

How to Use this Prayer Guide (Vol. 6)

This month we are focusing on praying for three different areas within our church:

- **Love God In Our Witness**
- **The Christian Testimony**
- **Walking In The Spirit**

In this transition time, it is vital that we seek the Lord in prayer with a humble heart and depend on His guidance and leadership. Our previous prayer guides were designed to build on one another, to prepare our hearts and minds to deliberately and continuously seek the will of God for our church.

Below is a list of our previous prayer guides:

- Vol. 1 - Our relationship with God and others and understanding God's will for our church.
- Vol. 2 - The character of God and putting our faith in His promises which results in our obedience to His Word.
- Vol. 3 - Learning how to pray to God and praying through His Word which gives us a right understanding of how to pray for our church.
- Vol. 4 - Understanding how to Love God and Love Others while gaining an understanding of what love is and how true unity looks in our church family.
- Vol. 5 - Praying for our Pastor Search Team, our Church Family, and our Future Lead Pastor

All previous prayer guides are located on our website:

richlandcreek.com/prayerguides

Defined by the **Word**, **Devoted** to **Prayer**
and **Dependent** on the **Holy Spirit**.

Day 1 - What is the Gospel?

Romans 5:8 But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Good news is hard to come by lately. COVID, unemployment, and a divided country dominate the headlines. While you may not find good news in the media, there is good news in God's Word. As a matter of fact, the word "gospel" means good news.

The gospel is the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ. The Bible depicts human beings, all human beings (Romans 3:23), as in revolt against God, and therefore under His judgment. The Bible calls this revolt sin. Sin is rejecting or ignoring God. All people sin in their words, deeds, and motivations (1 John 1:10). Sin separates mankind from God because it breaks fellowship with our creator God. Despite our efforts to restore fellowship with God on our own we cannot (Ephesians 2:8–9).

The Bible tells us the punishment for sin is death. Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death..." But although God stands against us in judgment because of our sin, God also offers us forgiveness and eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23). Christ bore our sin on the cross—in our place. What God requires, as payment for sin, God provides in His Son Jesus. Moreover, Jesus is raised from the dead on the third day and has conquered sin and death.

What must we do to be saved from sin, death and eternal separation from God? Jesus' offer of salvation is received by faith as we repent of our sins and turn to Jesus. 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When we repent and trust in Christ, relationship with God is reestablished. This free gift of salvation is available to all who will call upon the name of Jesus.

Questions to Consider:

Do you believe Christ is who the Bible says He is (Mark 16:16)? Have you trusted in Christ's life, death, and resurrection as the payment for your sin? Who do you know that doesn't know this good news?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, open my eyes and ears to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Give me an open and repentant heart to believe the gospel and receive Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Pray for God to free lost friends and family from the slavery of sin. Begin praying for opportunities to share with them what God has done in Christ.

Day 2 - What is Our Witness?

1 John 5:10–12 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself....And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The Christian witness testifies to the truth of the gospel. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:1, we were “dead in the trespasses and sins.” But now God has “made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:5).

Our witness centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

One example of a witness is found in John chapter 9. It is the story of a blind man healed by Jesus. To be sure, there is more here to the story than just physical healing. Physical blindness is representative of spiritual blindness. Thus, the blind man was not only physically blind, but spiritually blind as well. Moreover, the miracle here is not limited to Jesus restoring only the man’s physical sight but also his spiritual sight (understanding who Christ is). He initially calls Jesus “the man called Jesus,” then “a prophet,” later he refers to Jesus as being “of God,” and finally “Lord.” We’re literally watching the birth of this man’s faith and salvation.

In the midst of the narrative is this man’s simple witness: “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). Indeed, the blind man knows what many do not: Jesus is God (John 9:38). And what He does is to declare or profess what He knows to be true about the One who has healed him. This is what a witness is—sharing the truth of the gospel which we now can see but once could not. We, who have declared Jesus as Lord and Savior, bear witness to the One who has saved us from sin and death.

Questions to Consider:

Are you cultivating a relationship with anyone in order to be a witness to the gospel truth? When was the last time you shared your witness for Christ with someone?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, I pray for boldness to speak the truth in love with those in my life who don’t know you. Help me be purposeful in connecting with people to share the gospel. Let me see topics, themes and ideas in conversations that can be turned into gospel discussions.

Day 3 - The Goal of Our Witness

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Mark 16:15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."

Think on something profound that you have personally witnessed before. Maybe a car accident, a dream so vivid that it seemed real, or even the outcome of a tied, nail biter of a ballgame that went into overtime? When we experience these things, we tend to retell our account of the event in great, specific detail to others.

Webster's dictionary defines the word "witness" as: "to testify to, affirm to be true and one who has personal knowledge of something."

If we apply this definition in a biblical sense, as in yesterday's prayer prompt, the Christian witness testifies to the truth of the gospel. We have a personal knowledge of the gospel and believe it to be true!

Therefore, the goal of our witness is simply to *share the gospel*—not only with our words but also with our actions in how we live our lives each day. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, our eyes have been opened to testify to this work personally in our lives.

1 Peter 2:9 tells us that we are set apart, chosen by God as His very own, to reflect Him in our witness as we tell others. Stay here for a moment—meditate on these words. You were set apart and chosen by GOD to reflect Him to a lost and dying world. You. The power of this statement should drive us to great conviction in our Christian witness.

Our holy, almighty God is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise in our witness!

Questions to Consider:

Do you reflect Christ in your witness in both word and action? Do you have humble adoration and faithful obedience to the One who set you apart and chose you as His very own?

