

My Prayer Journal

Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.

Prayer of Confession:

Lord we read Your Word but don't live it. We study Your Word but don't adhere to it. We allow Your Word to inform our minds, but we fail to allow it to transform our hearts. Forgive us when we have been consumers of Your Word, hearers but not doers. Reform our ways and transform our lives by Your Living Word, Jesus Christ.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Time:

Every since the time of Jesus, Christians have tried to come up with words that say all the most important things about what they believe about Jesus, and the relationship between Jesus and God, and the relationship between Jesus and us. These words are called "creeds". One of the most famous ones is called "The Apostles' Creed", because the earliest Christians believed that this was what Jesus' earliest followers (disciples, or "apostles") believed. When you go to worship as a family, or when you go to LWKids, part of what you are doing is learning what Jesus' followers have always believed about Jesus, and how that belief should affect the way we live. It's important—because the choices we make every day depend on what we really believe deep down inside.

MONDAY 1.3.22

Genesis 1:1-2:1

As we begin our new sermon series in which we will look at the basic beliefs of Christianity, we will take a sweeping look at the belief statements in the Apostles' Creed—one of the oldest statements of faith in all of Christianity. The Creed begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth". The biblical foundation for this belief is to be found at the very beginning of the Bible—in Genesis (which is Greek for "beginning"), chapter one. Here, in sweeping poetry, the author proclaims how God spoke all of creation into being. God speaks, and things happen! Out of a dark and watery chaos, an orderly universe is created step by step, over the course of six days, in an orderly fashion. By the end of the description of creation in Genesis 2:1, the watery chaos has been transformed into a clear picture of the everyday world around us—giving rise to the Judeo-Christian belief in a God who is sovereign over creation, who delights in bringing order out of chaos, and whose word is powerful. No wonder the Creed begins by affirming belief in this almighty Creator—the only One who exists beyond our bounds of space and time.

- What do you see emphasized in this story? To what extent does belief in God as Creator underlie your Christian faith?

TUESDAY 1.4.22

Hebrews 1:1-3

The second part of the Apostles' Creed continues, "And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord", before continuing with other belief statements regarding Jesus' conception, birth, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming. This lengthier part of the Creed makes clear that belief in Jesus as the Christ is central to Christian faith, and that the story of the events of his life, as related in the Gospels, is to be foundational to faith. In fact, our entire New Testament is an interpretation of the meaning of Jesus. The writer of Hebrews, though, provides us with a concise summary of who Jesus is—the very Son of God, the imprint of God's being, the instrument of God's creation, the redeemer of fallen humanity, who in his resurrected state sits at the right hand of God the Father, sharing in His glory and majesty. When the Creed refers to believing in Jesus as *our Lord*, it is an affirmation that we will give Jesus our complete and undivided allegiance as the master of our lives. It is the events of His personal history, as proclaimed in the Creed, that provide the basis for ones personal declaration of Jesus' Lordship in their own lives.

- What do you believe about the individual statements about Jesus' life? Do they substantiate for you a claim to Jesus' right to be Lord of your life?

WEDNESDAY 1.5.22

Luke 4:21-22; Acts 2:1-4

The Apostles' Creed continues: "I believe in the Holy Spirit". For many people, the Holy Spirit is the most mysterious person of the Trinity. We seem more able to get our heads around an omnipotent God in heaven, and Jesus is of course a tangible, human being who we can easily envision. But a "Holy Spirit"? And yet, belief in the Holy Spirit is critical to a Christian understanding of faith. Jesus Himself had the Holy Spirit descend upon Him at his baptism, empowering His earthly ministry, and in an upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, after Jesus' Resurrection, the Holy Spirit came upon the assembled disciples, empowering them to continue Jesus' earthly ministry. Christian faith is undergirded by the belief that the same Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus, and who empowered the disciples in the first century, still empowers Christians today so that they can continue that same ministry of Jesus. At the same time, the Holy Spirit works within the internal spirit of every Christian to transform them into the likeness of Jesus Christ, as part of this empowerment for Christian service. In this way, Christians are prepared to change the world.

- Do you have a personal sense of the Holy Spirit's work in your life? How do you "experience God" in your life?

THURSDAY 1.6.22

Romans 12:1-8

The first belief statements in the Apostles' Creed after the three persons of the Trinity are a belief in "the holy catholic church, the communion of saints". It is important to note that while for many people today, the word "catholic" is used only to refer to the Roman Catholic Church, the word itself simply means "universal", or "shared by all". Thus, belief in the "holy catholic church" does not have anything to do with Roman Catholicism, but rather expresses the belief that the collected body of all believers united in Christ has a holy, and God-ordained purpose. The further statement of belief in "the communion of saints" expresses a belief in this spiritual unity shared by Christian believers. Even though, as Paul writes in Romans, each individual believer is uniquely gifted for Christian service, we are all empowered by the same holy Spirit, with the same ultimate goal of transforming the world into conformity to the will of God. This unity in the Spirit creates a "communion" among us, who are the "saints" of God ("saints" simply means those who are being made holy by the power of the Holy Spirit). For Christians, "church" is far more than a human institution—it is God's way of impacting the world.

- Do you believe that God can truly transform the world through the church? What *do* you believe about "church"?

