

My Prayer Journal

Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day. Then, pray for church requests and personal friends and needs.

Prayer of Confession:

Forgive us Lord, for we are way too vulnerable to self-righteousness. Save us from the sin of pride that magnifies ourselves and diminishes others. Give us the pure grace of forgiveness and renew our hearts for the service of Your Kingdom.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Activity:

Hey kids, have you ever said, or wanted to say, “You’re not the boss of me”? I have too. And yet most of the time SOMEONE is the boss of us. Your parents tell you when it’s bed time, when it’s time to get ready for school or have lunch. Now they can’t MAKE you eat or sleep or be happy about school. But they do get to make the judgment of when you’ll be told to do these things. Part of what the Bible tells us is that we are judged by those in charge of us. For us that means our teachers, coaches and parents all judge what we do. So who can kids be in charge of? When do you get to make judgments? Chat with your parents about these questions.

MONDAY 1.13.20

Numbers 27:12-23

In last week’s study, we read about Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, advising Moses to share his responsibility for judging the disagreements within the Israelite community with others. Now, near the end of the book of Numbers, God shows Moses the Promised Land—the land that the Hebrews have been waiting to enter throughout their wilderness wanderings. But God also lets Moses know that Moses is going to die before they enter. God then names Moses’ successor—Joshua, son of Nun. God asks Moses to hold a public ceremony to let the community know that Moses’ authority over them is now being passed on to Joshua.

- Why does God not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land? What does Moses ask God to do, since Moses will no longer be able to lead the people? Why does God select Joshua to succeed Moses? Where does the ultimate authority for leading, or judging, the Israelites lie? What does it imply that this authority is willingly extended to others?
- If in these stories from the Old Testament, it is clear that God shares authority with human leaders, what does that suggest about Christian leadership today? Where does it ultimately derive from? How can we be sure that those invested with authority in the church have received this authority? What is the role of public acknowledgement of authority in the story of Joshua? How important is such ceremony today?

TUESDAY 1.14.20

Daniel 7:13-14

Daniel is the Old Testament’s version of the New Testament book of Revelation. Most people raised in the church are familiar with the “stories” of Daniel that occupy the first six chapters of the book, but many are unfamiliar with the strange visions and dreams that are related in the last six chapters! Like Revelation, Daniel is apocalyptic in nature, peering into the end times to reveal what God has planned for the fulfillment of time. In today’s reading, Daniel sees a “son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.” Jesus often referred to Himself as the “Son of Man,” and seems to have understood His own identity as the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy. The key “revelations” here are that the Son of Man receives absolute authority from God, and reigns over a kingdom that will never end.

- Also read the account of Jesus’ trial before the high priest in Mark 14:60-64. Why do you think Jesus’ claim to be Daniel’s “Son of Man” caused the religious leaders to condemn Him? What authority is Jesus claiming through His words? Why did Jesus claim this authority for Himself? What authority do you ascribe to Jesus? What is the extent of the authority Daniel says the Son of Man will be given?

WEDNESDAY 1.15.20

Luke 6:37-42

Like Matthew, Luke has Jesus relate His command concerning judging others within the context of a longer teaching. (In Matthew, it is referred to as the “Sermon on the Mount,” because Jesus teaches from a mountainside—here in Luke, it is called the “Sermon on the Plain,” because Luke 6:17 says Jesus teaches from “a level place.”) Notice that Luke explicitly combines Jesus’ teaching regarding forgiving, and giving in general, with his teaching about judgment. The verse “with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” applies equally to all three. Notice also that before the words about removing the speck from your own eye, Jesus tells a parable here, in Luke, that is absent from Matthew, about the foolishness of the blind leading the blind.

- How do the words about forgiveness, about giving in general, and about the blind leading the blind broaden the impact of the statement concerning how we are “measured”? What is the overriding principle Jesus is communicating with in regard to our interactions with others? Is there a common denominator between giving to others, forgiving others, leading others, and judging others?
- Jesus also says here, “Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.” Is condemnation the same as judgment? Is Jesus repeating Himself, just using a different word? Or is there a different sense to His command not to condemn? Are you able to check yourself when you are tempted to judge, condemn, or lead where you should not?

THURSDAY 1.16.20

John 17:1-5

In John’s Gospel, Jesus teaches extensively during His Last Supper with the disciples. All of chapters 13 through 17 contain this teaching, but the lessons culminate in the prayers in chapter 17. Jesus first prays for Himself, then for His disciples, and then for all believers. Today’s reading focuses on Jesus’ prayer for Himself. Here again, Jesus refers to Himself primarily as “the Son,” and acknowledges that any authority the Son has claimed has been granted by the Father. Of greatest importance here is the claim that included in this authority is the right to grant eternal life—but note that even here, it is to grant eternal life “to those the Father has given the Son.” Throughout the prayer, Jesus gives the Father the final authority—Jesus does the work the Father gives Him, and only the Father can finally glorify Jesus.

- The gist of Jesus’ prayer is that through His coming death and resurrection, God will be glorified. How are God’s love, power, and authority over creation demonstrated through Jesus’ death and resurrection?
- What does Jesus’ authority to grant eternal life mean for your own life? Have you received what Jesus has authority to grant?