Prayer Prompt:

- Lord, help me to be faithful in my Christian witness to those around me so that the gospel will go forth.

Day 4 - Obstacles in Our Witness

Acts 1:8 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Why is it that Christians do not share the gospel of Christ? A straw poll reveals the number one reason Christians do not share their faith is FEAR. While there are other compelling reasons, most Christians state they are afraid to open their mouths to proclaim the good news of Christ. Fear springs from various forms: fear of 'what to say,' fear of rejection, fear they will 'mess-up' and fear of sending someone to hell. While these are concerns for people, they are NOT a free pass. All of these, along with any other reason for lack of evangelism, must be put to rest. And the solution is simple.

The solution is in the focus. You see, in all of the fear excuses, the focus is on either the hearer or the speaker. In order to overcome obstacles in our witness, we must focus on the gospel. Focus on the message, not the messenger—nor the recipient. The power for salvation is in the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; he was buried and he rose on the third day according to the Scriptures; and all who place their faith in Jesus will be saved.

How can one overcome any and all obstacles in their witness? **Learn** a simple gospel presentation (see tomorrow's journal entry), **practice** it (see Day 8 of this journal), and **share** it with someone who is living in constant fear due to Covid19, or illness, or loss. Share with someone in great need of a relationship with the One who brings life, healing, and hope in the midst of crisis. Focus on the gospel to overcome any obstacle of sharing your faith.

Questions to Consider:

Do you believe that the power of salvation is in the gospel? Do you know how to share a brief gospel presentation? Do you know a lost person who needs to hear this good news?

Prayer Prompts:

- God, I pray that I would not be ashamed of the gospel for it is Your power for salvation to all who believe.
- Please give me opportunities and boldness to share the good news of salvation.

Day 5 - How to Share the Gospel

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

How do you begin a gospel conversation? Here is a good lead question, "May I share with you where I find hope?" Then, imagine a road map of the gospel. The starting point and destination are God. The path includes knowledge that all have sinned and are separated from God. The only road to God is faith in Jesus' virgin birth, perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection.

Equipping Evangelism, a resource provided by our church, is a road map of truth.

- We believe the Bible is true.
- The Bible says there is one true living God who has created everything, including us.
- He created us in His image to have a relationship with Him forever.
- The Bible says that because of our thoughts, motivations, and deeds, which are against God, we have broken our relationship with Him.
- Because we are the ones who broke the relationship, we cannot fix it; we have no hope in a relationship with God by our deeds. We need someone to pay for our sin.
- Because God loves us so much, He made a way for us to have a relationship with Him.
- He sent His Son who was all God and all man, who was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died an atoning death, and three days later He rose again in a faithful resurrection; and offers us salvation as a free gift.
- The Bible says that if we place our trust in Jesus to pay for our sin, we can be reconciled to God forever.

After sharing the above ask, "*Has anything like that ever happened to you? What prevents you from receiving this free gift right now?*"

Other gospel resources to help you share your faith: Four Spiritual Laws; Romans Road, Apps: The Story, God Tools. Check out several resources and use the one with which you are most comfortable. One final reminder, share with *gentleness* and *respect*.

Question to Consider:

Are you prepared to make a defense for the reason for the hope that is within you?

Prayer Prompt:

- God, I pray words may be given to me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. Help me speak clearly so that the message is easily understood.

Day 6 - Pray about Sharing the Gospel

Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

We know that the number one reason Christians give for not sharing the gospel is FEAR and the accompanying anxiety. In our daily prayer time, we should focus on several topics concerning our witness and alleviating or minimizing this fear.

First, we should **pray for wisdom**. James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." Next, we should **pray for boldness** and clarity when sharing the gospel. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:19 when he's asking others for prayers for his witness "and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel."

Lastly, we should **pray for opportunities** to share the gospel. This can look a little different during a pandemic. We can certainly pray that the Holy Spirit will convict non-believers and give them a yearning to know God. Pray bold prayers! We can also take advantage of opportunities to reach out to friends and acquaintances who are not saved and offer encouragement and prayer. Drop a note in the mail with some Scripture on it. Share the Sunday morning worship service on social media. There are endless opportunities to share the gospel if we just look for them.

Most importantly, just get on your knees and **pray for the lost**. Bill Bright, the co-founder of Campus Crusade for Christ states,

"Prayer is really the place that people are won to Christ; sharing the Good News is just gathering in the fruit."

Leave the results to God.

Questions to Consider:

If Paul the great apostle asked for prayers for boldness in his witness, don't you think you should, too? Who can you lift up in prayer today as they share the gospel? Who can you ask to pray for you as you witness?

Prayer Prompts:

- Ask God to give you wisdom, boldness, and clarity when sharing the gospel.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to provide opportunities to share the gospel and also prepare the hearts of non-believers to receive this good news.

Day 7 - Prepare to Share the Gospel

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Think of all the important things in life you have had to prepare for. During my lifetime, I have prepared for graduation, my wedding, the birth of my children, their weddings, job interviews, my retirement, and the list goes on and on. However, I can think of nothing more critical in the lives of believers than being prepared to share the gospel.

In fact, 1 Peter 3:15 tells us to always be prepared to speak up for Jesus. How do we prepare to share the gospel?

