

# Nurture 365

## May

A Daily Devotional

By Robbie Pruitt

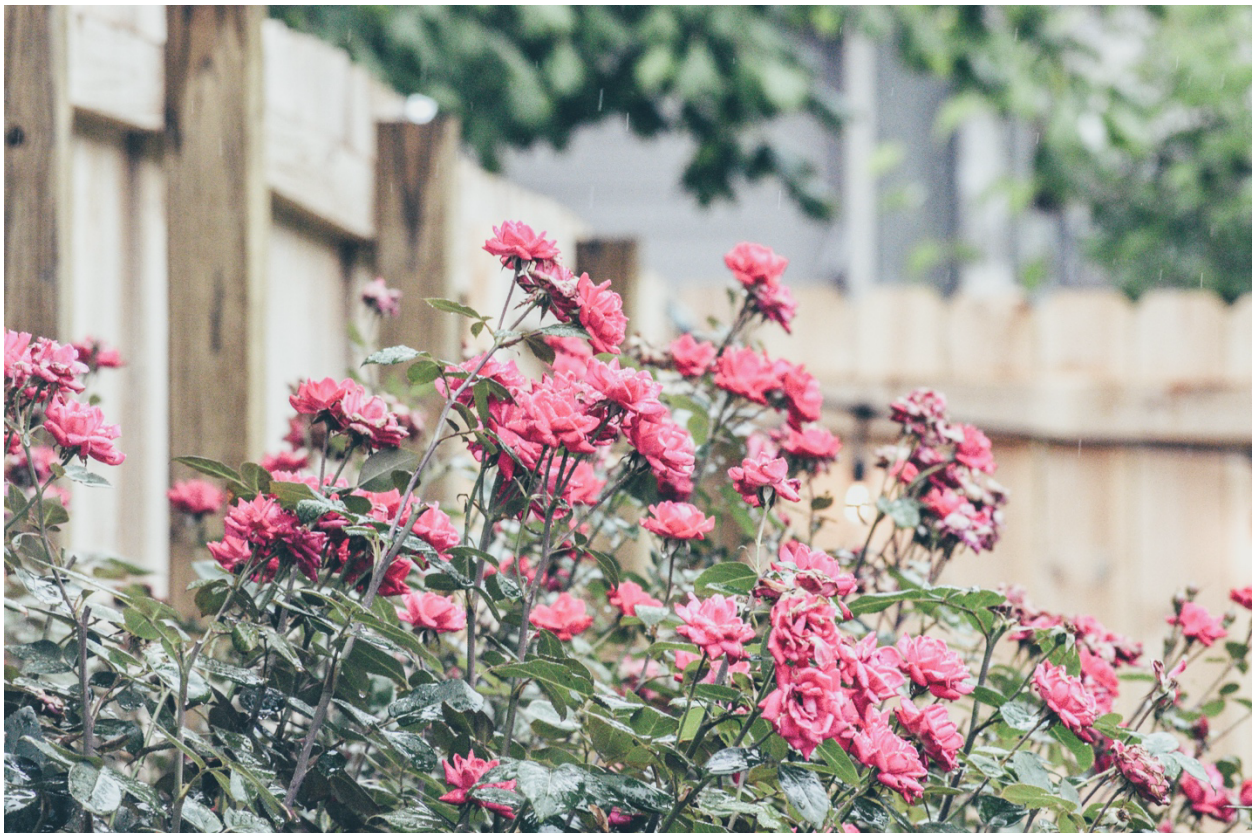


Photo by [Debby Hudson](#) on [Unsplash](#).

### **A Prayer for Christ to Be Formed in Us:**

“Lord Jesus, Master Carpenter of Nazareth, on the Cross through wood and nails you wrought our full salvation: Wield well your tools in this, your workshop, that we who come to you rough-hewn may be fashioned into a truer beauty by your hand; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, world without end. Amen.”

(#71., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## About Nurture 365

Nurture 365 is a daily devotional compiled from devotional posts I have posted on Facebook and Instagram over the last few years. In 2021, I also started posting these in the Blog section of my website, [www.robbypruitt.com](http://www.robbypruitt.com).

My hope and prayer for these posts and this compilation of devotionals is that they help others to nurture their relationship with Jesus daily.

Each devotional has a title, questions to consider, an idea or two, a passage of scripture, an application of some kind, and a prayer from the 2019 Book of Common Prayer, published by The Anglican Church in North America, <https://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net>.

The basic flow for most of these devotionals is the acrostic S.O.A.P., scripture, observation, application, and prayer—an easy, consistent, simple, and predictable format.

These devotionals are designed to be basic and easy to read. They are not intended to be overly comprehensive or complete in the subjects they cover. Like salt, hopefully these brief offerings will enhance the flavor of your faith and make you thirst for more.

If you have questions, would like to talk, to know more about any of these devotional thoughts, if you would like to have a deeper conversation, or if you would like to pray, you can always reach out to me through text, my cell phone number is 571-346-9583.

In the end, the best devotional for you is the one you use. If this one does not work for you, please find one that does and use it daily. Reach out to me if you would like other suggestions.

As you begin your daily time with God, I suggest quieting yourself, and prayer—asking God to reveal himself to you, to help you see something you have not seen before, or to teach you something you did not know about him, his kingdom, yourself, or this world.

