

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JULY 25 - 29, 2022



LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Pentecost Series
Jun 12 - Aug 14

MONDAY

Read **Acts 1:1-11, Psalm 139**

What are your goals in life, your hopes for the next 5-10 years? What are God's hopes for you? Just as in the Garden, the adversary would have us focus on areas unrelated to God's purposes, resulting in frustration and defeat.

In Acts 1, the disciples ask Jesus (paraphrased): "Now that You are alive again, will You now restore the Kingdom to Israel, throw off the Roman rule, and make Israel great again?" Their perspective was political and power-based. Jesus did not get into this discussion because their perspective on life was misguided. Instead, He said, "Go back to Jerusalem, wait, pray and when the Holy Spirit comes on you, He will guide you." The Spirit did arrive, but He did not clarify everything; He just led them into the next step of what God was doing.

We return this week to our series on the Holy Spirit. An earlier devo series explored how the Spirit helps us grow as God's sons and daughters. The Holy Spirit works to restore us to the people God created us to be, people in fellowship with God, people no longer stained by sin, no longer stained by needing to have everything our way. Sin is less a specific action and more spawned by an attitude that says, "I know best; I know better than God."

There are multiple ways the Spirit leads, but one is through the gift of prayer. This week we focus upon prayer. The third Member of the Trinity works with Father God and Jesus to bring about God's

perfect will in and through our lives. We often struggle with what to pray. We often know how far short we fall and how messed up we are, but the Spirit knows all things and enables our continued life-giving fellowship with God and our continued renewal into who He created us to be.

My prayers are sometimes a grocery store list of needs. But Psalm 139 says that God already knows my needs. Prayer is less of a list and more of a means of speaking with God. Build a relationship with God and walk with Him as He does His kingdom work in you and through you. Is this your goal?

ENRICHMENT

Today set a timer for 15 minutes and just sit with God. Talk to Him about whatever comes to mind. Enjoy His presence. Have a piece of paper handy; if something needs to be added to the to-do list, write it down, let it go, and get back to enjoying God.

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Lord, please fill us with deep love for children who are alone, without the watchful care of parents. Protect them, Lord, from human traffickers, and may each of us, including the team at ZOE International, serve as alert guardians for them!

TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 6:5-15, 25-34**

Psalm 139 declares that God already knows all our thoughts and circumstances even before they happen. Jesus teaches similarly in today's Matthew texts. If God already knows our needs, why pray? As considered yesterday, prayer not only strengthens our relationship with God, but also changes us. A few years ago, we did a series on the Lord's Prayer. It covers the totality of our lives, what God is doing in our lives and in the world.

Douglas Rumford's book, *SoulShaping*, shows how spiritual disciplines revitalize our lives in practical ways. The Holy Spirit—through prayer and the other disciplines—opens us to God's perspective, power, purpose, and peace for our lives as we encounter the world around us. Spiritual disciplines place us in God's presence, enabling the Spirit to flow in and through us.

Rumford speaks to three overarching reasons to pray. Prayer *calms us*; it centers us. Paul considered this in his famous passage on prayer in Philippians 4:4-8. Prayer also *clarifies life* for us—James 1:4 addresses this. Send up a prayer while slowly reading these verses, asking God to stop you at those phrases He wants you to dwell upon. Finally, Rumford says that prayer *connects us* to God.

Some ways to do this include praying the “Lord’s Prayer” phrase-by-phrase or going through the day praying without ceasing over every detail that arises. God is interested, just as we are, in the details of the lives of those we love. So, pray about the friction between two family members. Send up a prayer as you pass that accident on the freeway or the homeless camp. Pray about tonight’s dinner, and the phone calls and text messages, and the Facebook posts you read.

If you have not already read Darrell Johnson’s *Fifty-Seven Words That Change the World*, I highly recommend it. Like *SoulShaping*, don’t read it in one sitting, but one chapter at a time.