1. We need to spend time in prayer. Confess to God your fears about sharing. Ask Him for wisdom in what to say. Thank Him for His redeeming work on the cross.
2. Meditate on Scriptures that offer the hope of salvation. Here are just a few: John 3:16; Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.
3. Write out what you would like to say and read it over and over. Include the gospel truths from Day 5 of this journal: *Equipping Evangelism: The Road Map of Truth*.
4. Practice, practice, practice. See tomorrow's journal entry for more on practicing your gospel presentation. Without a doubt, the more you practice saying what you've written, the more natural it will become and the more prepared you will be to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Question to Consider:

If you were to engage in a conversation right now with an unbeliever, would you be prepared to give an answer for the hope you have in Jesus?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, I can think of nothing in my life that I need to be more prepared for than to offer the hope of the gospel to a lost and dying world. Thank you for my salvation. I pray for your guidance as I prepare to share.

Day 8 - Practice Sharing the Gospel

1 Timothy 4:15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

During the COVID quarantine, I have been taking an online lesson in calligraphy. At first, the class seemed daunting. My first thought was, "Why did I sign up for this? I will never be able to do it." Now that I'm a few lessons in I can see where I'm making progress. While I'm still far from great at it, with daily practice, the pen strokes are getting better; my understanding of what the instructor is saying is growing. I am gaining confidence that I lacked during the first class.

Before I started sharing the gospel, I had all those same feelings. It seemed so daunting; I had no confidence that I could do it and didn't fully understand what I should say. I began by writing a script and reading it over and over. Then I began saying it out loud without my script. The more I practiced, the more I realized it was not as scary as I initially thought. Through Bible verses I had in my script I began having a better understanding of what the gospel message was all about. It became even easier when I realized I was sharing the best news I could give someone.

A great way to practice sharing the gospel is to enlist the help of family members. Children especially are willing to help. Have them be the person you are sharing the gospel with. If they hear you practice it enough, they will also begin to share. This is the beginning of disciples making disciples.

Another way to practice is to ask co-workers, neighbors or friends to listen to you. Tell them you are practicing and need an audience. This is a great way for them to feel like they are helping you but also for them to hear the gospel. Also, try recording yourself on your phone and then listen to this recording over and over. It will help with remembering your presentation. We practice for almost everything else we do, so why should this be any different?

Questions to Consider:

We rush to tell others about the good things that have happened to us. Our salvation should be the very best news we have to share if we truly love God. What is stopping you from doing that?

Do you need to practice? We have men and women that would love to be your "practice buddies." Call the front office (919-556-9292) and ask to speak to Pastor Jim.

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, the Spirit You gave me does not make me timid but gives me power, love, and self-discipline. Help me to call on You for that power in those times when sharing the gospel seems like an overwhelming task.
- Meditate on 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is all you need. My power will rest on you when you are weak."

Day 9 - Plan to Share the Gospel

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Now that you are prepared and you have practiced sharing the gospel (see previous entries), it's time to make a plan and put that practice into action. If you are like me, things just don't get done without a plan. You need to put feet to what you have learned.

Here are some ways to develop that plan and begin to be obedient to what God has called us to do.

1. Pray. Admit to God your fears about sharing. Ask Him to make you a bold witness. Tell Him that you are not ashamed of the gospel, and you are willing to proclaim it. Ask Him to begin giving you opportunities to share.
2. Make a list of family, friends, co-workers, etc. that you know need to hear the good news about Jesus. Reach out to them and begin a dialogue about the gospel. Because of the technology we have available, even with the pandemic, there are so many ways to connect with people.
3. As you are walking around your neighborhood, plan to speak to your neighbors who are out.
4. As we anticipate the re-opening of the church, plan to attend events where you will have the opportunity to share. The first time I ever shared the gospel I was manning a bounce house at one of our festivals. Pair up with a member of the church who is already sharing the gospel and learn from them. Call the church office or talk to Pastor Jim, and they will get you plugged in with someone.

Questions to Consider:

Are you merely a hearer of the Word or a doer of the Word? (James 1:22) What is stopping you from sharing the best news you've ever received?

Meditate on 2 Timothy 1:7, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline."

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, I want to put feet to my words, but I confess I'm scared. Replace my fear with boldness.
- Bring people to mind that I need to talk to about you. Give me the confidence to reach out to them.

Day 10 - Pair the Gospel Witness

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

People love a good story. It has been said that stories are the most powerful form of communication. Stories draw people in, capture our interest, and connect us to one another. Many times we find common ground in the details and experiences of others. For that reason, stories are powerful. To be sure *pairing our story* (our testimony) with the gospel can serve to connect with others while restating the gospel truth.

Pastor Jim writes in the Equipping Evangelism resource (<https://richlandcreek.com/article/equipping-evangelism/>),

“When possible our next step after having shared the gospel should be to tell people how God saved us and changed us through the gospel. God has commanded us to “declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). We should declare this every time we have the opportunity. Our story is really repeating the gospel in the context of who we were, what happened, and who we are now.”

Days eleven through twenty of this prayer journal will focus on the Christian testimony. We hope you will learn more about its importance and how to share your testimony with others.

Remember, God gave you *your story* to tell about His story.

Questions to Consider:

If someone asks you about the hope that is in you, are you prepared to give your testimony? Are you willing to invest time and effort to prepare your testimony?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, thank you that I have a testimony of salvation. Grant me wisdom, understanding, and patience as I prepare a gospel statement and write my testimony.
- Pray for opportunities with your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to tell your story about what God has done in your life through Christ.

The Christian Testimony

Day 11 - What is the Christian Testimony

Psalm 71:15–18 My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge. With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come; I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone. O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.

Everyone has a story. This is a common saying that we hear often in our society these days. There are triumphs and tribulations that have molded a person into who they are today; countless stories that usually promote self-help, self-reliance and self-victory. Do you see a common theme here? The focus is on self!