A great model for prayer is the acrostic A.C.T.S.: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Take time to express your love for God. Confess to God where you have fallen short of loving him and others the way you should. Spend time in thanksgiving, expressing your gratitude to God for who he is and all he has done. Finally, ask God to supply what you need. (For a short article on this method read: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/simple-acrostic-prayer>).

I am praying with you and for you as you use this resource to draw near to Jesus and to nurture your faith.

In Christ alone,

Robbie Pruitt

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Find more at [www.robbypruitt.com](http://www.robbypruitt.com).

## Day 1

### Jesus' Yoke—A Lighter Load

When you are weighed down, who removes the excess weight off of your shoulders? Who helps carry your heavy load?

There are at least two kinds of people in this world: those who weigh others down, create obstacles, and burden other people, and then there are those who help lighten the load of others, ease the burden, and make life easier and more bearable for others.

When the religious leaders, the Judaizers and the Pharisees, wanted to re-institute the law and to make unreasonable and unachievable demands on new Gentile followers of Jesus, the elders stepped in and lifted their crushing demands on the Gentiles joining the church.

The Apostles wrote this encouragement: “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” (Acts 15:28-29, ESV).

The Apostles were removing the crippling religious yoke of the law which was inhibiting the Gentiles from fully entering the family of God.

The Holy Spirit led these Apostles to lift the heavy load that was being laid upon the shoulders of these new believers in Jesus by the pharisaical Judaizers.

The requirements for the Gentiles were simplified and clarified and focused on a lighter load. The Apostles focused on four issues: avoiding idolatry, bloody meat, strangled animals, and sexual immorality.

This focused requirement was achievable and emphasized what was most important in putting God first and living a holy life. These Gentile Jesus followers were now able to join the family of God and shoulder this lighter load of Jesus' yoke.

In Luke's gospel account, Jesus himself rebuked the experts of the law in his day when he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.” (Luke 11:46, ESV).

These legal practitioners loved to heap heavy helpings of hurtful hubris upon God's children, without the first thought of lifting or lightening the load of another brother and helping them to have faith and to follow Jesus.

A lighter load is at the heart of the gospel—the good news of Jesus. Jesus' yoke is a lighter load and this is good news for the followers Jesus and anyone looking to follow Jesus.

This is why Jesus himself said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30, ESV).

May we lift a lighter load as we come under the yoke of Jesus, and may we share this good news and lift heavy burdens off the shoulders of those who are staggering under the crushing weight of works-based-legalism.

**A Prayer for Mercy:** “Almighty God, you have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; grant that we, who for our evil deeds deserve to be punished, by the might of your grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (#79, Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 2

### Kingdom Hope in Hardship

What kinds of hardship are you experiencing as you live out your faith in your life? What kinds of hardship are you experiencing as you serve Jesus faithfully in a fallen world?

Troubles and hardship are inevitable in a broken world; however, we are not without hope as followers of Jesus.

We are either coming out of some kind of trial or trouble, currently enduring a trial or hardship, or we are about to enter a hardship, difficulty, or trial of some kind.

The Apostle Peter wrote his general letter of First Peter for those Christians who were experiencing, or would experience, trials of many kinds.

Warren Wiersbe writes, “The apostle knew that a severe ‘fiery trial’ was just around the corner, and he wanted to prepare believers for it. After all, what life does to us depends on what life finds in us” (Warren W. Wiersbe).

Difficulties and hardship reveal the character of a person. What is in us is highlighted when the pressures of life and the fiery trials weigh heavily down upon us, burning away our pretenses and our facade.

Those of us who are Christians living in this Western world have enjoyed mostly comfortable lives. Our brothers and sisters in Christ elsewhere in the world have suffered greatly for their faith in Jesus.

In our current cultural climate, it is becoming very clear that the time is coming when living for Jesus and taking a stand for Jesus will cost us. Our faith has a price tag.

Living for Jesus in a fallen world is not without cost. As the commentator wrote, “The only “comfortable” Christian will be a “compromising” Christian, and the believer’s comfort will be costly.”

In the face of trials, we need to prepare, and not despair. We must prepare to live out this costly faith. We must not despair in the face of adversity, trials, and hardship.

In the letter of First Peter, the Apostle has given us a precious word which encourages us to have hope in Jesus—no matter how difficult life becomes, and no matter how trying it is to live out our faith in this fallen world.

For the last two millennia, the church has experienced various fiery trials, but the enemy has not been able to destroy God’s church. Remember, it was Peter that Jesus made the promise that “the gates of hell would not prevail over his church.”

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Today, the church continues to face fiery trials of all kinds. We must be prepared for whatever comes our way. We must be willing to stand up for what we believe and to live out our faith in our broken lives and in our fallen world.

This is why Peter wrote, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5, ESV).

We have a living hope in the face of trials, difficulties, and hardship in our resurrected Lord Jesus. We have a living hope and an inheritance that is not of this world. We are citizens of another kingdom, and we have an imperishable inheritance waiting for us, which causes all earthly loss and personal cost to fade away to nothingness in comparison to what will be revealed to us in the last days.

May we take comfort in the face of trials, difficulties, and hardship, recognizing that God is guarding an imperishable and living hope and salvation for us in the coming kingdom of God in the last day.

**A Prayer for the Coming of God’s Kingdom:** “Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.” (#115, Book of Common Prayer, 2019).



