus was talking to His twelve disciples. Some people might think that Jesus would want His closest friends to be known for performing great miracles or for being excellent preachers, but He said that their love for one another should be what other people noticed first. It was evidence that Jesus had changed their hearts and minds. John, one of Jesus' disciples, later wrote about why Christians are commanded to love one another. What did he say in **1 John 4:7-8** and **4:19-21**?

Thursday

If God is your heavenly Father, then you have His loving nature inside of you. That makes it possible to love the members of His family. The Holy Spirit gives you the ability to truly care about other people, even those who are hard to get along with. What did Paul write **Romans 12:9-18** about how to put godly love into action?

Friday

We're usually loyal to the people we love the most and want to spend time with them. That should be just as true for your church family as it is for the family you live with. Have someone read **Hebrews 10:24-25** to understand why God wants believers to spend time together. When we go to church, we get the chance to encourage one another to show the love we have received from God by being helpful, kind, and compassionate. Since God is love, those who know God should genuinely love one another. Godly love isn't just a feeling; it can be seen by how you talk and how you act.

How has someone shown love for you in a way that other people could see?

When did another follower of Christ encourage you?

How did your attitudes or feelings change as a result?

Tell your family about a time you were able to share in the happiness of a friend.

Can you think of a time you cried with a friend who was hurt or extremely sad?

Saturday

What do people at school or church or work say about you? Do they recognize that you are a Christ follower by how loving you are? You don't have to answer this our loud, but think about anything you have said or done this week that didn't show the love of your heavenly Father. Ask God to help you get rid of any anger or pride that's getting in the way of really loving someone.

Wrap up by marking a list of encouraging and helpful things you can do this week. Start with how family members can put God's love into action with one another, and then talk about how you can help and encourage people in your church family. Each of you choose one thing from the list and be ready to share the results with your family next week.

NOTES/PRAYER REQUESTS:

Week 9

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

What do we do when we disagree with one another?

We've been learning that our community of believers can be compared to our human bodies and families. God chose those illustrations because we can all identify with them. For instance, think about ways you protect your body from things that would cause pain ... or the way you still love your family members even though you might disagree with them from time to time. Let's explore what should happen when Christians disagree.

Do you remember last week's activity? Share how you helped or encouraged someone last week.

Talk about the things members of your family have in common and the ways you are different from each other. How do the differences sometimes cause disagreements?

Wednesday

The members of God's family are as unique as the members of your human family; so He knew that disagreements would sometimes come up in your church family just as they do in your human family. God made sure we had instructions about what to do when that happens. Read **Ephesians 4:1-7** together and look for the instructions in those verses.

Thursday

Since believers share the same Father, Savior, and Spirit we ought to do whatever it takes to live lovingly, peacefully, humbly, and patiently with one another. After all, God is loving, forgiving, and patient with us – right? Being patient means that you choose to complain less and control your temper more. Learning to not get annoyed or upset helps you to get along better with people who are different from you. All of those things are proof that you are growing up and becoming more mature. What does **Ephesians 4:11-16** say about becoming a mature follower of Christ?

Friday

We learned last week that love for one another should be the first thing people notice about Jesus' followers. Really loving others helps you to be patient with them, and patience changes how you speak to them. You see, how you say something is just as important as what you say. When truth is said harshly, it hurts people's feelings; but when truth is said gently, it helps them mature as followers of Christ.

Did you notice that the Apostle Paul used the illustration of the human body for the church again? This time he specifically named Jesus as the Head of the body. Every member of the church receives instructions from the Head, just as your brain tells the rest of your body what to do. Something is wrong if your hand and your foot does whatever it wants to do, ignoring the messages from your brain! When each member of the body of Christ is doing what He has said to do, then the entire body is healthy. As a result, we learn to gently and lovingly solve our differences with other believers.

Saturday

Name ways that God has been patient, forgiving, and loving with you.

How should that change how you respond to your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Take turns saying the following phrases in different tones of voices. Which tones sound loving and patient? What ways sound hurtful?

- a. Would you please pass the butter?
- b. Can you please stop doing that?

Think of one way that God has shown you love and forgiveness recently. Will you try to remember that thought when you start to grow impatient or annoyed with someone else? Listen to your tone of voice when a disagreement comes up at home, at school, or at work. Remind yourself of Christ's instructions by reading the Bible every day. Will others be able to tell by your patient and kind attitude that you are a follower of Jesus?

NOTES/PRAAYER REQUESTS:

Week 10

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

How do I talk to God?

We have learned that the Bible is how God has made Himself known to the world and how He talks with His people. Prayer, then, is how we talk with Him. Any close friendship comes by talking with that person regularly. It's the same with God. For the next few weeks, we'll look at what Jesus said when He taught His disciples to pray.