As believers, the Christian testimony is a story our gracious and merciful God has given us, to tell of His saving work in our lives. A story that should consume us with joy and the desire to share this good news with others! Though this story involves ourselves, it should always point to the One who has saved us.

Each believer's testimony is a beautiful picture of how life looked in brokenness, despair and separation from a Holy God, to the moment of the effective gospel call in their lives that led them to conversion when they placed their faith and trust in the work of Jesus Christ, therefore, being redeemed, justified and adopted by the Father. It is only in and through Him that we can proclaim this story. But the Christian testimony doesn't stop there. It is also about life after conversion and the regeneration that takes place in a believer's life. This change of heart is described in Ezekiel 36:26 when God says, "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

God's Word tells us that we are to share our testimony and proclaim His excellency!

Questions to Consider:

Recall the details of your salvation. What is your personal testimony? Does it point to the One who saved you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, thank you that because of your saving work in my life, I have a personal testimony.
- Help me to have a good understanding of the gospel and my personal testimony so that I can share this good news with others.

Day 12 - The Goal of the Christian Testimony

Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Growing up I was always interested in hearing someone's testimony. I was fascinated by all the amazing, tragic and shocking ways people found salvation. I was in it for the story, the dramatic entertainment of it all. Sadly, through all the years and multitudes of testimonies I heard, I never once heard the gospel being shared—not one single time. I remained entertained, but lost.

The gospel IS the goal of a testimony.

A Christian's testimony is a tool that can be used to share the gospel, to glorify God and to let others know how we came to know the Lord. As you write your testimony for the first time or as you revise it, it is important to remember that you should keep the focus on Him, not on you.

Think of your written testimony as building a house. The gospel is the support beams, the walls, the roof—it's the house. The parts of your testimony that focus on you are the small personal touches that make your house your own, like pictures or flowers; however, the house is still the main and dominating focus.

Your testimony is your opportunity to share the good news with the world. It is important that in the time you have with that person, you share what God wants them to know about Him. You may only have 1–2 minutes when you are sharing with someone. In that short time would you rather they know more about you or about the gift of salvation?

Question to Consider:

When you prepare your testimony and share it with others, is your goal to shine light on the good news of the gospel or on your own personal story?

Prayer Prompts:

- Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the Earth.
- Take some time and pray this verse, consider how you will be a witness for our Heavenly Father as you share the gospel through your testimony.

Day 13 - Pitfalls of the Christian Testimony

John 3:30 "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Just tell your story. How hard could that be? Because it is our story, we may be prone to think our testimony requires no preparation or planning. Yet, more often than not, we can become nervous, distracted, and even lead ourselves down rabbit trails that divert us from our primary goal: exalting Christ. Consequently, this can result in squandering our opportunities with others to exalt Christ. This is why a little forethought and effort in preparing our testimony can go a long way.

The very first pitfall of the Christian testimony is not preparing a well thought out, written version of your testimony. We fall into the trap of thinking, *"I can do this on the spur of the moment and it will come out perfectly given the time frame I have."* Time allowances vary from situation to situation so we need to adjust what we say—on the fly. That is more challenging than you might think. Friend, for the majority of us, we need to put some effort and thought into what we will say before we say it. If we don't, we will focus on the wrong person.

The second pitfall is believing the myth that people really are interested in your amazing (or disastrous) performance in the third-grade play. Rabbit trails—they are the death of testimonies. Testimonies when paired with the gospel must stay on track. Again, time is usually limited. What is so special, important, and cherished (or painful) to us from our past is not the purpose of our testimony. Keep the main thing the main thing—Jesus Christ.

A third pitfall, not too dissimilar from rabbit trails, is what has come to be called the "Selfie Testimony." It is pretty much what you would think—testimonies that center on our lives rather than on Christ. One writer describes these as "Look! God is great because *me me me*. These are not road-to-Damascus stories, but spiritually tinted selfies." As stated in yesterday's journal entry: The gospel IS the goal of a testimony.

Questions to Consider:

Do you have a testimony written down? Is there room for improvement with how you present your testimony?

Prayer Prompt:

- Pray that your efforts to put into practice all that this prayer journal teaches would be blessed and fruitful as you seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Day 14 - Anatomy of a Christian Testimony - Before Christ

Ephesians 2:1-3 “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world . . . among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

A testimony is not about you . . . even though it is your testimony. It should be totally focused on pointing others to Jesus. The next three days will be spent sharing how a Christian testimony can be written. There should be three essential parts: Before Christ, Trusting Christ, and After Christ. Today I will focus on the “Before Christ” portion of the testimony.

When beginning a salvation story, it is important to identify how life was not fulfilling. Or perhaps it was fulfilling, and the problem is a question such as “Why does a good God allow suffering and evil?” Or you can explain how you were in disobedience to God, to parents, to authority, and the like. It does not have to be radical; it can simply be “I was once lost, but now I am found.” Here is an example of a before:

I grew up with a single mom, who along with grandparents took me to church at every opportunity. Because I did not want to disappoint anyone, I tried my best to be good. In fact, I thought I was good enough for God, too. I was a good girl, made good grades in school, and was a friend to many. My life was considered by many to be near perfect. However, I knew that I felt empty and sad most of the time, even though I did everything to the best of my ability. As a teen, my goodness was not enough to fill the overwhelming sadness.

Questions to Consider:

How can you convey to others that you once were a person who deliberately broke God’s perfect law? Is it possible to share your story and still point toward Jesus and His glory?

Prayer Prompts:

- Prepare my thoughts as I begin to think about my testimony and how to prepare it.
- Guide my words as I seek to share with others the life I led before God initiated His good work in my life.
- Lord, use my life as an example to others who may be similar to me in their lives before Christ.