### Day 3

#### Barnabas the Encourager

Do you have a nickname? If so, what does your nickname say about you? If you do not have a nickname, what nickname would you give yourself? What would you like your name to communicate about you or God?

In Acts chapter four, we meet a man named Joseph, or Barnabas, and we learn much about him, his nickname, his character, and his contributions to the early followers of Jesus and the early church. We see Barnabas as a man of encouragement, and as a man of self-sacrifice and generosity towards to the early church.

We also learn much about the nature of the early church and the characteristics of the body of believers that met together to worship and to serve the Lord Jesus as a sacrificially giving and serving body of Christ followers.

Luke tells us in Acts chapter four that “The full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.” (Acts 4:32-35, ESV).

Here in this Acts chapter four passage, we see the following concerning the early church:

1. The early church was unified as one as “the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul”.
2. The early church was sacrificial in their generosity and in their concerns for others as “no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common”.
3. The early church was expressive of their faith, sharing the good news of Jesus with God’s power and their personal experience, as “with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all”.
4. The early church was extremely generous as they gave what they had for the benefit of those who had need, and as they shared what they had in common with one another— “There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”

The early church was marked by their unity in Jesus, by their sacrificial service, by their powerful and personal expressions of their faith, and by their provision for one another through holding everything in common.

Barnabas, whose real name was Joseph, exemplified encouragement and this radical generosity and sacrificial service in the early church. Barnabas was named “son of encouragement” by those closest to him because of his extraordinary contributions.

Barnabas was a Levite from birth, from the priestly line, and he modeled priest-like service and giving sacrificially.

Luke tells us, “Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.” (Acts 4:36-37, ESV).

Barnabas exhibited recognizable Godly character as he lived out his faith through selling his field and giving it to the apostles for the church.

Barnabas was a true encouragement to the church and rightfully earned the nickname, or title, “Son of Encouragement”.

Like Barnabas, may we sacrificially and generously serve Jesus and his church, as his living body, as we live out our faith in the world as encouragers as we express our unity in Jesus, by our sacrificial service, by our powerful and personal expressions of our faith, and by our common provision for one another.

**A Prayer for Those Who Serve Others:** “O Lord our heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served, but to serve: We ask you to bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others, especially for those who are encouragers, those who, like Barnabas, are faithful and fruitful servants of the Lord, endue them with wisdom, patience, and courage, that they may strengthen the weak and raise up those who fall, and, being inspired by your love, may worthily minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the sake of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.” (#45, Book of Common Prayer, 2019).



## Day 4

### How to Pray

How do you know when to pray? How do you know how to pray?

After Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, Jesus assumed that they would pray, and then taught them how to go about praying—giving them a model prayer.

Jesus did not say, "if you pray." Jesus said, "when you pray." Prayer is assumed from a disciple of Jesus.

In Luke's gospel account of the disciple's prayer, Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, saying, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'" (Luke 11:3-4, ESV).

This model prayer Jesus taught his disciples teaches us many aspects of prayer and the heart of God for his followers as they pray.

1. Jesus wants his disciples to pray.
2. Prayer is to be directed intimately to our Heavenly Daddy, our "Abba," our Father.
3. Our prayer acknowledges and glorifies the holy name of our Holy God.
4. When we pray, we are ushering in God's kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.
5. We pray acknowledging our daily dependence upon God, requesting our daily provision.
6. We are to pray in repentance of all our wrongdoing and neglect, as we ask for the forgiveness of our sin.
7. Our prayers are to lead us to forgive others as God has forgiven us.
8. We are to pray to be led away from all that leads us away from God as we ask to be delivered from temptation.

May we learn and put into practice Jesus' model prayer for his disciples in our own lives as we learn to pray, and practice praying, as Jesus has taught us in his word.

**A Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 12):** "Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 5

### You Are More Than What You Own

Does your life equate to the things you own? Is your life more abundant than the abundance of your possessions?

Our lives are more than what we own. Our possessions are not the sum of who we are, or an accurate representation of our true net worth. We are of more value than our physical assets.

In Luke's Gospel account, Jesus spoke a warning to his disciples and those in the crowd about the dangers of covetousness; he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (Luke 12:15, ESV).

We should be careful about our possessions and our desire to possess things that are not ours. Our possessions can quickly come to possess us. We can become green with envy.

Covetousness, wanting things that are not ours, is violation of the last of God's Ten Commandments, where God warns us, saying, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." (Exodus 20:17, ESV).

Our material assets can manage us if we do not manage them. Our possessions can possess us. What we own can come to own us if we are not careful to manage our desires and the objects of our affection.

The truth is, our life is more than the abundance of our possessions. This is why we must guard against wanting more than we have. If our true life is in Christ, then seeking life in the material things of this world will only take our attention and affection away from God and our true life, purpose, and contentment in him.

May we come to know that we are more than what we own and trust God for our daily provision and our true life of eternal value.

**A Prayer for Stewardship of Creation:** "O merciful Creator, your loving hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence, and give us grace to honor you with all that you have entrusted to us; that we, remembering the account we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 6 Give Me More

How much is enough? What would you receive that would make you content enough to not ask for anything more?

When asked by a reporter, “How much money is enough?” Famed multi-millionaire John D. Rockefeller replied, “Just a little bit more.”

It is easy to look at what we do not have instead of looking at what we have. It is in our sinful human nature to always want more.