Think about the friend you talk to the most. Tell your family what makes that person easy to talk with. What are your favorite topics of conversation?

Wednesday

Read Matthew 6:5-13

Jesus gave His disciples two examples when He taught them how to pray. First, He told them not to follow the bad example of hypocrites – people whose actions don't match what they say they believe. These hypocrites prayed long, loud prayers when they went to their place of worship because they wanted other people to hear them and praise them. Jesus didn't say that it's wrong to pray in public, but He cautioned His disciples to remember that prayer is talking with God, not a speech to get the attention of others.

Thursday

Jesus then gave His disciples a right pattern to follow by praying a model prayer. The first part of the Lord's model prayer reminds us that we're talking with our Father in Heaven. Conversations with the Lord are different from conversations with friends because we're talking to the Creator of the universe! Any conversation with God should start by recognizing that He is great and that His Name should be respected above every other name. This lesson from Christ teaches us the importance of taking time to praise God for who He is before we ask Him to do anything. Read **Psalm 89:1-15** and look for the praiseworthy names and qualities of God in this passage.

Friday

Isn't it amazing that the Lord God Almighty wants to talk with us as friends? Whether you pray in front of friends at church or alone in your room – prayer is between you and the one true God. He doesn't mind if you stutter, and you don't have to use big words. The Lord just wants you to talk with Him honestly. He already knows exactly what you need, what you think, and how you feel before you say the first word of a prayer. Even so, it's important to pray because it helps us learn to depend on God and to trust Him.

Why do you think Jesus taught his closest friends to pray?

What did **Psalm 89:1-15** teach you or remind you about God?

How would praising Him for that character quality when you start to pray change how you pray?

Saturday

Most of us spend more time asking God for help or for things we want than we spend praising Him. How would you feel if your close friends only talked to you when they wanted something from you? Don't misunderstand: God wants us ask Him to meet our needs. However, a healthy relationship with God is built by praying the way Jesus taught His followers to pray.

Close this week's devotion by praising God through your prayers together. To get started, open your Bibles to Psalm 89 and take turns praising God for the names and qualities found there. Make a special effort to talk only about God in the prayer time (for example: "I praise You, Lord, because You are faithful!). As you begin to notice His character traits throughout the Bible, you'll be able to praise God regularly for Who He is – just as Jesus did.

NOTES/PRAYER REQUESTS:

Week 11

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Will God answer my prayers?

God has the right to say, “Yes,” “No,” or “Wait” to anything we ask of Him because He is the Lord God Almighty. It’s hard to understand why God sometimes says, “Wait” or “No” to good things—like healing someone who is sick. However, we can trust that He is able to bring something good out of even the worst situation. Let’s take a look at when God says “Yes” to our prayers.

How do you want your family to pray for you, personally? Get a piece of paper and write down one personal prayer request from each family member.

Wednesday

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He gave them a model prayer as a pattern to follow. Have a family member read **Matthew 6:9-13** to refresh your memory.

Today we will look at **verse 10**. Go ahead and read that verse again. We talked last week about praising God’s character traits at the beginning of our prayer time. If we believe that He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth and that His character and plan are perfect, then we should want His will to be done in our lives and everywhere. Look

at what the Apostle John wrote in **1 John 5:14-15**.

Did you catch the key to answered prayer? John encourages us to pray for things that agree with God's will. Read what else Jesus said in **John 14:13-14**.

Thursday

Have you heard someone end a prayer by saying, "I ask these things in Jesus' Name"? Praying in the Name of Jesus declares that He is God. Praying in Jesus' Name announces that you want God's will to be done. It means that the things that are important to Jesus are important to you, too.

What things do you already know from Scripture about God's character and His plan for people? Based on those things, brainstorm ways you can pray according to God's will.

Friday

Prayer and Bible reading go together like two lanes on the communication road between God and us. We hear from God and learn more about Him by reading Scripture. As we obey His Word, we become more like His Son, Jesus. Then we express our concerns to Him through prayer, wanting what God wants more than any selfish desires we have. If God says, "No," or "Wait" during a difficult time, remember that He can be honored as others watch you trust Him.

Look back at the prayer requests you wrote down. How does your request honor and glorify God? What do you need to change about your request in order for it to line up with God's Word?

Saturday

Concentrate your prayer time this next week on things that will honor and glorify your heavenly Father. First, find out what God has already said in the Bible about what you are asking. Then, instead of asking God to change His mind, ask Him to change your heart to match His will.