ENRICHMENT

Spend time with God, slowly praying the Lord’s Prayer, one phrase at a time. Stop after each phrase, asking the Spirit to guide your thoughts and prayers. Pray, for example: “Our Father ... I am not alone; I am part of a family! Lord, what does it mean to be in true community with other believers? Other Christians are being persecuted—Lord, please help them! Help me show them that I stand with them ... ‘Who art in Heaven’ ... It is so good to know that You are in control.”

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

We ask, Lord, that You would place vulnerable children in loving families. Please work through Your body, the church, to open their hearts and homes to bring healing and restoration to precious children who’ve experienced trauma at an early age.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Romans 8:22-27**

“In the same way that our ‘hope’ gives us fortitude, the Holy Spirit strengthens ... and sustains us through times of trial. Our weakness (‘groaning’) may be physical, emotional, or spiritual. While we were yet sinners, Christ interceded for our sins; as believers, the Spirit intercedes for our weakness. At times, our weakness is so intense that *‘we do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.’* (Romans 8:26) ... When we don’t know what to pray for or how to pray ... the Spirit voices our requests for us. He intercedes by appealing to the only One who can help us, God Himself. We may not know the right words to say, but the Holy Spirit does” (B.B. Barton, et al.)

“Moreover, the Holy Spirit’s intercession is ... *‘with groans that words cannot express’* or *‘sighs too deep for words.’* ... These wordless groans must surely be related to the groans both of God’s creation and of God’s children, namely *‘agonized longings’* for final redemption and the consummation of all things. Why do we not know what to pray for? Perhaps because we are unsure whether to pray for deliverance from our sufferings or for strength to endure them. ... So, the Spirit intercedes for us ... The Holy Spirit identifies with our groans, with the pain of the world and the church, [sharing] in the longing for the final freedom of both. We and He groan together. ... [Such] inarticulate groans, although wordless, are not meaningless.

“So three persons are involved in our praying. First, we ourselves in our weakness do not know what to pray for. Secondly, the indwelling Spirit helps us by interceding for us and through us, with speechless groans but according to God’s will. Thirdly, God the Father, who both searches our hearts and knows the Spirit’s mind, hears and answers accordingly. Of these ... it is the Spirit who is emphasized. ... Paul makes three statements about Him. ... First, ‘*the Spirit helps us*’ ... secondly, ‘*the Spirit intercedes for us*’ ... and thirdly, the Spirit intercedes ... ‘*according to God’s will.*’” (John R.W. Stott)

ENRICHMENT

Go to Amazon and find this daily devotional: *100 Names of God* by Christopher D. Hudson. Click “Look Inside” to see the names of God in the Table of Contents. Using this list, prayerfully lift up some of the names, asking God how He wants to manifest Himself in your life today.

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Please work through ZOE staff, Lord, to prevent trafficking and to rescue trafficked children. Create paths of escape for victims. Please give them eyes to see these paths, empower them with the courage to run, and bring them to safety by Your mighty hand.

THURSDAY

Read **2 Corinthians 11:21–12:10**

In Romans 8:26 “Paul said that the Spirit ‘helps us in our weakness.’ That weakness is our lack of understanding regarding prayer. Prayer has always been one of the great mysteries of the spiritual life. We understand that God is listening, but we sense our inadequacy when it comes to knowing how to pray or exactly what we should pray for. ... God understands what the Spirit desires even though it is inexpressible in human terms (v. 27). God is the One who has complete access to the heart. ... God is a searcher of hearts and knows the desires of the Spirit as the Spirit intercedes for us ... in harmony with His will. ... The Spirit comes to the aid of believers baffled by the perplexity of prayer and takes their concerns to [the Father] with [incomprehensible] intensity. Our groans (v. 23) become His (v. 26) as He intercedes on our behalf.” (Robert H. Mounce)

When praying, I feel like my prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. I pray and then there is silence, or so it seems. Does God really answer prayer? Yes, but not always in the way I desire. Sometimes His answer is “yes,” sometimes “no,” and sometimes “wait.” Waiting is often the hardest because we don’t know how long, or what God is doing in and through us as we wait. The enslaved Israelites in Egypt cried out for God’s intervention. It came, but first Moses had to mature while he was in Midian; even then, after returning to Egypt, things got worse for the

slaves before they got better. The Israelites spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness as God worked Egypt out of them. God uses our wilderness experiences to fashion us into greater Christlikeness.

