

Grabill Missionary Church

Great Commandment Great Commission Changed Lives



Devotional Guide

01/04/10-01/31/10

Introduction

This devotional guide is being provided as part of the Seeds Campaign that is currently going on in the church. Although one aspect of this campaign deals with the past physical expansion of the church facilities, a far more crucial dimension concerns the building and expansion of our own personal relationships with God. This booklet is intended to help foster that **spiritual growth by encouraging us to study God's** word and to pray for ourselves and each other.

As we follow this daily guide, we will have the opportunity to grow as a church family through the mutual sharing of insights and experiences relevant to the passages being studied. The passages focus on such key elements of the Christian life as worship, thanksgiving, confession, and supplication. Included with each passage are questions to help focus the attention on specific aspects of the text, some thoughts intended to guide the personal application of the passage, and some suggested prayer responses.

Included with this guide is a prayer magnet related to the more specific prayer times. Although we have **clearly sensed that it is God's will to proceed with this** project, it is also important that we continue to seek His guidance and enabling power on a day-to-day basis. For this reason, we suggest that the magnet be displayed in a prominent place as a reminder to pray.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God "rewards those who earnestly seek Him." It is our desire that this campaign be a time for us as individuals and as a body to earnestly seek Him, for He is worthy of our full attention and devotion in every area of our lives—not just during this Campaign—but always.

“Using time wisely” is an area of life that is a concern to everyone—from the teacher who marks a satisfactory or unsatisfactory on the report card of the student, to the person who responds to a request to help in the church, “I haven’t the time”. God gives to every Christian the same amount of time and we are expected to use a portion of it in His Kingdom’s work. It is not a question of not having the time, but of how to organize time. Read Ephesians 5:15-21.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How are you to live?
2. How do you spend your “leisure time”?
3. How much time do you spend for God each week?

APPLICATION

Draw a circle and divide it into pie pieces representing the tasks you routinely spend time on each week. Look at your priorities, are they pleasing to God?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for giving you this day.
- ◆ Ask God for wisdom to use time wisely.
- ◆ Ask God for help in setting aside time to spend with Him.
- ◆ Pray that God’s will be done in this church body.

Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:12

Few people would argue about the importance of exercise for physical health. It is also important to exercise your talents, your skills, your abilities and your gifts to maintain spiritual health. It is sad to hear **Jesus' words about the person who buried his talent, or Jesus' words about the fig tree that bore no fruit.** Read Romans 12:1-8.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How can you “test and approve what God’s will is” (vs. 2)?
2. Make a list of your talents, skills, abilities, and gifts, then put a star beside the ones you are using **in God’s service.**

APPLICATION

Think about how many talents you could be using in **the Lord’s work. God has made provisions for us as** persons, for our health, our safety, and our peace of mind. God is our source.

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for giving you skills and abilities.
- ◆ Thank God for our Pastors and their talents as they minister to each of us.
- ◆ Ask God to open doors so that your skills and abilities are used in ministry.
- ◆ Pray for the Campaign Committee. Scott, Matt and Jack

*Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16*

At times do you feel exhausted? How can I do all the things that I need to do and not grow weary? Do you wonder where you can receive more energy? Read Hebrews 12:1-3.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are we to “throw off”?
2. Where are we to fix our eyes?
3. How much energy do you expend every week in **God’s work**?

APPLICATION

Remember the author of Hebrews urged every Christian to always look to “Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” for strength. Determine this week to be a good steward of your energy.

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His promise in Isaiah 40:31.
- ◆ Ask God to give continued energy to enable His people to do His will.
- ◆ Pray for the Story Committee

*But those who hope in the Lord will
renew their strength...
Isaiah 40:31*

All that we have, all that we are, and all that we will ever be comes from God. Our job is to be good stewards over the things that God has given to us. Read I Chronicles 29:11-14.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. From where do wealth and honor come?
2. Who owns your home, your car, your family, or your business?

APPLICATION

For some of us, the most difficult areas of our lives to turn over to the Lord are our finances. However, to be the stewards that God truly wants us to be, we must come to the understanding that even our wealth comes from God. Our Stewardship of Life Campaign is not based on equal giving, but rather on equal sacrifice. **Prayerfully consider God's blessings in your life** and what sacrifice He is asking you to make.