Close your family devotion by practicing what we've learned about prayer together. Begin your prayer time by praising some of the Names and qualities of God – as we learned last week. Then move on to the requests you've written down. How does each request honor God so that it can be asked in Jesus' Name? Ask each family member to pray for another member's request.

NOTES/PRAAYER REQUESTS:

Week 12

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

What should I ask God for?

We're going to look again at the pattern Jesus gave His disciples for prayer. So far, Jesus' model prayer has focused completely on God, but this week the spotlight shifts from God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will to the needs of the people praying.

How has God answered some of your prayers from last week's family prayer time? Add a thanksgiving section to your list for those things. If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be? Use this list for prayer at the end of the devotion.

Wednesday

Go ahead and read **Matthew 6:9-13**. Did you notice what changes in **verses 11-13**? Jesus talked about three important areas of our lives: providing for our daily needs, forgiving our sins, and rescuing us from temptation.

We all need food, water, clothing, and shelter. After that, the list of what we really need isn't very long. Instead of worrying about how to get the things you need or how to fix your problems, God invites you to bring those things to Him in prayer. Open your Bibles to **Philippians 4:6-7** and read those verses together before continuing.

Sometimes we confuse what we need with what we want. It's okay to pray for things that you want, as long as those things honor and glorify God. Before asking for something that you want, stop to thank Him for already providing something that you really need, like your home or the clothes you wear. Recognizing that God is the One who provides for both your needs and your wants gives you an attitude of gratitude.

Thursday

Jesus also said we should ask God to rescue us from the temptation to sin. Temptation is something that you know is wrong, but it seems exciting when you think about it. Satan tries to trick us by making sin look fun, but all sin will eventually hurt you in some way. Read what Scripture promises about God's escape plan in **1 Corinthians 10:13**.

Other than food, water, clothing, and shelter – what things qualify as “needs” in your life?

Look back at the list you made. What category do most of your personal requests fall into: needs, wants, temptations, or forgiveness?

Friday

Read **Matthew 6:12** again; then read **Luke 11:4**. What word does Luke use for “debt”? We should ask God to forgive us for sinning against Him when we fall for Satan's tricks. God forgives us, **1 John 1:9**. Likewise, we should forgive others – even if they don't ask.

The Lord knows that we have all kinds of needs (and wants), and He loves when we choose to come to Him with specific requests.

How has God provided for you this week, this month, or this year?

Share with your family something you are extremely grateful for. Add those things to the thanksgiving section of your family prayer list.

Saturday

Did you notice that Jesus said, our and us - no me and mine? Although prayer is a personal conversation between you and God, the New Testament shows us the important of praying in a group. Get ready to close in prayer together by deciding which member of the family will prayer for each request on your list.

Start by praising God's names and qualities – as we learned in week 10. Then thank the Lord for how He has provided, protected, and forgiven you. Remember to ask for His forgiveness for disobedient attitudes or behaviors before you present your other requests. Make an effort to practice this same pattern in your personal prayer time with God (praise, thanksgiving, forgiveness, requests).

NOTES/PRAAYER REQUESTS:

Week 13

Loving God - A Commitment to Scripture

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Who should I pray for?

This week we'll look at a few Scriptures that tell us who we should pray for.

Moving clockwise, have family members say a name as quickly as they can. It can be someone they know – like a friend or a teacher – or a person they've seen on television or heard about in the news. Keep going until one of you hesitates before answering.

How did you do? It's amazing to think of how many names we have stored in our heads, isn't it? Did your family name friends who also believe in Jesus? Spending time with Christian friends alerts you about how to pray for them. What does **James 5:16** tell us about how to pray for other believers? You can pray for a sick friend to get well or for friends going on vacation to have a safe trip. You can even pray for God to show them ways they have disobeyed Him.

Wednesday

For another important way to pray for Christians friends, read Paul's personal prayer request in **Ephesians 6:19-20**. If Paul – the greatest missionary who ever lived – needed prayer for boldness to talk about Jesus, then so do our friends and so do we! Paul not only prayed that

he would share the gospel of Jesus, he also prayed for the unbelievers who heard it. What did he pray for his unbelieving countrymen in **Romans 10:1**? Do you have friends who haven't yet received Jesus' gift of salvation? Pray for boldness to talk to them about Jesus and about how much God loved them.

Thursday

Jesus Himself gave instructions about praying for another group of people. What four words does He use to describe them in **Luke 6:27-28**? Having a godly attitude toward people who hate you, curse you, and mistreat you does not come naturally. It's easier to be kind and loving to even those people when you pray for them regularly. As you pray for people who seem to be against you, ask the Lord to help you to respond to them in a way that honors Him.

