

My Prayer Journal

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

Prayer of Confession:

O Lord God of mercy and compassion, give us courage to see ourselves in the mirror of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We confess that we fall so short of all You have made us to be. Give us grace, O gracious Lord, lest we be overcome by the truth of our shortcomings. Give us understanding, O Lord of truth, that we might receive and grow in the redemption freely offered in Jesus our Savior. Amen.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Time:

We are all children of God, we are given His grace and love every day. By allowing ourselves the goodness of Christ in our hearts we are welcoming Him into our every day lives. When we struggle to make God at the center of our lives than we forget to WHO we are living our lives for. Take time this week as a family to remind yourselves that God is at the center of your lives and how as a family you can remember that each day. Make a list of practical ways that you can create space for Christ in your family time each week.

MONDAY 5.3.21

Romans 8:28-39

Paul's follow-on to the hope we have in our future resurrection and glory is the assurance that whatever we may experience in this earthly existence, our ultimate destiny is secure. God is at work in all aspects of the believer's life—in the good things that befall them as well as redeeming the bad. God's predetermined plan is that those who demonstrate their love of God by putting their faith in Jesus WILL be changed, fully, into His likeness—including their ultimate glorification. Because this is the predetermined plan of God, and because no one and nothing is greater than God, we can be absolutely confident that it will happen. Whatever hardships we may face, we face them knowing our destiny. No matter what condemnation we may face in this life, Jesus is our advocate before God the Father, securing our eternal futures. Just as, from a worldly perspective, Jesus appeared to be defeated on the cross, the worldly perspective toward our own physical realities is not only limited but contradicts ultimate realities. In Christ, we live knowing that we will emerge victorious in the end. In fact, we are MORE than conquerors. No adversary in this world can undo our conformation with the image of Christ.

- Do you live with this assurance of your ultimate destiny?

TUESDAY 5.4.21

Romans 9:1-13

Beginning here, in chapter 9, Paul sets out to address the fact that this gospel of Jesus Christ, this gospel of salvation and justification by faith and not through adherence to the written code of law, is being widely rejected among the historic people of Israel. As a Jew himself, Paul is devastated by this reality. He goes so far as to say that he would sacrifice his own salvation if it would mean the salvation of his people. Everything about the Christian faith finds its roots in the people and the faith of Israel—culminating in the human lineage of Jesus himself. Why then, does Israel not believe, while Gentiles do come to faith in Christ? Paul understands and offers a theological explanation for such a situation, using the Old Testament example of Jacob and Esau. Even though both were children of Isaac, it was Jacob who was elected by God to change his name to "Israel" and become the patriarch of the twelve tribes of Israel. Similarly, God's ultimate purposes are now being served by having people from both within historic Israel and from outside of historic Israel turn to faith in Jesus Christ, while others do not. This is God's prerogative—being a "child of God" has never, in reality, been about blood descent, or works of the law, but about believing in the promises of God.

- Does your life give witness to being a child of God? How?

WEDNESDAY 5.5.21

Romans 9:14-29

In these verses, Paul addresses a difficult issue that has continued to confound Christian believers since Paul's day. If, indeed, God wants everyone to repent, accept the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ, and have eternal life, then why is it that some people do so while others do not? Is it really God's will that some people reject the gospel? If so, is it really just for them to be held responsible for their choice? Paul does not offer easy answers but falls back on an absolute belief in God's sovereignty as Creator of the universe. His real point is that things are the way they are—with some Jews accepting Christ, and some rejecting Christ, and with some Gentiles accepting Christ, and some rejecting Christ, because ultimately, this is God's chosen path toward the redemption of the entire creation. We may wish it otherwise, or say that we would do things differently ... but we are not God, and have no right to question the reality. God is God, and this is the way God is choosing to redeem His creation. The issue of who accepts the gospel and who rejects it, and why they do so, remains a mystery. Believing that this IS God's path to a redeemed creation is, not surprisingly, a matter of faith.

- What does God's absolute sovereignty mean to you?

THURSDAY 5.6.21

Romans 9:30-10:4

Remember that Paul's digression about God's sovereignty has been part of a broader discussion concerning Israel's apparent rejection of the gospel. Paul reiterates what we read earlier, on Tuesday, that his heart's desire is that the Jews might share in God's salvation in Christ. But Israel's understanding of its calling from God was too narrow. By offering the gospel to Gentiles, God is now offering the Gentiles the same grace that God had given to Israel in the first place when God chose them to be the covenant people. But rather than embrace the righteousness of God that has now been offered in Christ, they have clung instead to a righteousness based in strict adherence to the Law of Moses. Paul says that Israel is zealous for God, loves God, believes in God ... but has failed to recognize God's own Son for who He is. By rejecting Jesus, they are fulfilling their own Scripture regarding the "rock that makes them fall." Jesus, Paul writes, is the "goal," or "end," of the law—meaning that the purpose of the law has been fulfilled in Jesus, as Paul has spent the first half of his letter explaining. If Israel truly knew God, they would have recognized God's Son and the truth that righteousness comes by faith.

- What do you think—is it possible to achieve a righteousness based on law? How is righteousness by faith an act of grace?