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for providing you with food, clothing, and shelter.
- ◆ Ask God to remove anxiety about material things from your life
- ◆ **Dedicate your treasure to the furthering of God's kingdom.**
- ◆ Pray for the Advanced Commitment Committee.

*And whatever you do whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
Colossians 3:17*

We live in a fiercely individualistic society. Apart from babies and small children depending on their parents, dependence is largely viewed as weakness. What does the Bible have to say about this issue? Read Psalm 127.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What claim does Solomon make in this Psalm about **success in life's undertakings**?
2. Does this mean that there is no legitimate role for builders or watchmen?
3. How do verses 3-5 tie in with verses 1 and 2?

APPLICATION

I recently heard a children's song (which my three-year old learned VERY quickly) consisting of three repetitions of "I want to do it myself" and ending with a hearty "And I mean it!" Amusing perhaps, but does this attitude characterize our lives? If there is an area or areas of your life where you are depending on your own efforts to bring you success, bring them to God in repentance and confession. Give them over to Him.

PRAYER

- ◆ **Take time to acknowledge God's role in the successes and blessings you already enjoy by thanking Him for these now.**
- ◆ Confess to Him any undue emphasis on your own efforts (characterized by pride, work-aholism, or other wrong attitudes).
- ◆ Ask Him to teach you to depend on Him in every area of life (and be prepared to learn!)
- ◆ Pray for the Presentations Committee.

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Psalm 127:1

Few people would argue about the importance of exercise for physical health. One of the spiritual exercises a Christian should do daily to maintain his spiritual health is to praise the Lord. How many reasons can you give for praising God? Read Psalm 135.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the reasons the Psalmist gives for praising the Lord?
2. Which of these seem to you the most important?
3. In verses 19-21, where do you fit in?

APPLICATION

The Psalmist recalls several of the Lord's mighty works in regard to Israel's deliverance from Egypt and conquest of the promised land. In your own life, what events, whether deliverance from difficulties or personal victories, can you attribute to God's working? Take time to thank God for these events and to praise Him for His goodness and power.

PRAYER

- ◆ Praise God for His mighty works.
- ◆ Praise God for His love and care.
- ◆ Ask God to renew within you a reverent fear for Him, a joyful heart to praise the Lord, and a willing life to serve Him.
- ◆ Praise God for Grabill Missionary Church.
- ◆ Praise God for the people that He has surrounded you with.

*Praise the Lord for the Lord is good.
Psalm 135:3*

It seems that identity crises are characteristic of our times. Thankfully, God has made it very clear who we are as His church. Read I Peter 2:4-10.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. **What are the two responses to the “living Stone”?**
Is there any middle ground?
2. What are we, as believers, called to be?
3. What are we called to do?
4. What are some spiritual sacrifices we might offer to God through Christ?

APPLICATION

The lines are clearly drawn: there are those who come to the living Stone, and those who reject Him. There is no fence to straddle. Our acceptance of Christ sets us apart from all other men and makes us part of the singularly unique group of people we call the Church.

Together we are “a people belonging to God!” Our common goal? Declaring His praises. Let us work together for His glory!

PRAYER

- ◆ Praise God for calling you out of darkness into His wonderful light!
- ◆ Pray for us as a church that we might realize and live out our glorious identity and calling in Christ.
- ◆ Pray for brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who suffer at the hands of those who reject the living Stone.

...but now you are the people of God...

I Peter 2:10

It is always sad to hear stories of Christians fighting with each other. It is equally sad to hear Christians criticizing fellow believers to others. While it is true that some people are easier to get along with than others, are you thankful for all Christians? Read Psalm 34

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How often does Paul say we should give thanks for other believers?
2. Why does Paul give thanks for these believers?
3. How does the Lord view these believers?

APPLICATION

Should we be unthankful for those whom God loves and has chosen? List ten people for whom you have never given thanks or for whom you have not given thanks in a long time. If needed, expand your list to 20 people. Thank God for these people, telling God why you are thankful for them.

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank the Lord for fellow believers.
- ◆ Thank the Lord for those Christians He has brought into your life.
- ◆ Pray for a spirit of thankfulness in the church.
- ◆ Pray for someone who has been a vital part of your life. Call them and thank them for it.
- ◆ Pray for the staff of Grabill Missionary.