Day 15 - Anatomy of a Christian Testimony - Trusting Christ

Ephesians 2:4–5 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”

Today we will focus on the second part of a testimony—trusting Christ. As Ephesians 2:4 states, “But God,” we must remember that in contrast to our willful disobedience and walking in sin, God “being rich in mercy . . . made us alive together with Christ.” Now is where you focus on how you became a Christian. Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ; identify the events that led to your conversion. Tell the gospel in clear statements.

Here is an example of trusting Christ:

At church I began to listen as the pastor explained we are all sinners. To sin means to fall short of God’s perfect standard. The Bible says sin separates us from a holy God, and the penalty for sin is death. I understood Jesus was truly God; that Jesus became man and lived the life of perfect goodness I could not; that Jesus died and was resurrected from death on the third day. Jesus lived the perfect life in my place—the very life that I was created to live. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus took my place and received from God the penalty for sin in my place.

The Lord graciously revealed to me that I was spiritually dead and separated from God, and that my goodness was really only for myself. On that day I asked God to forgive me for my unbelief in Jesus and to forgive me for sins against Him. I admitted that Jesus was the Son of God and that His work was sufficient to give me a right standing before God. I realized it was not enough to just know about Jesus, but that I needed to know Him personally.

Question to Consider:

How can I share the gospel in a concise way?

Prayer Prompts:

- Guide my words as I begin to write my salvation story.
- Let my words of your gospel be used to help others understand your love for them.

Day 16 - Anatomy of a Christian Testimony - After Christ

1 John 1:3 "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

The focus today is on the third part of a testimony—after Christ. In the before, you expressed your understanding of the truth—you were estranged from God and could not mend that broken relationship by your own efforts. The objective now is to briefly show the difference that Christ has made in your life. Remember you are not trying to sell Christ to anyone. Do not make your testimony sound like you now have "health, wealth, and happiness" and others can have the same.

Here is an example of after Christ:

After salvation, I grew very slowly in my faith. However, God is faithful and reliable. I read my Bible and began to understand it as I attended church and other activities. The desire to be good still remained in me, but now I was good out of love and gratitude for Jesus and all that He had done for me. In Christ I am a child of God, forgiven of all the wrong that I have done. Ephesians 2:1 states, "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins." I found contentment and peace and a desire to know Him more. And above and beyond all of that, I have eternal life with Christ.

Questions to Consider:

Perhaps there were remarkable changes in your life after you came to know the Lord. Maybe life stayed the same. What did not remain the same is your position before God: before Christ you were alienated and apart from God and *after* Christ you were reconciled to God and became His child. What words can you use in your testimony to point others to Christ? What is holding you back from writing down your story, emphasizing the good news of Jesus?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help me to construct a testimony that will give glory to Christ using the context of who I was, how I came to trust Christ, and who I am now.
- Father, I want to worship you in everything I do, including preparing my testimony. Prepare for me, even now, a variety of settings where I can speak or write my testimony to others.

Day 17 - Length of the Christian Testimony

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Several times in the New Testament we are told to imitate Paul (1 Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1; Philippians 4:9). One intentional way to follow his lead is to share the gospel in a succinct conversation. Notice today’s verses—the good news in one run-on sentence, a writing trademark of Paul.

Yet, what depth he teaches. We are sinners. Jesus died in our place, He was buried, and He rose again—all as the Old Testament prophesied (Isaiah 53). The words *received* and *delivered* reveal the importance of passing along everything we’ve heard and received in the gospel—nothing left out or distorted. Consider Christians as middle runners in a relay race. We must receive the good news of the gospel and pass it along to someone else.

There are times the gospel delivery needs to be brief, as short as one minute—in line at a store, on an elevator, or in prayer before a holiday family meal. Other opportunities, we may have a 3 or 5-minute dialogue—over coffee, in the break room, over Zoom, or in the yard with a neighbor.

As we learn to share the gospel through our testimony, consider what could be left out or added for brief 1, 3, or 5-minute gospel opportunities. Remember, the gospel is the focus.

Questions to Consider:

Do I view myself as privileged to receive and pass on the gospel? Is sharing the gospel important to me? Which life situations could I be intentional to briefly share the gospel through my testimony?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help me better appreciate the gospel I’ve received.
- Please prepare the opportunities for me to share my testimony in brief ways. Use Your Spirit to heighten my awareness and help me obey.

Day 18 - Prepare a Christian Testimony

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”

We hear much about preparedness these days. Being physically prepared is important, yet how much more eternal impact spiritual preparedness has. As we look to incorporate all we’re learning about sharing our testimony, it is time to actually write it.

Begin prayerfully. Put time and effort into writing. Consider starting with three paragraphs; one about separation from God before salvation, one focusing on the gospel when saved, and one paragraph about how God is graciously walking with us and giving us hope. It’s all right to work through a couple of drafts. When finished, ask a pastor or trusted believer to go through it and give feedback. Having another set of eyes is a blessing to us as we grow in this area.

In John 14 Jesus is addressing the fears of the disciples by giving hope in an eternal relationship with Him. Similarly, those around us have great anxieties, and only the truth of the gospel can restore. We are sinners, separated from God, and Jesus alone saves. Church attendance (John 5:39–40), good deeds, or moral living cannot redeem. Only in Christ do we have forgiveness, restored relationship, and eternal life. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life revealed to us—God in the flesh.

