

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:

Loving God, I ask You to give me a spirit of humility. Show me the places in my life where I am called to follow, rather than to lead. By Your grace, remove my temptation to boast in my own accomplishments, and fill me with the awareness of what You have done for me. In the name of Christ I pray, Amen.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Activity:

What was the last thing you did that was so awesome you really wanted to brag about it? Did you? It's a great thing to keep working to grow, and to become the very best you can be at whatever you like to do. But something inside us usually wants us to brag about it when we do! Jesus teaches us that instead of being cocky about what we're good at, we should avoid bragging. Even when we're really good at something, we should use that as a way to help others to get better at it, and not as a reason to boast. What are some ways you can help others to get better at what you're already good at?

MONDAY 3.9.20

2 Chronicles 7:11-22

The theme of this week's lessons is "humility." Any time we are asked to move from a place of higher authority to a lower place, we are required to exercise humility. In the ancient world, humility was not seen as a virtue, but as a weakness. And yet, the people of God have always been taught to approach God in humility. Pride, the opposite of humility, has often been characterized as the root of sin. In today's reading, God tells King Solomon that if God's people will humble themselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn from their wickedness, God will hear, forgive, and heal. If they cannot bring themselves to exercise that kind of humility, then as the saying goes, "pride goeth before a fall."

- When have you been required to exercise humility? How did it make you feel?
- Being "humiliated" is clearly from the same root as "humility." The difference is that we are immune from others humiliating us when we assume an attitude of humility in the first place. Have you ever felt humiliated? Did your own attitude have anything to do with that?
- What does it mean to come before God in humility? How are you doing at that?

TUESDAY 3.10.20

2 Kings 22:1-23:7

Josiah was an eight-year-old boy when he inherited the throne of Judah, the Southern Kingdom of Israel. The northern kingdom had fallen to the armies of Assyria about 80 years earlier. Whereas Josiah's father and grandfather had been terrible kings who erected altars to other gods in the Temple in Jerusalem, Josiah "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD." When a priest found the long-lost Book of the Law (portions of our books of Exodus through Deuteronomy), Josiah was astounded by how far his people had drifted from the humility God had expected since the days of Solomon. He reaffirmed the covenant with God, and went to work trying to restore the humble faith of Israel.

- How do you think Josiah was able to overcome the influence of his father and grandfather? Consider that in ancient times, kings had little direct interaction with their young sons.
- How was Josiah, as king, required to exercise humility to do what he knew had to be done? Who, or what, was he submitting to?
- Is it easy for you to submit to a higher authority?

WEDNESDAY 3.11.20

Daniel 4:1-37

Eventually, Josiah's successors also drifted away from God, and the nation of Judah was conquered by Babylon, and its residents sent into exile there. Daniel was among them... but Daniel was gifted in dream interpretation, and King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon relied upon Daniel's skills. When Daniel's prediction of Nebuchadnezzar's fall came to pass, Nebuchadnezzar learned a humbling lesson. Just as the Judah had fallen to Babylon as a direct result of failing to approach God in humility, Nebuchadnezzar's pride had resulted in his own fall. When he recovered, he gave praise to Daniel's God.

- It is one thing for Josiah, a Jewish king, to humble himself and try to restore worship of God. What did it take for Nebuchadnezzar, who worshipped those other gods that Josiah's father had worshipped, to turn to God in humble faith?
- It is important to understand that God does not DO these bad things to people to get them to turn to Him in humble faith—these things happen as a natural result of NOT turning to God in humble faith. When this lesson is learned, people like Nebuchadnezzar amend their ways. Have you learned this lesson?

THURSDAY 3.12.20

Mark 9:33-37

The teaching of Jesus is completely consistent with the Old Testament emphasis on humility before God. Jesus, though, takes a more direct approach in teaching His followers to adopt an attitude of humility with *everyone*. In today's story His disciples argue about which of them is the greatest. They must have known Jesus would disapprove, because when He asks them what they were arguing about, they keep quiet. If you really want to be first in God's eyes, Jesus says, you have to be willing to be last. The bottom of the social hierarchy in their day was children—so Jesus uses them to demonstrate that welcoming the most insignificant person makes one great in the eyes of God.

- How willing are you to be welcoming to the bottom-most layer of our social structure? Who would that be? Would you welcome them into your home? Your church?
- Would you find doing so to be humbling, or humiliating?
- How do you think the disciples themselves would have felt about that at this point in their walk with Christ?