While Jesus was teaching his disciples and the multitudes, “Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?’” (Luke 12:13-14, ESV).

Jesus was more than a little irritated at this person, calling him “Man” instead of “Friend”, or instead of calling him by his name.

This man cared more about receiving an additional inheritance than he did about his relationship with his own brother. This man’s brother was also guilty of valuing his share of the inheritance rather than valuing his familial relationship with his brother, as the word “you” Jesus uses here is plural in the original Greek, meaning “Who made me judge or arbitrator over you two?” or “both of you?”

Jesus emphasized the value of relationships over monetary gain in his response to this man. Jesus tells a story, teaches, and warns this man, his disciples, and the crowd, against covetousness.

May we be content with what we have as we focus on our blessings and trust God with meeting our needs and providing for us.

**A Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity (Proper 13):** “Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your grace that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 7

### Wealth Upon Wealth

Do you believe you already have an abundance? What would you do if you had more wealth added to the wealth you have?

Some of us want more wealth to pay off debts, to get ahead, and to be financially secure. Many of us want more wealth for the sake of giving more generously to others.

It is fascinating to see the news coverage of people being interviewed who are purchasing lottery tickets when the lottery reaches record highs. People dream out loud about what they will buy, and what they will give, with their newfound wealth, should they win.

A similar scene unfolds when Jesus told the crowd a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’” (Luke 12:16-17, ESV).

Jesus points out that this was already a rich man who was now becoming richer as his land produced an abundance of wealth. Instead of looking outward and to how his wealth could benefit those in need, this man set out to store his wealth for himself—wealth upon wealth.

The rich man desired storehouses of wealth for personal security. He said, “I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” (Luke 12:18-19, ESV).

This man cared for himself and had only himself to consult and to care for. For the first century hearers of this parable, this man would be seen as most pitiable. This was a sad and lonely state of isolation and self-centeredness. The rich man chose himself over others. He chose security, comfort, and relaxation, feasting and drinking, and isolated celebration over community and the greater good.

The parable ends with an indictment of the rich man as God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” Jesus then warned, “So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:20-21, ESV).

May we learn from this parable that we are greater than our possessions, and may we seek to honor God and serve him as we help others with the abundance of our wealth—as we are rich toward God.

**A Prayer for the Harvest of Lands and Waters:** “O gracious Father, you open your hand and fill all living things with plenteousness: Bless the lands and waters, and multiply the harvests of the world; send forth your breath, and renew the face of the earth; show your loving-kindness, that our land may yield its increase; and save us from selfish use of what you provide, that the poor and needy may give thanks to your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (#23., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 8

### Answered Prayer

Have you heard the saying, “A friend of a friend is a friend?”

Would you ever dishonor a friend in need by not helping him?

Would a friend of yours dishonor you in your time of need by not helping you?

Do you have a friend that would dishonor themselves by not coming through for you or for someone else in need?

A true friend who has access to what you need will provide it for you for your honor, their honor, and for the honor of the relationship.

This is the heartbeat of Jesus’ illustrative story in his teaching of his disciples how to pray in Luke’s gospel account.

Jesus said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.” (Luke 11:5-8, ESV).

In the honor and shame culture of Jesus’ day, the first century, generous hospitality and reciprocity were highly valued. The community’s needs outweighed the need of the individual and showing care, provision, and hospitality to the traveler passing through was of utmost importance and was a matter of the village’s honor and reputation.

Travelers would often travel at night due to the extreme heat during the day. It was not uncommon for them to look for a place to stay and for provisions late into the night while passing through familiar villages where they had family and friends.

In this account that Jesus tells, a friend comes to stay at a friend’s home unexpectedly. There are not enough resources, so the friend must ask for bread from another friend—a neighbor in the village whom he knows has bread.

Jesus asks if this friend will not arise and give his neighbor and friend what he needs. The implication is “of course the friend will arise at midnight and give his friend what he needs and then some.” The honor of the man who has bread is at stake. The honor of the friend is at stake. And the honor of the village is at stake.

God is our nearby neighbor and friend who has what we need and we can go to him anytime, night or day, and receive from him. His own honor, character, and reputation is on the line.

Prayer is going to God with our need and trusting that he has the resources we need, and that he will provide them for us—for his own name's sake. God's honor is on the line—he will answer our prayer.

May we trust that we can go to God in prayer, because God has what we need and he will give us what we need and more, and all for the honor and glory due his name.

**A Prayer for the Answering of Prayer:** “Almighty God, you have promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in the Name of your Son: Mercifully incline your ear to us as we make our prayers and supplications to you; and grant that what we ask faithfully, according to your will, we may obtain effectually, for the relief of our necessities and the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (#100., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).



**Day 9****The Work You Do**

What is the purpose of the work you do? Is there meaning in the mundane and the profound tasks that you accomplish each day?

Our lives have purpose and meaning. Everything that we do should bring honor and glory to God. From the littlest of tasks to the most profound of our undertakings, we are working to the purposes, to the plan, and to the glory of God.

The Apostle Paul wrote the church in Corinth encouraging them to glorify God in all they do, including their work. Paul wrote, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31, ESV).

May we glorify God in all we do as we do all things to the glory of God.