Questions to Consider:

How do I sin by trusting in myself? Have I allowed culture or other religions to sway my thinking about the focus of salvation? (Acts 4:12)

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help me be prepared to share my testimony. Help me focus on You in what I write.
- Use what You have already done in me as an example to those around me. Use this story to bring others to Yourself. You and Your history of redemption are glorious!

Day 19 - Don't Sell Jesus

1 John 5:12, He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

To be sure, salvation is a work of our gracious God as He “made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5). Because of God’s great work of salvation believers have been moved from death to life (John 3:16).

With Christ as Savior, and the Holy Spirit indwelling us, some believers may even experience wonderful changes in their earthly circumstances. For some, the circumstances of their marriages, relationships, family, work, or even health may see evidence of restoration. Yet, for others life does not get easier. Sometimes suffering and pain continue even after one comes to know Christ. Diseases remain, relationships crumble, and sin tempts us daily (Rom 7:15). Indeed, life may get even harder (John 16:33).

What does this have to do with sharing our testimony? Sometimes, for those whom God sovereignly works amidst difficult circumstances, believers may speak of circumstantial restorations *more* so than the core message of the gospel—and in doing so shift the focus away from Christ. This can result in listeners understanding the gospel as, *“If I get saved, God will fix all my problems.”* The Bible speaks of no such thing. While it is true, some may have circumstantial recovery; others do not. Frankly, the Christian life is often “grieved by various trials” (1 Peter 1:6).

Friend, we want to be sure we speak of God, the gospel, and the work of Christ rightly. Let’s keep our focus on Christ and not on the ebb and flow of our circumstances. God is great not because of our circumstance but because God is God. When giving your testimony, remember the words of Paul “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). That’s the heart of the gospel.

Questions to Consider:

If you have never written out your testimony, we highly recommend you do so. If you have put your testimony in words, what seems to be the main message?

What do you spend the most time talking about? Consider having another mature believer (or two) review your written testimony.

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, I desire to exalt you and you alone. As I prepare my testimony help me see areas that need revising or improvement. Guard me from focusing on anything but you.

Day 20 - Speak the Same Language

Colossians 4:3–4 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

You hear it all the time. Someone is trying to learn a second language and engages in conversation with a native who actually speaks that language. The one learning the language inevitably uses a word that doesn't actually mean what they think it means. Sometimes those foreign language stories can be quite funny. Other times the miscommunication is painfully awkward or embarrassing. Even when people do speak the same language, words can mean different things to different people. As a matter of fact, words can even change meaning from one part of the country to another.

To muddy the water even further, Christians have cultivated their own language within the faith. This language is known as “Christianese”—a vocabulary spoken by Christians that is not easily understood by those outside the community of faith. Sometimes believers can become so accustomed to using these words, phrases, and jargon that it becomes second nature to them. We easily forget that this jargon is “like Greek” to those with whom we speak about the gospel and our testimony.

Friends, we must remember, when talking with those outside the faith, it is important to refrain from using “church words” that our listeners don't understand. These are words such as redemption, saved, born again, covenant, holy, disciple, election, justification, reconciliation, repentance, atonement. Those outside the faith in all likelihood have no experience with these words or, if they do, they very well may not understand them correctly.

Let's make sure our listeners actually understand what we're saying. Use common, everyday language that even a child could grasp. If you do use words like *sin* or *grace* or *saved*, make sure to clearly define them as you speak.

Questions to Consider:

Do you remember what it was like before you were saved and knew very little about the Christian faith? What confused you? Were there words you did not understand? What words of the Christian faith do you use regularly?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, I too like Paul desire to “make it clear” that the message of Christ is understood. Help me recognize when I need to stop and explain words or concepts particular to the faith.

DAY 21 – Fruit of the Spirit: Introduction

Galatians 5:22–24 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

The imagery of fruit in Scripture is frequently used to illustrate cause and effect relationships. In Galatians 5, the fruit, or result, of the indwelling Holy Spirit through faith in Christ should be as obvious as apples on an apple tree. But unlike apple trees, we are all sinners, and the fruit we produce is not always what God desires in our lives.

There is a battle of “flesh vs. Spirit” inside of us. Paul acknowledges this in Galatians 5:17, *“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”* He even goes on to spell out some of the fleshly fruit in verses 19–21. Take a moment to contrast these to the Spiritual fruit in verses 22–24. Now take a moment to press your life up against these Scriptures.

The Bible teaches that a tree is known by its fruit (Luke 6:44). Through the next nine days we will examine each of the nine attributes of the fruit of the Spirit, giving biblical definitions and helpful prayer prompts. Our prayer for you is that the fruit in your life would bring glory to God as we follow His mission together.

Questions to Consider:

Have I truly “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” through Christ?

Are there specific attributes in verses 22–23 that I struggle with and may need help?

Prayer Prompts:

- Confess to God and repent of “the lust of the flesh.”
- Pray that God would grant wisdom and discernment as you seek to follow His Spirit and will.

Luke 6:44, “For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush.”

DAY 22 – Fruit of the Spirit: Love

Ephesians 5:1–2 “Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

Our culture defines and expresses love in many ways. We can love our spouse romantically, our family and friends brotherly, and even our sports teams passionately. More often than not love is self-serving, based on what we get out of these relationships rather than what we put in. However, this idea is turned upside down and inside out when we understand how God defines love in His Word.

Love is sacrifice. Christ demonstrated this truth by making the ultimate sacrifice to save us from sin and death. In the above Scripture, Paul implores us to imitate God and walk in love as Christ did. God put us first, sending Jesus as our sacrifice. Jesus took on flesh, putting aside His place in heaven to save sinful humanity.