*We ought always to thank God for you.
II Thessalonians 2:13*

Are you ever frustrated with praying because it seems that your prayers never get answered? Do you ever think **“What’s the use! I confess my sin; I ask repeatedly, and nothing happens.”** Don’t give up. **John’s first letter** makes it clear how we can pray with confidence. Read I John 5:13-15.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. **How can we be sure that God’s hearing our prayers?**
2. According to whose will are we to pray?
3. What will happen if we pray according to our will? (Hint: See James 4:3)
4. What word does John use twice in verse 15 to show the certainty of these things?

APPLICATION

Praying according to God’s will requires that we know God’s will. God has throughout His Word helped us by giving clear commands and even at times saying, “This is the will of God.” Examples of these are found in Colossians 3:12-17 and I Thessalonians 5:18. Find at least **three other passages which reveal God’s will for us** (the Epistles abound in such commands). Better yet, prepare a continuing list of things that are the will of God and begin praying that God will make them true in your life. Do not be surprised to see these prayers answered quickly.

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for showing you His will in the Bible.
- ◆ Ask God to help you identify those passages that **indicate God’s will.**
- ◆ Ask God to help you pray according to His will and not your will.

If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

I John 5:14

When we think of an athlete, a musician, a businessman, or anyone who is very good at what he or she does, it is easy to give praise to that individual. How much more then does our great God deserve our praise! Read Psalm 34

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How often does David propose to bless the Lord?
2. What does David beseech others to do with him?
3. What are the many things God does for the righteous and for those who fear Him?
4. Which of these promises gives you the most hope at this point in your life? Why?

APPLICATION

The Scriptures teach that we should praise God for who He is and for what He has done. Concentrate on the latter of these. Write down the things God has done or stands ready to do (for example, David tells us in this Psalm that God is ready to deliver the righteous from all their troubles). Take time now to praise God for what He has done or stands ready to do. Share your list with a family member or friend and, as David said, **“exalt His name together.”**

PRAYER

- ◆ Praise God for who He is, naming several of His attributes.
- ◆ Praise God for those things He has done and for those things He stands ready to do.
- ◆ Praise God for the work He is doing in our church today.

I will extol the Lord at all time; His praise will always be on my lips. Psalm 34:1

WHO CAN DISCERN HIS OWN ERRORS? 01/14

Can a Christian sin and not be aware of it? Yes, if he has hardened his heart and has been out of fellowship with the Lord for some time. What about the Christian who is walking with the Lord? Can he sin and not be aware of it? Read Psalm 19. David mentions two types of sin: hidden sin and willful sin. Today we will consider how hidden sins adversely affect our intimacy with God, and tomorrow we will focus on the effects of willful sin.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. **What does David mean by “his errors” and “hidden faults” in verse 12? (Hint: Read Numbers 15:27-31)**
2. **What is the answer to David’s question in verse 12? What does this imply about asking God to reveal sin in our lives?**
3. **On what basis can the prayer “acquit me” (cleanse me) be made? (Hint: Read I John 1:9 and 2:2)**

APPLICATION

The Scriptures teach that sin destroys fellowship with God and makes us useless vessels to Him. Accordingly, we are **exhorted time after time to be holy as He is holy. “Hidden faults,” as well as sins we are aware of, hinder us in this quest. In response to God’s command to be holy, ask God to reveal to you any unintentional sins in your life. Confess these to God.**

PRAYER

- ◆ Ask God to enable you to discern any unintentional sins in your life.
- ◆ Ask God to show you how even unintentional sin hinders your spiritual growth and witness.
- ◆ Confess any unconfessed sins to God.

Forgive my hidden faults. Psalm 19:12

As we saw yesterday, Psalm 19 is David's song of praise for God's revelation of His glory in His creation (1-6) and in His Word (7-10). It closes with a prayer which reveals David's dependence on God in dealing with sin (12-14). Reread Psalm 19:12-14.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In Numbers 15:27-33, what distinction does the Lord make between unintentional sin and willful sin that makes clear His view of the gravity of willful sins?
2. In verse 13, how does David show his awareness of the nature of willful sins?
3. How does verse 14 give us hope as we struggle to avoid sin in our lives?