**A Prayer for Those Who Serve Others:** "O Lord our heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served, but to serve: We ask you to bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; endue them with wisdom, patience, and courage, that they may strengthen the weak and raise up those who fall, and, being inspired by your love, may worthily minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the sake of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen." (#45., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 10

### Kingdom Perspective

What would you give if you believed you had everything? What investments have you made in your eternal future?

As followers of Jesus, as his beloved children, we have access to the everything that God has in store for us. We have access to everything of the kingdom of God.

In Luke's gospel account, Jesus said to his disciples, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32, ESV).

Because God desires to give us his kingdom at his good pleasure, we should not be afraid for how we live our lives or how we pour ourselves out for others in generous living.

Jesus encouraged his disciples to have an eternal kingdom perspective, saying, "Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Luke 12:32, ESV).

Our lives are to be blessings that are poured out for others—as we are receiving an eternal blessing of a heavenly treasure that will not fail us. We have access to God's kingdom, a treasury that never grows old or fails us.

May we have a kingdom perspective as we live fearless and generous lives for God.

**A Collect for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 14):** "Almighty God, give us the increase of faith, hope, and love; and, that we may obtain what you have promised, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 11

### Ultimate Reward

What is your ultimate reward in life? What are you seeking or desiring?

In the Old Testament book of Genesis, Abraham was looking for a son, a descendent to carry forward his name so that he would be blessed in life.

Genesis tells us “The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.’” (Genesis 15:1, NIV).

In seeking out God’s blessings and promises, we do not need to be afraid. God himself is our protector and our very great reward.

God is our provider. God is the one who gives us every blessing and reward in life. God is our ultimate reward.

May we have great courage and never be afraid because God is with us, God will protect us, and God will keep his promises to us—as God himself is our ultimate reward.

**A Collect for Guidance:** “Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 12

### The King's Return

Are you ready for another kingdom? Are you ready for your master's return? Do you believe that Jesus will return with judgement for the unfaithful and blessing for the faithful?

How we believe the narrative of this life ends affects how we live our lives in the present.

Jesus promised his disciples and the multitudes that he would return, telling them to "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks." (Luke 12:35-36, ESV).

We are to stay awake. We are to keep the lights on. We are to be dressed for action. Because when the master returns, he will knock and expect us to receive him.

John tells us of Jesus' words in Revelation when he says to the church in Laodicea, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20, ESV).

Our master Jesus desires to come in, not to be served by his servants, but to serve them and to break bread with them. This was unheard of in the first century. Jesus is reordering the social customs to serve his faithful servants.

This is why Jesus says, "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them." (Luke 12:35-36, ESV).

This is the exact posture Jesus took with his disciples in John chapter thirteen when he arose from the Passover table and put on the towel and washed his disciple's feet.

The question is, "Are you ready for your master's return? Are you ready to be blessed and served and given another kingdom by your soon and coming king?"

"If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! ...You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Luke 12:38 and 40, ESV).

May we be ready for the return of our king and his soon and coming kingdom.

**A Prayer for the Coming of God's Kingdom:** "Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen." (#115., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

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## Day 13 “Man Up”

What does it look like to be strong, watchful, and firm in your faith?

The expression “man up” is often used as a call to be strong and courageous and to take responsibility for one’s actions.

As followers of Jesus, whether male or female, we are to be strong and courageous and to take responsibility for our actions.

The Apostle Paul wrote the church in Corinth, encouraging them to “Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13, ESV).

Like the early Corinthian church, we are to be watchful of our faith, to stand firm in our faith, and to be strong in our faith.

May we be watchful, firm, and strong in our faith as we live out what we believe daily throughout our lives.

**A Prayer of Self—Dedication, by William Temple:** “Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.” (#73., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 14**  
**Nearer to God**

Where is God when your life is excruciatingly challenging, and you feel all alone?

God is nearer to you than you realize.

We are in God's presence, because God is near. God is not far from his children. There is no place we can go that God is not aware of where we are and is present to us.

God spoke of his nearness to his people through the Prophet Jeremiah, saying, "Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:23-24, ESV).

We cannot flee or avoid God's presence. God is nearer to us than we are aware. The presence of God inhabits and fills all his creation and God is present with us.

May we take comfort and security in the presence of God who is nearer than we know.

**A Prayer in Times of Suffering and Weakness:** "Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: I hold up all my weakness to your strength, my failure to your faithfulness, my sinfulness to your perfection, my loneliness to your compassion, my little pains to your great agony on the Cross. I pray that you will cleanse me, strengthen me, guide me, so that in all ways my life may be lived as you would have it lived, without cowardice and for you alone. Show me how to live in true humility, true contrition, and true love. Amen." (#95., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 15

### Judgement Fire

When has the application of your faith in Jesus brought about conflict or division in your life as you went about living for him?

When we practice our faith and apply God's word to our lives and live for him, there can be division and conflict. There can be fractured relationships between people who believe and people who do not believe in Jesus.

Jesus said that he came to bring the refining fire of his judgement, to divide what is good from what is evil, and to do away with every impurity that is contrary to God's kingdom.

In Luke's gospel account Jesus said, "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." (Luke 12:49-51, ESV).

Jesus said that he came to bring this division. And while this division can be disruptive and anything but peaceful, the outcome is unity and peace with God and an eternity with no evil. This is why Jesus desired that this refiner's fire of judgement was already kindled.

Jesus declared, "For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." (Luke 12:52-53, ESV).