How do we hear God's answers when we pray? Nicki Gumbel, founder of Alpha, says there are 5 C's to hearing God's answers: Scripture commands (2 Timothy 3:16), a compelling spirit (when something or someone is on your heart), common sense (2 Timothy 2:7), the counsel of the saints, and circumstantial signs. Recently God used many of these as I sought to seek His will in a particular situation as I cried out for the Spirit's wisdom and discernment.

ENRICHMENT

This week we have been taking time each day to let the Holy Spirit guide our prayers. Go online and type in "1050 New Testament Commands of God" and pray through some of those commands: https://www.abc.net.au/reslib/201407/r1308729_17984331.pdf.

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Lord, we thank You for making available to us Your wisdom and discernment. Guide and direct us in this battle against the darkness of human trafficking. May we employ Your battle strategy to combat and overcome the enemy so that captives may be set free!

FRIDAY

Read [John 14:15-21, 23-31](#); [15:18-20](#); [16:1-5, 12-15](#)

Hope sustains and helps the believer through present suffering. *“In the same way”* the Spirit helps and sustains the believer *“in weakness,”* specifically through the ministry of prayer. The advocacy role of the Spirit was promised by Jesus—this is part of the fulfillment of those promises. Paul’s description of the Spirit’s role in prayer is one of the most intimate glimpses we have into the inner workings of the Godhead. When we are weak and trembling, confused about the purposes of God in our sufferings or our confusion, *“the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”* (Romans 8:26). The Father searches our heart, *“not to know what [our] conscious prayers are, but to find out what the prayer of the Holy Spirit is.”* (Oswald Chambers)

“Who has not bent the knee before the Father and been at a loss for words? How often does the mind of man fall short in discerning [God’s] purposes? Yet how often do we rise from a [dry] season ... to [having] our hearts refreshed, our hope renewed, and our faith rewarded ... Thank God for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes to bring the purposes of God to fruition.” (Boa and Kruidenier)

What glorious news: God does not leave us alone! Not only did He make the ultimate sacrifice, but He also sends the Holy Spirit to join in our suffering, in our daily challenges, and in our trials. The Spirit ministers to us even when we do not know our own needs, what to ask, or how to pray.

“The companionship of the Spirit in prayer is one of the themes of Romans 8. It is the Spirit who urges us to call ‘Abba, Father’ (v. 15). ... How should we pray?”

- Utilize all the forms prayer takes: adoration, confession, petition, thanksgiving, and meditation. ... Trust the Spirit to make perfect what is imperfect.
- Listen during prayer. ... Ask the Spirit to search our hearts and minds ... then be silent.
- Practice prayer as a habit.
- Combine prayer with other ... spiritual disciplines (see Philippians 4:4-8).
- Confess sins that the Spirit points out.”

(Barton, Veerman, and Wilson)

ENRICHMENT

Today take time to pray through God’s promises. Here is one source: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/gods-promises-verses-in-the-bible/>. Don’t just pray through the “feel good” promises but also the hard ones. Another helpful source entitled “Tools for Prayer” is: <https://trinityconnection.com/tools-for-prayer/>.

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Lord, please protect all ZOE workers (and those of other ministries, too) who battle on the frontlines to rescue victims of human trafficking. May You expose the deceptive wiles of those who seek to interfere with and thwart rescue efforts.

Sources

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Glenkirk Church | 1700 Palopinto Ave, Glendora, CA 91741 | 626.914.4833

GlenkirkChurch.org |  @GlenkirkChurch |  Facebook: GlenkirkChurch