APPLICATION

Willful sins relate to acting in a proud manner, to **asserting one's own will to the point of rebelling against** authority. God obviously hates such sin. Ask God to reveal any willful sins in your life. Confess any sin God reveals to you and receive His forgiveness and cleansing. One way to guard against willful sins is to meditate on the word of God daily. As you are fed, instructed, encouraged, and kept close to God in this way, your thoughts and words will become increasingly transformed to reflect the likeness of Christ.

PRAYER

- ◆ Confess to God any known sin in your life.
- ◆ Acknowledge to God your tendency to rebel against Him.
- ◆ Ask God to remove any rebelliousness in you and create in its place a heart eager to please Him.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight...Psalm 19:14

We are all too familiar with the government's problem of deficit spending — spending far more money than the available resources. What about us as believers? Do we overspend our spiritual resources? Do we even draw upon the resources available to us? Read Isaiah 40:25-31.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does this passage say about the best of human resources (verse 30)?
2. How would you answer the questions posed in verse 25?
3. According to this passage, how do we draw upon **God's unlimited power**?

APPLICATION

The **word translated “hope” in verse 31 [NIV] literally means wait for**. Waiting runs contrary to the principles of our modern busy world, yet waiting for God is a powerful Biblical concept repeated time and again in the Old Testament. (See Psalm 130:5-6 for a graphic example. Check your concordance for others.) Here in Isaiah it is seen as the solution to spiritual deficit spending (see also Psalm 27:14). What do you think it means to wait for the Lord? Do you wait for Him in any way?

PRAYER

- ◆ Reread verses 25-26 and 28 and praise God for His power.
- ◆ Ask God to teach you how to wait for Him in your day-to-day life.
- ◆ Ask Him to help us as a church develop deeper dependence upon Him.

...yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength...Isaiah 40:31 (NASB)

There are many evil conditions in our world that seem overwhelming and without hope of change. From time to time even our personal problems are overpowering and seem beyond hope of solving. Rather than sinking into despair, what is the Christian to do to resolve this all to common situation? Read Philippians 4:4-7.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What commands are in the passage?
2. Are there any restrictions on what requests you can make of God? What two words give us the answer?
3. What promise is in the passage?
4. What must you do to appropriate this promise?

APPLICATION

The principal duty of a guard is to protect something of value. How gratifying it is to know that God is willing to protect our hearts and minds from doubt, worry, and despair! All we need to do is make our requests known to God. What events have been burdening you or causing tension in your life? Take these to the Lord in prayer right now. In obedience to His command, claim His promise of peace. If Satan later attacks with thoughts of doubt, again let your requests be made known to God and again claim His promise of peace. The Lord is near!

PRAYER

- ◆ Confess any worry as sin.
- ◆ Ask God to remind you at every point of anxiety or fear to make your requests known to Him.
- ◆ Ask God to make His peace real in your life and in the lives of other members of our church.

*In everything...present your request to God.
Philippians 4:6*

One of the most frequent expressions in the Psalms is “**Praise the Lord**” or “**Bless the Lord.**” **Have you ever** wondered for what reasons David used these phrases? Read Psalm 103.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What do the mercies (benefits) of God listed in verses 2-5 reveal to us about Him?
2. What aspect of His dealings with us in verses 6-19 strike you as most praiseworthy today? Why?
3. Who is called upon to praise the Lord (verses 19-22)?

APPLICATION

How many things can you name for which you should be praising God today? List those benefits of God in your life that mean the most to you. What do these reveal to you about God? Carry this list with you and each day praise God for these mercies.

PRAYER

- ◆ Praise God for pardoning all your iniquities.
- ◆ Praise God for providing healing.
- ◆ Praise God for providing what He has given you.
- ◆ Pray that you may be continually aware of the righteousness of God as well as the mercies of God.
- ◆ Pray for the Spiritual Emphasis Committee.
- ◆ Pray that God will continue to provide for the needs of Grabill Missionary.