The practice of our faith—the obedient following of Jesus and his word—can cause all sorts of interpersonal conflicts and rifts between family, friends, and co-workers, acquaintances, and even strangers. When our values are different than other people's values there will be conflict and division. We can expect it. Jesus will purify our lives and his kingdom so that we will be at peace and unified in him.

May we expect the purifying judgement fires of God and the peace and the unity that we will experience by following Jesus.

**A Prayer for the Human Family:** "O God, you made us in your own image, and you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#42., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).



## Day 16

### You Are Here

Where are you? Can you locate your current position on a map? Do you know where you are physically? Maybe your phone can tell you where you are, what weather you can expect, and how to get to another destination?

We know where we are physically and we can discern our geographical context, the climate, and the weather, but do we know where we are spiritually? Can we discern the times in which we live, where God is moving, and where God wants us to go and what God wants us to do?

In Luke's gospel account, Jesus spoke about interpreting the times, saying to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.' And so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" (Luke 12:54-56, ESV).

The Israelites understood where they were in the world and what the implications of their geography was and how the land and the weather impacted their lives.

The Mediterranean Sea in the west brought in rain clouds and the desperately needed rainfall upon the land and crops. This precipitation refilled cisterns and provided the essential water needed. This is why the Israelites were waiting and watchful for these particular clouds from this particular direction.

In contrast, the south and southeastern winds brought in scorching heat from the dry and arid desert wastelands. Winds from these directions could mean dehydration, heat related illnesses, drought, scorched crops, and even famine.

Jesus accused the Israelites of knowing how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but not knowing how to interpret their present time. In short, the people knew where they were and the implications of their geography, but they did not understand where they were spiritually and the outcome of God's presence and coming judgement.

Unlike the crowd Jesus was addressing, may we understand where we are spiritually and the implications of God's presence and judgement in the world.

**A Collect for the Coming Kingdom of God:** "Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen." (#115., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 17**  
**A Well-Lit Path**

Is your pathway illuminated? Can you see your way clearly?

Our journey through this life can be complicated, cluttered, and lonely. It can be difficult to navigate our way in this dark world.

The Apostle John wrote in his first letter “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7, ESV).

We can choose to walk alone in the darkness, or we can choose to walk in the light of God’s presence and love and forgiveness.

If we walk in the light of God and his word and his will for our lives, we will travel a well-lit path. And when we walk in the light of God, we never walk alone—we walk in fellowship with one another. When we walk in the light of God, we travel along the way of life forgiven and free from all our sin.

May we walk in the light of God, along his well-lit path for us, as we journey through this life in fellowship with one another.

**A Prayer for Guidance:** “O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices; that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path we may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (#77., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 18 Through the Narrow Door

How challenging is it to get your foot into the door of God's kingdom?

The door to our salvation is a narrow door according to Jesus. While many will seek to enter God's kingdom, many will not be able.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus went through towns and villages, teaching as he traveled toward Jerusalem. As he went someone said to him, "'Lord, will those who are saved be few?' And he said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.'" (Luke 13:22-24, ESV).

Jesus sought to teach throughout all the towns and villages so that all might know him and the good news of his salvation.

When asked if those who would be saved would be few, Jesus taught that we should make a great effort to enter his kingdom through the narrow door.

Jesus said that many people would seek to enter the narrow door of salvation and would not be able to.

May we strive with all our might to enter the narrow door of salvation and enter God's good kingdom.

**A Prayer for a Spirit of Evangelism:** "Almighty God our Savior, you desire that none should perish, and you have taught us through your Son that there is great joy in heaven over every sinner who repents: Grant that our hearts may ache for a lost and broken world. May your Holy Spirit work through our words, deeds, and prayers, that the lost may be found and the dead made alive, and that all your redeemed may rejoice around your throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#20., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 19**  
**Abounding Hope**

Where do you find your hope? Where do you find your joy? Where do you find your peace?

We all have some level of hope in our lives. We look hopefully for hope. We hope for joy. We hope for peace. We hope for God.

The Apostle Paul wrote a blessing to the church in Rome, saying, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” (Romans 15:13, ESV).

Our God is the God of hope. We can have God’s hope, God’s joy, and God’s peace in believing and in trusting God. We can have the hope we are looking for, and have it abound, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May we have an abounding hope in the God of hope as we believe in him and trust in him throughout our lives.

**A Collect for Endurance:** “Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 20**  
**Humility**

Is it easier to lift yourself above others, to look down on them, and to make demands of them, or is it easier to take the position of lowly submission and service to others?

What goes up must come down. If we exalt ourselves, it is easy to fall and to be humbled. If we keep ourselves in a position of lowly service, there is little distance to fall, and it is easier to be lifted up.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus said this about humility, "For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." (Luke 14:11).

God desires for his followers to be humble. Pride comes before the fall, but humility leads to God's blessing and exaltation.

May we walk in humility and humble ourselves before God so that God may lift us up.

**A Prayer for Trustfulness in Times of Worry and Anxiety:** "Most loving Father, you will us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on the One who cares for us. Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested unto us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#80., Book of Common Prayer).

**Day 21****Who Loves First**

Whose idea is love? Who thought of love first? Who takes the initiative to love?

God is love. Love is God's idea. God loved first and always initiates love.

The Apostle John wrote about love in his first letter, saying, "We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19, ESV).

We know love because God loves first.

May we experience the love of God as we receive his love for us, and as we love God and as we love others as God loves us.

