



PRAYER JOURNAL

This week, I will praise God for...

-
-
-
-
-
-

I will ask God for...

-
-
-
-
-
-

I will thank God for...

-
-
-
-
-
-

I need to confess...

-
-
-
-
-
-

I will pray for others...

-
-
-
-
-
-

MONDAY | REJOICE ALWAYS?

READ → **Philippians 4:4-7**

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

REFLECT → Do you know what "rejoice" means? It means to be glad about or to take delight in a situation.

Is it possible to rejoice always? Is it possible to give thanks in all circumstances? Some circumstances aren't all that joyful. Some circumstances are extremely sad or very frustrating.

Can God use diversity or painful situations to bring about good? What examples can you think of? What affect can going through a bad time have on your faith in God?

From where do we get comfort in difficult times? Read Philippians 4:6-7 again. It tells us not to fret or fear because through prayer, we can tap into God's peace—a peace that is so thorough that words can't even describe it.

We may not always understand what God has in mind for a particular situation, but we do know, from reading Romans, that God works for good for us in all things.

RESPOND → 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says, "Pray continually." Try that out. Get into the habit of saying short one-sentence prayers throughout the day: "Dear God, what a beautiful day!" "Help me, Lord, to make a wise decision." "Give me patience, oh God." "Thank you for being near me."

Pray continually and begin to experience the peace of God.

TUESDAY | TWO VERY DIFFERENT MEN

READ → **Luke 18:9-14**

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³ "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴ "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

REFLECT → Jesus' parable includes two very different men. The Pharisee was a man who was well schooled on, and very conscious about keeping, the Law of Moses. Pharisees were often considered by their fellow citizens to be noble and righteous. Tax collectors, on the other hand were considered to be traitors. They were Jews who were working for the occupying Roman government. Many had a reputation for cheating their fellow citizens by collecting more money than was due and pocketing it.

As you read the story, what words would you use to describe the Pharisee? How about the tax collector?

The tax collector seems to feel unworthy appearing before God. He doesn't even look up. Can guilt keep a person from coming close to God? What would you say to a person who feels unworthy to talk to God?

The Pharisee seems to be very full of himself. What does Jesus have to say about this attitude?

RESPOND → Consider your attitude toward others. Are you more like the Pharisee or the tax collector? Remember that all that you are and all that you have are gifts from God. Always be thankful for these gifts, and pray that God will help you to always remain humble.

© 2009 by Neal Bowes. Permission is granted to any Christian religious institution to download, photocopy, and distribute these daily devotions to teenagers in its community. This material is not for sale and may not appear in any commercial publication without written permission.

Please do what you can to inform other youth ministry leaders about this free resource. Updates are posted on Friday evenings at www.DailyDevos.org.

All Scripture quotations in this publication are from the HOLY BIBLE, TODAY'S NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® TNIV®. Copyright © 2001, 2005 by International Bible Society®. All rights reserved worldwide.



Share your comments about these Devos online at DailyDevos.org

WEDNESDAY | A TWO-WAY STREET**READ → 1 Kings 19:9b-13**

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹¹ The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

REFLECT → Prayer is supposed to be a two-way street—a conversation. We should absolutely talk to God, but we should also be sure to listen for God.

Have you ever heard God speak? Where were you? What did God say to you?

We can often miss the voice of God, because it doesn't usually come booming out of the sky.

Elijah had a lot on his mind and desperately wanted to hear the voice of God. Where did Elijah hear it? Do you think that's how he was expecting it?

Life has so much noise and so many distractions: music, the TV, the computer, your siblings, your parents, the telephone, the dog...how would we ever hear a gentle whisper in all of that?

RESPOND → Create a quiet, private place to pray. Read some Scripture, tell God what's on your mind, and wait. Wait in the sheer silence for God's gentle whisper. Give God plenty of time. Don't rush it.

THURSDAY | MAKING A PRAYER LIST**READ → Ephesians 6:18-20**

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Romans 12:12

¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

1 Samuel 12:23a

²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you.

REFLECT → What kinds of things do you pray for? It's easy for our prayers to end up being a list of requests—everything from "please help me do well on this test" to "please keep us safe as we travel." Requests aren't bad. God likes to hear about the things that are on our minds. But God also wants to hear some praise and the occasional "thank you." God wants us to pray for the concerns and needs of others, too.

It's helpful to keep a personal prayer list. In what ways has God blessed you? Make a list and be thankful. What have you seen that has been truly amazing? Make a list and praise God. What sins do you need to confess? Make a list and take it to God. Who are some people you could pray for? This could be a long list: parents, teachers, church leaders, government officials, even complete strangers.

RESPOND → Keep your list going, and take it every day into a quiet place and be faithful in prayer.

FRIDAY | GOD IS IN CHARGE**READ → Matthew 26:36-42**

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

REFLECT → In this passage, Jesus is praying just before he is arrested and led away to be crucified. The "cup" he speaks of is his impending suffering and death. He wants to know if it would be possible to skip all that, but quickly acknowledges that God is in charge.

How would you describe Jesus' emotions in this passage? How does he express his obedience to God? What does Jesus mean by "not as I will, but as you will"? How should we model this in our prayers?

RESPOND → Sometimes, we might be unhappy with God's decision or really wrestle with God over a situation. We need to remember that God is in charge, but we should never forget that God is loving and just and compassionate and faithful, and that God knows better than we do.

SATURDAY | RIGHT ANSWER, RIGHT TIME**READ → Isaiah 55:8-9**

⁸ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Jeremiah 29:11-14a

¹¹ "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity."

Psalms 46:10

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

REFLECT → Does it ever seem like God doesn't answer your prayers? Is it possible that we are sometimes guilty of dictating *how* God should answer our prayers...and then, when we don't get the result we expect, we say that God has ignored us?

Part of being a faithful follower is trusting that God will make the right decision, in the right time, for each situation.

RESPOND → God generally has three responses to our prayers: "Yes." "Not yet." "No, I have something better in mind." How has God responded to your prayers recently?