Praise the Lord, O my soul...
Psalm 103:1

Singing is one of the highest forms of worship and praise to God. Read Psalm 33 for reasons to sing unto the Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What reasons does the Psalmist give for singing to the Lord?
2. How do verses 20-22 relate to singing to the Lord?
3. Reread verses 1-3. If you could praise the Lord by any means you wanted, how would you choose to do it?

APPLICATION

Memorize the first verse of one of the great hymns of praise. Some suggestions: *How Great Thou Art*, *To God Be the Glory*, *Crown Him with Many Crowns*, *The Doxology*, or *Holy, Holy, Holy*. Plan on the memorization taking about a week and then make it a habit to sing this hymn at least once a day.

PRAYER

- ◆ Praise God for who He is and what He has done.
- ◆ Ask God to put a new song in your heart in praise to Him.
- ◆ Pray that God would use the joyfulness of your life for His glory.
- ◆ Pray for the Creative Gifts Committee.
- ◆ Pray for Commitment Sunday. That all would know what God has asked of them.
- ◆ Pray for our worship leaders, Marsha, Lee and Georgana

*Sing joyfully to the Lord.
Psalm 33:1*

After David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and had Uriah killed, he was consumed with guilt over what he had done. Read Psalm 51. Just as with David, when we sin we often feel separated from God. We lose touch with the **“joy of our salvation.”**

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Against whom does David claim to have sinned? Why?
2. List David's requests of God. What is the significance of each?
3. What is David's proposed response?
4. Why does God desire “a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart?”

APPLICATION

Sing verses 10-12 to yourself. Through these words David expresses his desire to be holy, and he acknowledges that he is unable to do so on his own. After being restored to a right relationship with God, David expresses his desire to serve and praise the Lord. Has something come between you and the Lord? Pray that God would restore the **“joy of your salvation.”**

PRAYER

- ◆ Confess any sin in your life and pray that God would cleanse you and wash you whiter than snow.
- ◆ Pray that God would create in you a pure heart.
- ◆ Pray that you would have a steadfast and willing spirit within you to resist temptation and stand firm in the Lord.
- ◆ Pray that God would restore the **“joy of salvation”** so that you will be aware of God's great compassion and mercy.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

Many of the problems in our lives stem from an improper thought-life. God knows this and also knows **our tendency to dwell on those things we shouldn't** even think about. Read Philippians 4:8-9 to find out what God wants us to dwell on.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the things God says to let your mind dwell on?
2. Does God want you to dwell on past mistakes or hurts?

APPLICATION

Memorize Philippians 4:8, a key verse for the Christian. The things that God says the believer should meditate upon are tests for what is worthy of consideration. Think of one example for each item. Ask God to help you keep your thoughts on these things. If improper thoughts later return, repeat this verse to yourself and again ask God to help you keep your thoughts on those things worthy of praise.

PRAYER

- ◆ Confess as sin any dwelling on thoughts that are contrary to the list given in Philippians 4:8.
- ◆ Ask God to help you keep your thought-life fixed on things that are excellent and worthy of praise.
- ◆ Ask the Lord to help us as a congregation to dwell on that which is pleasing to God.
- ◆ Pray for the Communications Committee.
- ◆ Pray for and give praise for our Pastors.
- ◆ Pray for the Elders Committee.

...if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things. Philippians 4:8

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Nevertheless, we often live as if He had said, “and I will give you another job to do before 3:00 p.m. tomorrow.” Is there a place for rest in the life of a 21st century Christian? Should there be? Read Psalm 23.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How would you characterize the relationship of the shepherd and the sheep as pictured in this passage?
2. What feelings are evoked as you read the passage trying to imagine the setting and lifestyle involved?
3. What is the connection between the relationship (question 1) and the lifestyle (question 2)?

APPLICATION

David is known as a man after God’s own heart (I Samuel 13:14), and this Psalm gives us his perspective on his relationship with God. Trust, dependence, love, and confidence are among the words that describe this relationship. Surely the quiet, peaceful time together described in verses 1-3 played a key role in the development of this intimacy. Does God desire any less from His relationship with you? Are there times of quiet in your life when you spend time alone **with God? Set aside some time today to rest in God’s presence.** Invite Him to help you get to know Him better.