**A Prayer for Those We Love:** "Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#52., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 22

### A Cheered Soul

What are the concerns and the cares that consume you? How is your soul doing?

The concerns and the cares of this world can be overwhelming and burdensome. Our souls can be consumed with the cares of this life. We can be overwhelmed by the anxieties of this world. Our souls can grow weary.

The Psalmist writes, “When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.” (Psalm 94:19, ESV).

When our souls grow tired in the face of the difficulties of this life, God’s presence and comfort will cheer us as we persevere.

May we seek God and his consolation in this troubled life, and when our soul grows weary, may we experience a cheered soul in God’s comforting presence.

**A Prayer in Times of Social Conflict or Distress:** “Increase, O God, the spirit of neighborliness among us, that in peril we may uphold one another, in suffering tend to one another, and in homelessness, loneliness, or exile befriend one another. Grant us brave and enduring hearts that we may strengthen one another, until the disciplines and testing of these days are ended, and you again give peace in our time; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (#44., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).



**Day 23****A Good Word**

What is the good word? When was the last time you shared a good word with someone who needed one? When was the last time you received a good word from someone?

In this anxious life, we can become heavy hearted and weighed down. We need the encouragement and hope of good news.

The wisdom of the Proverbs tells us, "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." (Proverbs 12:25, ESV).

It does not cost us much to share a good word, but the impact can be great encouragement and gladness that will lift the burden of an anxious and heavy heart.

May we experience the gladness of a good word shared and the relief of anxiety and a heavy heart as we receive a good word, and may we provide others the relief they need from burdensome anxiety as we share the good news of hope.

**A Prayer for Trustfulness in Times of Worry and Anxiety:** "Most loving Father, you will us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on the One who cares for us. Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested unto us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#80., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 24

### Choosing Humility

Can you detect when there is pride in your life? Do you know when you are in a state of humility? Can you be intentionally humble?

It can be difficult to discern on our own if we are being prideful. We need the help and the wisdom of God and his word, and fellow followers of Jesus, to help lead our way.

Humility is life giving. Pride is dangerous.

The wisdom of the Proverbs tells us, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18, NIV).

While we may not be aware if we are being humble, because of the very nature of humility, we must be aware of pride in our lives that will bring about destruction and fall.

In his book *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*, Timothy Keller writes, "The essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less."

The essence of pride is self-absorption and preoccupation with self. Pride is being puffed up and exalts the self above others, and to a higher degree than is justified.

Humility is not self-aggrandizement and not self-loathing, but self-forgetfulness.

When we choose humility, we protect ourselves from the dangers of pride in our life, which will lead to our downfall.

May we be mindful of our destructive prideful nature and choose life giving humility.

**A Prayer in Times of Social Conflict or Unrest:** "Increase, O God, the spirit of neighborliness among us, that in peril we may uphold one another, in suffering tend to one another, and in homelessness, loneliness, or exile befriend one another. Grant us brave and enduring hearts that we may strengthen one another, until the disciplines and testing of these days are ended, and you again give peace in our time; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#44., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 25****The Cost of Discipleship**

What does it cost to follow Jesus with our lives? Have you considered the cost-benefit analysis of being a student of Jesus?

Being a disciple of Jesus, a Jesus follower, or student of Jesus, is a weighty matter which comes at a cost and requires finishing well.

In Luke's gospel account, Jesus said, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27, ESV).

If we are not willing to carry our cross, to make the sacrifice of picking up and carrying our burdens and following Jesus, we cannot be his disciples. It costs us to be his students.

Following Jesus is difficult and comes at a cost that we must be willing to consider and to pay.

Jesus said this about considering the cost of following him and finishing well, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'" (Luke 14:28-30, ESV).

May we pick up our burdens and follow Jesus with our lives, having considered the cost, and having planned to finish well as his disciples.

**A Collect for Mission III:** "O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen" (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 26****Confident and Ready Disciples**

Are you sure about following Jesus as his disciple, or are you fearful and reluctant? Do you have confidence that being a disciple of Jesus is worth it? Are you ready and prepared to follow, having considered the benefits?

We can and should be confident and ready to be disciples of Jesus. When we consider the cost-benefit of being a disciple of Jesus, the benefits far outweigh the cost.

Jesus spoke of having confidence in following him in this way, saying, "What king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace." (Luke 14:31-32, ESV).

We can deliberate and discern wisely the cost and the benefit of being Jesus' disciples and following him. We must consider the cost. Jesus said, "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33, ESV).

Jesus is upfront about what it will take for us to be his disciples. We can wisely discern the cost and be confident and ready to follow him with our lives as his disciples.

May we renounce all we have in exchange for what Jesus has for us, having considered the cost, and may we follow Jesus with our lives as his confident and ready disciples.

**A Collect for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 18):** "O Lord God, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 27****Benefits and Responsibility**

What are your responsibilities as a disciple of Jesus? Have you considered your role in being a follower of Jesus? Have you considered the benefits of discipleship?

We often think of the benefits of being a disciple of Jesus, but more often than not, we neglect thinking about the responsibilities we have as disciples of Jesus.

Jesus spoke of the responsibility of his disciples in Matthew's gospel account when he said, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12, ESV).

We are called to be disciples of Jesus, who make disciples of Jesus.