To walk in God’s love requires sacrifice. Offering our time, talent, and treasures to Him for the benefit of others is counterintuitive to our culture and our fleshly nature. The Holy Spirit living in us gives us the ability to love others sacrificially, submitting our will to God. There is good reason that love is the first fruit of the Spirit mentioned: God’s love manifested to us through Christ gives us the ability to truly love one another, binding the other eight attributes tightly together.

Questions to Consider:

Have I trusted in Jesus Christ as my Savior from sin and death?

Do I love others selfishly or sacrificially?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise God for demonstrating His love for us through Christ.
- Pray to love sacrificially, seeking to forgive and serve others.

Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

DAY 23 – Fruit of the Spirit: Joy

Romans 15:13 “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

We’ve all probably heard the saying, “Do what makes you happy.” It sounds good and appeals to our fleshy desire to feel good. Most of us have also figured out that happiness is fleeting, and the chase for it never-ending. So how can we have joy in our lives if we cannot maintain happiness? We can because happiness is not how Scripture defines joy.

Joy is hope. The hope of fulfilled promises, the hope of forgiveness, the hope of eternity. Happiness is determined by our feelings; joy is determined by our faith. Happiness is guided by outside influences (people, circumstances, etc.); joy is guided by the indwelling Spirit. Happiness is fickle and temporal; joy is constant and eternal. The hope that is in us through faith in Christ allows us to focus on the heavenly end of the journey rather than on the bumpy earthly road we travel.

We are all promised trials in this life. The trials could be spiritual, medical, financial, relational, or something else. We usually don’t get to choose the trials. We do, however, get to choose our response. Through the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we can choose joy.

Questions to Consider:

Are there things in my life that give me temporary happiness, but no lasting joy?

How can I have hope in the midst of trials?

Prayer Prompts:

- Confess to God and repent of any “happiness idols” in your life.
- Pray that God would remind you of His promises during times of trial.
- Pray for His joy to guide and sustain you.

1 Peter 4:13 “But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”

DAY 24 – Fruit of the Spirit: Peace

Colossians 1:20 “. . . and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

During an Internet search on the word “peace,” the first two definitions that came up were “tranquility” and “a period in which there is no war.” These are both common definitions of peace in our culture that are also uncommon to achieve. Tranquility is relative and can be easily put out of balance by simple things like noise, weather, or illness. Wars and rumors of wars are promised by Scripture to continue (Matthew 24:6). It’s easy to conclude that true peace is not defined by these definitions. God’s Word defines peace in a very different way.

Peace is reconciliation. Peace in a right relationship with God is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ. Our sin separates us from God, breaking our relationship with Him in a seemingly irreparable way. We cannot fix what we have broken, causing turmoil within us. Jesus “made peace through the blood of His cross.” He reconciled us to God, repairing our broken relationship.

None of us are promised tranquility or an absence of conflict in our lives. Peace cannot truly be reached if measured in these ways. However, we can experience true peace through the reconciliation offered by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. This is the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Questions to Consider:

Are there things in my life that take my focus away from the peace of God?

Is there unconfessed sin in my life that is hindering peace with God?

Prayer Prompts:

- Confess to God and repent of any unconfessed sin.
- Pray for rest in the peace of your reconciliation through Christ.
- Pray for your relationships with people who need reconciliation.

Philippians 4:6–7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

DAY 25 – Fruit of the Spirit: Longsuffering

James 1:2–3 “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”

This season of COVID-19 and “shelter at home” may be straining your patience. We don’t know how much longer until things get back to normal, or even what that “normal” will look like. We watch and wait, and then wait some more. Some are truly suffering in this season, whether physically, financially, emotionally, or other ways. We can become edgy and even down right irritable when patience runs low. We must strive to see things God’s way when it comes to longsuffering.

Longsuffering is endurance. It is keeping our eyes fixed on God and His promises while going through seasons of life. It is learning and growing from trials, processing things in the Spirit through His Word. It is relying completely on God. It is not merely putting up with the bad to get to the good; it is putting both the bad and the good before the Lord for His glory. It is not just limping through a race that never ends, but rather finishing the race in the victory already secured by Jesus.

This attribute of the fruit of the Spirit is often cited as the hardest one to keep and demonstrate consistently. Much of this may be due to our impatient fleshly desires pushing against the inexhaustible longsuffering of the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can genuinely endure. If you feel discouraged, remember all Christ endured for you.

Questions to Consider:

Are there things in my life that cause me to become impatient?

What is God teaching me through this season?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for endurance in this season.
- Pray for wisdom to grow through trials.

Hebrews 12:1 “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

DAY 26 – Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Philippians 2:3–4 “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Sometimes the English language fails to capture the complete essence of Greek words in the Bible. The Greek word *chrestotes* (khray-stot'-ace), translated as “kindness” in Galatians 5:22, is a prime example. When we think of kindness, we may think of being nice, friendly, considerate, or generous. But this Greek word also includes the idea of usefulness, serviceability, and meeting needs. There is no one English word that encompasses all of these ideas.

Kindness is beneficial. It helps meet the need of others in very practical ways. It is active, not passive. It is continuous, not selective. It is for the benefit of others, not for ourselves. Think of our Food Pantry Ministry as an example: the physical and spiritual needs of others are intentionally and actively met. Our kindness is the practical manifestation and application of the love Christ lavished upon us through His death and resurrection.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can put God first and others before ourselves. As we grow closer to God through discipleship, we can demonstrate kindness in our witness, our ministry, and our generosity. None of us need to selfishly look out for ourselves when we all look out for each other.