Think about the names you mentioned on Tuesday. Try to match some of their names with one of the groups we just talked about: believers, unbelievers, authorities, and those who mistreat you. How can you pray for each group?

Which of these people have an immediate need for prayer because of an illness or some kind of trouble?

Friday

Followers of Christ have the privilege to talk with God. We also have the responsibility to pray for other people. The Apostle Paul summed it up best when he said to pray, "**for all**" (**1 Timothy 2:1**). Wow! Praying for all people is a big responsibility, but it's also a great privilege. Of course, it would be impossible to pray all at one time for every person you know or have ever heard of. That's why the Bible instructs us to "pray without ceasing" (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**). That means that we should always be in an attitude of prayer. When

a friend comes to your mind, you don't have to stop and close your eyes to pray. You can simply ask God silently from your heart to help that friend.

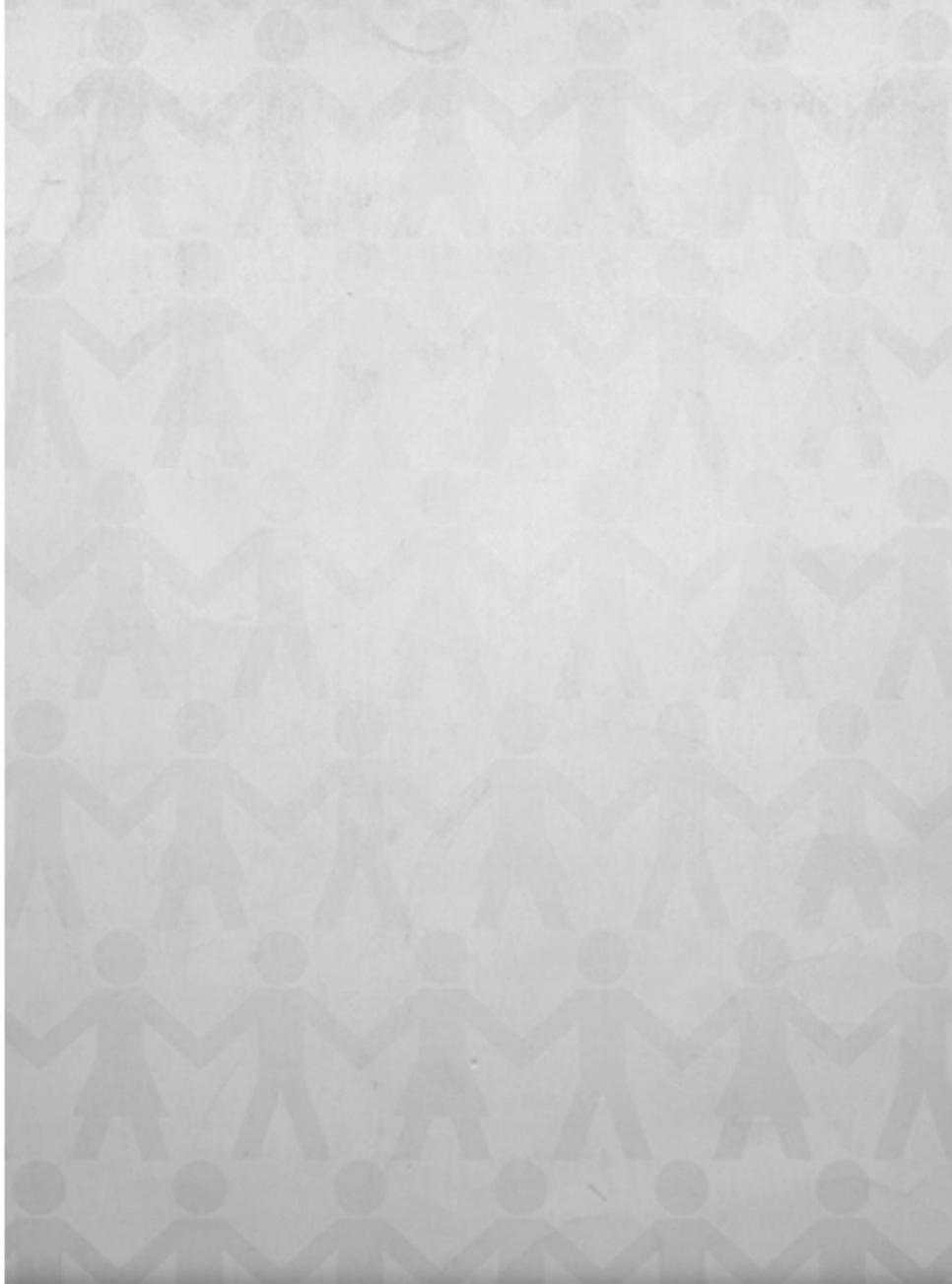
Who makes the decisions that affect you and your family? How can you pray for those leaders and authorities this week?