One of the best ways we can love others and help them in their relationship with Jesus is to do for them, and to give to them, what we wished someone would do for us and would give to us.

Loving God comes first, and then loving others as we love ourselves. This is the responsibility of discipleship which leads to abundant blessing.

May we take on the responsibility of loving discipleship which leads to abundant blessings in our lives and in the lives of others as we follow Jesus.

**A Collect for the Presence of Christ:** "Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 28****Discipleship is Imitation**

Have you heard the saying, “Do as I say, not as I do.” How about this saying, “Follow me as I follow Jesus?”

In following Jesus, we can do both what he says and what he does. We can also do what others are doing who are following Jesus.

Discipleship is in its essence emulation or imitation. We are to be more like Jesus.

The Apostle Paul wrote the church in Corinth, saying, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1, ESV).

Paul also wrote the church in Philippi, saying, “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:9, ESV).

In Luke’s gospel account, Jesus gave this definition of a disciple, saying, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.” (Luke 6:40, ESV).

May we see that discipleship is emulation and become more like our teacher, Jesus, every day as we do what he says and do what he does.

**A Collect for Endurance:** “Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## Day 29

### God's Spirit of Courage

When are you most afraid? When are you at your weakest? When do you feel like you have lost control?

It can be easy to get overwhelmed or to feel overwhelmed by this fallen and broken world. This life can confront us with uncertainties and fears, times of weakness and the need for strength, and moments where we need help to get a grip and to control ourselves and our circumstances.

The Apostle Paul wrote his beloved disciple Timothy encouraging him in times of fear, weakness, and loss of self-control, saying, "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." (2 Timothy 1:7, ESV).

When we are most afraid, at our weakest, and out of control, God's presence and spirit will give us the courage, the strength, and the self-control that we need to persevere.

May we receive and embrace God's spirit of courage, power, love, and self-control as we journey through this life.

"Father, we praise and thank You for giving us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Show us and our neighbors in our fears our desperate need to put our complete confidence and trust in You." (2 Timothy 1:7).

**A Collect for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 18):** "O Lord God, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).



**Day 30****Discipleship is Loving God More**

What do you love the most? Can you tell what you love by looking at your calendar app, your bank statement, or by tracking your screen time on your iPhone?

What does it mean when Jesus said we are to hate our family and our own life if we are to follow him as his disciples?

In Luke's gospel account, Jesus said to the crowds who were following him, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:25-27, ESV).

Discipleship is loving Jesus more than everything and everyone else, including ourselves. Discipleship is loving God more.

Jesus modeled this radical love of God, this redefining of priorities, and this redefinition of family, when his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. The people told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." But Jesus answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." (Luke 8:19-21, ESV).

Discipleship is loving God more. Discipleship reprioritizes what is most important in our lives and redefines how we see everyone and how we see everything, even our own family and even our own lives.

Those who hear the word of God and do it are true disciples of Jesus. These are the people who love God first and who love God more.

May we be true disciples of Jesus and love God more as we hear the word of God and do it in our lives.

**A Collect for Strength to Await Christ's Return:** "O God our King, by the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, you conquered sin, put death to flight, and gave us the hope of everlasting life: Redeem all our days by this victory; forgive our sins, banish our fears, make us bold to praise you and to do your will; and steel us to wait for the consummation of your kingdom on the last great Day; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

**Day 31****Work, Work, and Rest**

How important is your work to you? How important is getting the right amount of rest? Are you balancing your work and your rest?

Work is good. Work is a blessing. It is important to enjoy your work, to work hard, and to work with excellence.

Rest is good. Rest is a blessing. It is important to enjoy your rest, and to be refreshed and restored by resting well and sufficiently.

In Matthew's gospel account, Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29, ESV).

Jesus gives us the rest we need from our labors. When we come to Jesus, we receive the balance we need between our hard and meaningful work and our restorative rest.

May we enjoy purposeful labor and restorative rest as we come to Jesus.

**A Prayer for Commerce and Industry:** "O Lord Jesus Christ, in your earthly life you shared our toil and hallowed our labor: Guide those who maintain the commerce and industries of this land, and give to all who labor pride in their work, a just reward, and joy both in supplying need and in serving you; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, world without end. Amen." (#46., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

## A Thanksgiving Prayer

“Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side. We thank you for setting us at tasks that demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments that satisfy and delight us. We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he conquered death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.”

(#117., Book of Common Prayer, 2019)

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## About Robbie



Pastor Robbie is from Columbia, SC and moved to Northern Virginia with his wife, Irene, in 2004, to continue his calling of pastoral ministry. He and his family live in Ashburn, Virginia, where Robbie is the Rector (Pastor) at an Anglican Church in Fairfax, Virginia. He and his family have also lived in Alexandria, Virginia, where Robbie was the Director of Youth Ministry and Pastoral Associate for four years, and in Port-au-Prince, Haiti for five years, where Robbie was the High School Bible Teacher at a Christian school. Robbie has his Master of Arts in Theology from Columbia International University, a Diploma in Christian Ministry from Trinity School for Ministry, and a B.S. in Bible, with an emphasis on youth ministry, also from CIU. Robbie and Irene have four children, Grace, Hannah, Simeon, and Jacob. Robbie enjoys spending time with his family, mountain biking, hiking, concert going, studying the Bible and Biblical context, writing poetry, and writing about theology, leadership, and discipleship.

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