

My Prayer Journal

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

Prayer of Confession:

Holy God, we give You thanks for the gifts You so generously pour out upon Your church. Specifically, we thank You for the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers who You have placed among us to help us to mature in Christian faith. We pray that through their efforts, we might attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Time:

Have everyone in the family list what their gifts from God are. Think through how each of those gifts can be used for certain ways to serve the church or your community. Have a conversation about how you could use your gifts together to serve God's Kingdom as a family. Write down two ways to serve with those gifts and make a plan to do that.

MONDAY 10.19.20

Exodus 31:1-11

Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that "spiritual gifts" are limited to the various lists of spiritual gifts that the apostle Paul articulates in his letters, such as the one from Ephesians that is the basis of this week's sermon Scripture. But the Bible insists that God often imparts His Spirit to people to accomplish all kinds of work for His Kingdom, well beyond those specific lists. In today's reading, we see that God has specifically gifted two men, Bezalel and Oholiab, with the ability to perform detailed craftsmanship and artistic design in order to complete the construction of the Tabernacle—the tent for worship of God that traveled with the Israelites in their wilderness wandering and was later set up as the place for worship in the Promised Land. Don't miss the fact that God says these gifts of artistry, carpentry, and metalworking are due to the fact that God has "filled them with the divine spirit"! Spiritual gifts take many forms, but all of them are given to bring glory to God.

- Have you ever thought of craftsmanship and artistry as spiritual gifts, or merely as natural talents?
- Has God given you this gift? If so, how might you be called to use that gift at Living Word?

TUESDAY 10.20.20

1 Kings 3:9; 4:29-34

When King Solomon assumed the throne of Israel, he recognized that he was not as equipped to govern the people as he would need to be. He prayed for God to give him wisdom to rule, and God was pleased with the request. The description of Solomon we have in 1 Kings 4 demonstrates for us that God not only filled Solomon with wisdom, but with scientific knowledge as well! Solomon became known as the wisest man, and also the most knowledgeable man, in the entire middle east. The story shows us that spiritual gifts are not necessarily given at God's sole discretion—often, God responds to prayer by equipping people with the gifts they have discerned they will need to accomplish a task for God. We can pray for specific spiritual gifts, and if they will be used to bring God glory, God will give them to us! The story also shows us that both a wise, and discerning mind, and an intelligent and knowledgeable brain can both be used for God's glory. Like in Solomon's day, people today need leaders who can discern the right path to follow, and who are intelligent enough to follow it!

- How have you seen the spiritual gifts of wisdom and knowledge used to grow God's Kingdom?
- Do you have these gifts? How are you using them?

WEDNESDAY 10.21.20

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Today's reading is the flip side to yesterday's! Whereas King Solomon recognized the gifts he would need to lead the people, prayed for wisdom, and received it from God, Jeremiah was set apart by God to be a prophet even before he was born! Jeremiah is often called the "reluctant prophet" because he often feels compelled to speak the Word of God to the people even though he knows it will be poorly received, and he wishes he could avoid the task (see Jeremiah 20:7-18, for example). God symbolically touched Jeremiah's mouth, placing His words in Jeremiah's mouth—words that would first condemn, and then build up, the people of Israel. Either way, prophets speak only what God tells them to speak. The spiritual gift of prophecy is a mixed bag—sometimes, it is a call to speak words the people want to hear, encouraging and applauding the good work of the Kingdom. At other times, as with Jeremiah, prophets are called to speak words that bring God's people to accountability for their failures to live as God calls us to live.

- Have you ever been reluctant to use a gift God has already given you? Why was Jeremiah unable to resist his gift?
- Have you ever felt compelled to speak on behalf of God?

THURSDAY 10.22.20

Acts 6:1-7

The early church's main priority was evangelism—spreading the gospel about Jesus' death and resurrection and inviting people into God's Kingdom. However, God's Kingdom was to be characterized by demonstrating God's love through care of others, especially with regard to caring for the less fortunate. When a complaint arose about unfairness in the way food was being distributed to widows, favoring Aramaic speaking widows over Greek speaking widows, a "task force" of Spirit-empowered disciples was assembled to take responsibility for resolving the issues and ensuring fairness in the distribution of food, so that those disciples more gifted in evangelism and preaching could focus on those tasks. These seven men were consecrated to the work of service by the laying on of hands, a sign of their assignment to this specialized service. The ceremony assured the entire Christian community that God would be at work through these persons to care for all widows, regardless of ethnicity.

- Do you think those who preached and evangelized ever served the needy? Do you think those who served the widows ever preached or evangelized?
- Do you have gifts of service? Do you feel a particular call to serve in one-on-one ministry with the less fortunate?