Questions to Consider:

How can I show God’s kindness to others?

Do I genuinely esteem others greater than myself?

Are there things I do out of selfish ambition?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray to esteem others greater than yourself in word and deed.
- Pray for practical ways to demonstrate God’s kindness to others.

Psalm 116:12–13 “What shall I render to the Lord, For all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord.”

DAY 27 – Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

The concept of goodness, or being good, is one most of us have heard since childhood. We’ve been told to be nice, follow the rules, mind your manners, and so forth. We could do these things even if we didn’t want to or didn’t believe they were important. We merely had to appear good to be seen as good. This is because these require our behavior, not our hearts. However, goodness in Galatians 5:22 shows that it’s all about who we are, not what we do.

Goodness is authenticity. It is being exactly who you appear to be. It is not just living, thinking, or acting LIKE a Christian; it is living, thinking, and acting AS a Christian. Authenticity is not turned on and off depending upon situations and surroundings. True goodness flows from the Holy Spirit within us. The good works and good behavior are the fruit that naturally grow from a genuine faith. They are the effect, not the cause of faith.

Being authentic can be challenging as we all have fleshly desires and actions, past and present, that cause shame. Our sinful nature urges us to build walls around ourselves, lest anyone should see who we really are. Living as Christians, genuinely loving God and others, tears down these walls. We then quickly see that we are all quite the same: sinners saved by God’s grace on mission for His glory.

Questions to Consider:

Am I living like a Christian, or as a Christian?

What part do my “good works” play in my faith?

Are there things in my life that hinder my authenticity?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you live authentically as a Christian.
- Pray for wisdom and guidance regarding your “good works.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

DAY 28 – Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness

1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Let’s say you are taking a train from Raleigh to Chicago. You’ve got your ticket, itinerary, luggage, and are ready to go. You sit back, relax and enjoy the ride all the way to Union Station. You trust that the train will get you to Chicago. Why? Because the tracks are set and the train just has to follow their path. You trust that you will get to Chicago because the train will get to Chicago. That is the idea behind faithfulness as a fruit of the Spirit.

Faithfulness is trust. Trust in God rather than in ourselves. God laid the “train tracks” for us, and we must trust Him as we travel in His direction. When we trust in His Son, His Word, and His promises we are then able to be trustworthy to others. There is integrity, or wholeness, that comes only from God. Walking in this integrity strengthens us to be people others can rely on, pointing them toward Christ.

Faithfulness can also be described as “God’s warranty.” It is the promises of Who He is, what He has done and will do, and how much He loves. Trusting and walking fully in these promises always puts us on the right track.

Questions to Consider:

Am I trusting in God or in myself and other things?

Can others trust me? Does my life point others to Christ?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you fully trust God, repenting of trust in other things.
- Pray that your life would point others toward Christ.

Ephesians 1:13–14 “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

DAY 29 – Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness

James 1:19–20 “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

It’s game 7 of the World Series, and the home team is down 4–3 in the bottom of the ninth. With one out and runners on first and second, the power hitting catcher steps into the batter’s box. He’s thinking one thing: 3-run homer to win the Series! However, the third base coach is giving him the sign to bunt rather than swing away. He angrily accepts the sign and stabs roughly at the first pitch. Strike one. He calms down, remembers that his coaches have got the team this far, and squares away to bunt. He lays it perfectly down the third base line, sacrificing the out at first to move the runners to second and third. The next batter hits a two-run single, and the home team wins the championship in part because the catcher held back and trusted his coaches. He showed gentleness.

Gentleness is submission. It is the idea of strength under control, specifically God’s control. It is walking in humility before God and others. The catcher in our illustration could have done things his way rather than submit to his coaches. Each of us must decide every minute whether to submit to God or do things our way. It’s either the fruit of the Spirit or the lust of the flesh. There is tremendous power when we lay aside our own strength.

Questions to Consider:

Am I submitting my will to God?

How do I demonstrate gentleness in my life?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray to be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.
- Ask the Spirit to identify anything I am not submitting to God.

1 Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

DAY 30 – Fruit of the Spirit: Self-Control

Galatians 5:25 “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

It is quite significant that the fruit of the Spirit starts out with love. Think of the rest flowing out of Christ's sacrificial love for us. Without that love in our lives it would be impossible for us to have joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness. It is also very significant that these attributes end with self-control. Think of self-control as the fruit basket, holding the others together and carrying them forward.

Self-control is accountability. The Greek word *egkrateia* (eng-krat'-i-ah) in Galatians 5:23 translated as “self-control” also speaks to the idea of “true mastery from within.” It proceeds from within oneself, but not by oneself. It comes from the Spirit living in us through faith in Christ. We are given the ability to consistently choose Spirit over flesh. The bad news is that none of us can or will be perfect. The good news is we don't have to be: Jesus is already perfect in our place.

This is also most beneficial in our relationships with others. When we are accountable to God in all things, we can in turn be accountable to one another. Accountability is essential to Christian discipleship. It must be present for honest, life-changing discipleship to occur. Self-control is the outward manifestation of every attribute of the fruit of the Spirit. Let us walk together in the Spirit.

Questions to Consider:

Am I walking in the Spirit, or in the flesh? Am I accountable to God? Am I accountable to others?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help me truly walk with the Lord.
- Pray for accountability toward God and people.
- Praise God for demonstrating His love through Jesus.

Romans 14:12 “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

THANK YOU

*We praise the Lord for all those who contributed to make
this prayer guide possible. To God be the glory!*

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*“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently
labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you
instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their
work. Live in peace with one another. - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*