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for how He shepherds His flock (including you!)
- ◆ Ask Him to help you look at your life from His perspective to see if there is too much busyness and not enough opportunity for rest and restoration.
- ◆ Pray for a greater desire to be a person after His own heart..

...He restores my soul. Psalm 23:3

Someone once said that an answer to prayer within a body of believers does more to encourage and unite the people of God than almost any other thing. How are we to pray for fellow believers? Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In light of verses 10-12, how important is the ministry of prayer commanded in verse 18? Why?
2. **How many “all’s” do you notice in verse 18? How does each one emphasize the importance of this ministry?**
3. What do you suppose Paul intends for us to be **praying for all the saints?**

APPLICATION

Do you stay alert to the needs of others in the body of believers? Tell God that you want to broaden your prayer life. Begin praying for other believers for whom you have not prayed in the past. Ask God to help you be alert to the needs of these people. Pray for these people each time the Lord reminds you of them. Keep a prayer journal.

PRAYER

- ◆ Ask God to help you stay alert to the needs of others.
- ◆ Ask God to help you broaden your prayer life by praying **for the needs of “all the saints.”**
- ◆ **Ask God to broaden the church’s concern for believers** in other places.
- ◆ Ask God for you to provide for someone's need today.

Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Ephesians 6:18

Do you ever get frustrated and discouraged by the injustice of the world in which we live? Has this injustice affected your desire to praise the Lord?

Consider the words of the Psalmist who issues God's call to join him in praising the Lord. Read Psalm 98.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why should we sing a new song to the Lord?
2. Why should all the earth shout joyfully to the Lord?
3. Why should the whole creation rejoice before the Lord?

APPLICATION

List the personal difficulties you face. Should you dwell on them or blame God for them? Tear up the list as an indication that you will not dwell on these difficulties but upon God who is our Deliverer, King, and Righteous Judge.

PRAYER

- ◆ Praise God for His righteousness and His display of sovereign power in salvation.
- ◆ Praise God for revealing Himself to you in His Word and by the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Praise God for the promise of His coming as the righteous judge over all the earth.
- ◆ Praise God for the freedom in worshiping him.

*He will judge the world in righteousness.
Psalm 98:9*

What things are you thankful for? Are we to be thankful for only the pleasant things in our lives? Read I Thessalonians 5:16-18.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. **What is the difference between “giving thanks in all circumstances” and “giving thanks for all circumstances?”**
2. How is it possible for a believer to give thanks in all circumstances and what does this require?
3. Is there any benefit to be gained from the adverse circumstances of life? (Hint: See James 1:2-4)

APPLICATION

Think of some recent unpleasant circumstances that have come into your life. Were you thankful in the midst of them? In light of this verse should you have been thankful in spite of them? Take time now and thank God for working through these circumstances.

PRAYER

- ◆ Ask God for forgiveness for not being thankful in everything.
- ◆ Ask God to help you have an attitude of thankfulness.
- ◆ **Pray that you might see God’s good purpose in difficult situations.**
- ◆ Pray for those in our congregation in difficult situations, health, finances, marriage, job or lack thereof, relationships.

...give thanks in all circumstances...

I Thessalonians 5:18

James gives us God's promise of wisdom if we ask in faith. Christians too often overlook this promise and depend upon themselves in decision making and problem solving. Read James 1:2-8

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are trials? Are they always a part of a Christian's life?
2. What should be the result of trials?
3. When we ask God for the wisdom we lack, what three assurances are we given?
4. **What is an appropriate attitude to receive God's wisdom?**

APPLICATION

List some trials or testings you often face. Do you try to handle them in your own strength and wisdom? If so, do you handle them successfully? If not, what must you remember to do in the future? Ask God to remind you that you need His wisdom. Ask God for His wisdom now.

PRAYER

- ◆ Ask God to teach you to seek for His wisdom in every difficulty and testing He allows to come to you.
- ◆ Ask God to help you know the joy that He has for you in the trials He sends into your life.
- ◆ Pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ that they too may grow in joy and wisdom in the midst of trials.

If any of you lacks wisdom he should ask God...

James 1:5

Our society is productivity-oriented. We want to see results (not excuses). In such a social context, it is natural for us as Christians to expect the same in our spiritual lives. Jesus referred to spiritual results as “fruitfulness.” Read **John 15:1-9**.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Does Jesus command His disciples to be fruitful? (read carefully!)
2. What does He command them to do?
3. How does fruitfulness fit into this picture?