Saturday

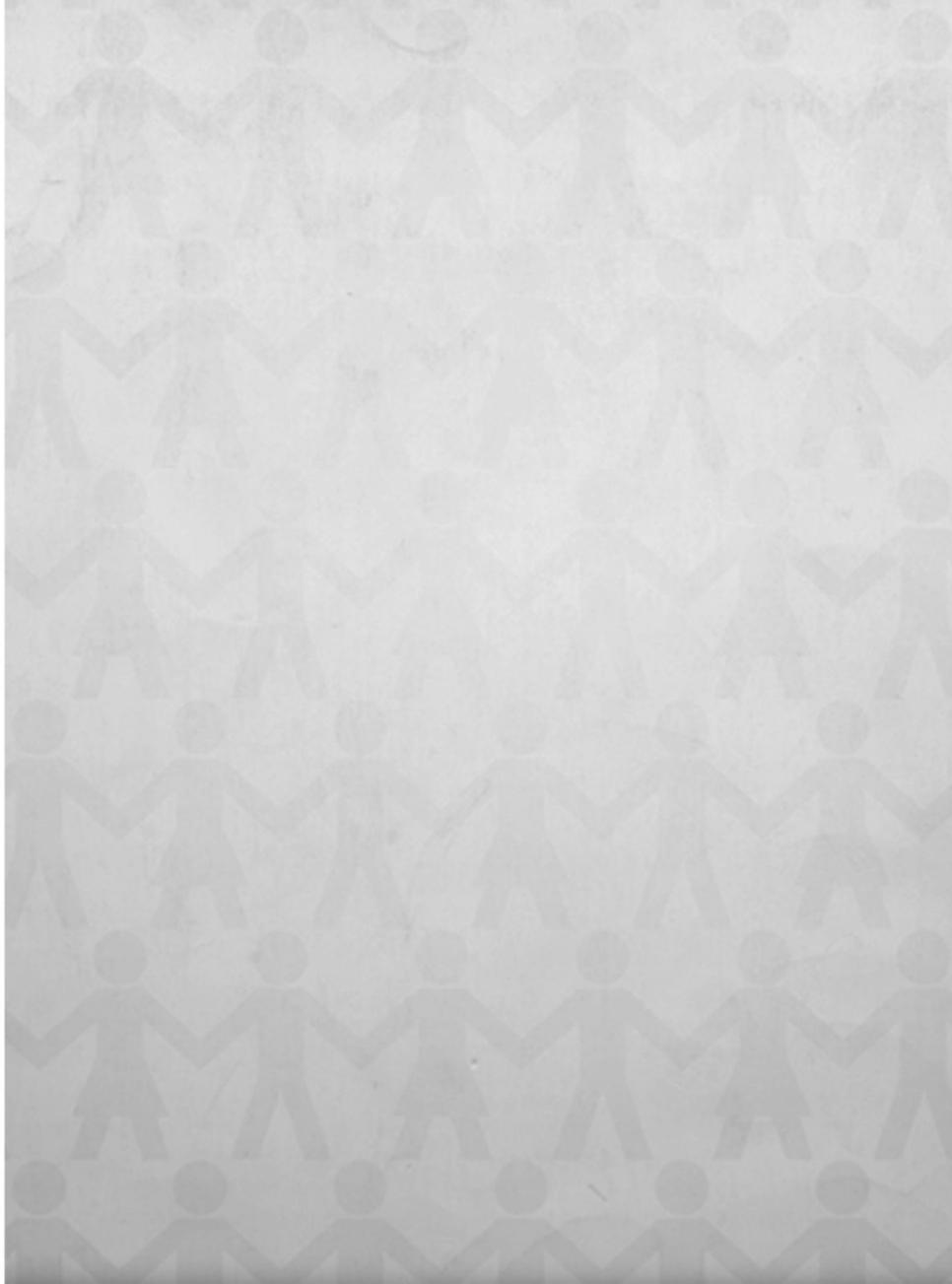
Let's practice everything we've learned this month about prayer. Remember to start your family prayer time by praising God for who He is, and then thank Him for what He has done. Ask God for forgiveness. Pray again for the requests your family members have mentioned over the last few weeks. Finally, pray for the people you talked about this week (as many of them as you can). End your prayer in the Name of Jesus, because Jesus Christ is our intercessor and we want our requests to glorify and honor His plans.

NOTES/PRAAYER REQUESTS:

Notes/Prayer Journal:



Notes/Prayer Journal:





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