

## 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:

Dear Heavenly Father, we lower our heads before You and we confess that we have too often forgotten that we are Yours. Sometimes we carry on our lives as if there was no God and we fall short of being a credible witness to You. For these things we ask Your forgiveness and we also ask for Your strength. Give us clear minds and open hearts so we may witness to You in our world. Remind us to be who You would have us to be, regardless of what we are doing or who we are with. Hold us to You and build our relationship with You and with those You have given us on earth.

### My Prayers this Week:

### Family Activity:

I wonder if you've ever had a time when a good friend did or said something terrible to you? And you didn't know what to do, so you just walked away, didn't tell anyone and hurt inside. When this happens the Bible tells us to do a REALLY hard thing. We're supposed to go to that person and say, "Hey, what you said (or did) was wrong. I was hurt (or sad, or mad). Did you mean to hurt me?" WOW...doesn't that sound hard? That's 'cause it is. Think about doing this in steps. First find the person and tell them how you felt. Sometimes that's all you need to do and the person will tell you they're sorry. Sometimes you'll need to ask them if they still want to be your friend. And sometimes none of this works. Then maybe you need to spend a little time away from that person and remember what's important to you. Prayers will help you feel better and so will telling your parents.

### MONDAY 2.24.20

### Matthew 5:38-48

Rewards for friends, revenge on foes are so woven into our cultures that Jesus' words may seem a recipe for self-destruction. What company, political party, or law firm always deals with friends and foes this way? Yet Jesus said this is how God works. What's more, He called us to live out of the same heart: "No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously."

- In Jesus' day, many rabbis quoted Leviticus 19:18 ("Love your neighbor as yourself"), and then added, "and hate your enemies." Jesus said that love to the just and the unjust, to evil and good alike, is God's way. Do you understand "love" more as a feeling or a set of actions? Can you "love" someone even if you don't like them?
- John Wesley, Methodism's founder, said Jesus called us to be "perfect in love," always growing toward loving with God's all-inclusive love. He rejected the idea that "perfect" meant never sinning (missing the mark). Does it challenge you more, or less, to see "perfect" as about the state of your heart rather than just your outward actions?

### TUESDAY 2.25.20

### Ephesians 4:25-32

"We are all members of one body," Paul said. It's clear he was talking mainly to those in the Christian community. Wow—even in church it's quite possible to meet "bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." Even with fellow believers, we need the call to forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

- Being as honest as you can, who are the Christians you know who most often and most deeply "get your goat"? Pray for them, and about them. Ask God to help you to find practical, realistic steps to "be kind and compassionate," in ways that are healthy for you and for them.
- This passage says that Christians should be "forgiving each other." Again being as honest as you can, in what ways do you at times see yourself being unloving and hurtful to your brothers and sisters in Christ? What steps can you take to grow in these areas, and to seek relational healing by asking for forgiveness?

### WEDNESDAY 2.26.20

### Ephesians 2:11-22

Almost all conflict happens because of some kind of difference. As Jesus' message spread through the Mediterranean world, the early church became more and more diverse. But Jesus pulled off an amazing feat: He "put to death" the hostility of different groups. Our differences still create hostilities today—and Jesus' power is still at work.

- The main issue the Ephesians faced was the distrust and contempt between Jews and Gentiles. In a global society, what are some of the differences that trigger hostility in your heart? How can Jesus' forgiveness help make you willing to tackle the hard work of changing long-standing attitudes, feelings, and actions?
- "He Himself is our peace ... through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit." Do you see any difference between peace as a solely human effort based on "splitting differences" and balancing interests, and peace based on who Jesus is and who you are in Him? Is one more lasting than the other? Why or why not?

### THURSDAY 2.27.20

### John 3:14-21

John said Jesus did not come to condemn the world. What amazing possibilities open before us when we're told that God does not have a condemning attitude toward us! It frees us to let go of our condemning attitude toward ourselves and others. It's natural to condemn an enemy. Jesus came to offer us a SUPERNatural way of life.

- How do you understand the meaning of "God so loved the world"? Do you believe God's love extends to the whole world, or is it limited to a righteous subset of the world's people? How does your answer affect your own inner responses to those citizens of the world who seem to be "enemies"?
- John was a realist. Though Jesus did not come to condemn, some chose to remain His enemies. "Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil" (verse 19). How do you as Christ's follower treat those who reject you, or Jesus? What can Jesus' example teach you?