APPLICATION

Branches are attached to vines because that is the way they grow—the life of the branch is in the vine. Fruitfulness comes as a natural by-product of this completely dependent relationship. If you have ever seen a grapevine wreath, you know how dry and unfruitful branches disconnected from vines become. Yet how often are we more concerned about being productive than about being firmly rooted and growing in Christ our vine! The key to true fruitfulness is to be so hungry and thirsty for all that Jesus offers us that our only desire is to please Him in all that we do. He will work powerfully through hearts and lives totally yielded to Him.

PRAYER

- ◆ Ask God to purify your heart so that your one desire will be to grow in your relationship to Him.
- ◆ Ask Him to cleanse you from superficial productivity so that He can do His work of true fruitfulness in His time.
- ◆ Thank Him for the life that is ours in “the true vine” and ask Him to help you “remain in the vine.”

I am the vine; you are the branches... Apart from Me, you can do nothing. John 15:5

From the time Adam and Eve hid from the Lord in the garden after disobeying Him, our tendency has always been to avoid accepting responsibility for our sins through denial, justification, rationalization, or blaming others. Read Psalm 32 to find out what happened to David when he tried to hide his sin.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What two approaches to dealing with sin did David try in verses 1-5?
2. Which approach does he recommend?
3. What are the benefits of the recommended choice?

APPLICATION

Covering up the sin in our lives leads to misery. Not only is there guilt, but also the Scriptures teach that physical illness may result. Worst of all, our fellowship with the Lord is broken. What a blessed relief it is to know the divine forgiveness and acceptance that follows confession! Whatever misery we endure is worthwhile if it leads us to repentance and restoration in our fellowship with the Lord.

PRAYER

- ◆ Confess to God any known sin in your life.
- ◆ Thank Him for the rich blessing of forgiveness and reconciliation..
- ◆ Ask God to keep you sensitive to sin.
- ◆ Ask God if there is anyone you need to forgive. Do it!

*Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does
not count against him and in whose spirit
there is no deceit.
Psalm 32:2*

Praise and thanksgiving should be our response to the **goodness and glory of God**. As you consider God's love and faithfulness in your life, how much more should you desire to praise Him! Read Psalm 138.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. For what does David praise God?
2. What words in verse 1 characterize how David expresses his praise?
3. Why does God pay attention to David's concerns?

APPLICATION

Are you thankful that God is interested in your life? Do you praise God with all your heart? What would help you to praise Him in this way? Since God is interested in you, ask Him to accomplish those things that will fill your heart with praise.

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His interest and guidance in your life.
- ◆ Ask God to make you a person filled with praise.
- ◆ Praise God for His love and faithfulness to our church.
- ◆ Pray for the Arrangements Committee.
- ◆ Praise God for the history of Grabill Missionary.
- ◆ Praise God for what He is going to do in our church.

I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart...
Psalm 138:1

In Psalm 119, again and again the Psalmist prays for God to give him understanding of His statutes, laws, and precepts. Christians too should constantly seek to **understand God's Word and His standards for living.** Read Psalm 119:33-40.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. List six different words used for God's law.
2. What specific requests does the Psalmist make?
3. What are the Psalmist's goals?

APPLICATION

Do you desire the same things as the Psalmist? Are you willing to set aside time in order to meet these goals? If so, select a time and place for your Bible study and prayer. Ask God to help you carry out your plan faithfully and consistently.

PRAYER

- ◆ Reread the passage and let each verse be a prayer of your heart.
- ◆ Pray for the Telephone Committee.
- ◆ Pray for the Follow Up Committee.
- ◆ Pray that God would open doors so that your skills and talents would be used in ministry.
- ◆ Pray that others with open doors would walk through them.

Turn my heart toward your statutes...

Psalm 119:36

As we come to the end of the devotional, we should not feel as if this is the end, but just the beginning. The Seeds Campaign was not designed to be a temporary spiritual high, but rather is to equip us for a life as **“God’s chosen people.”** Read Colossians 3:12-17.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Which quality listed here would you most like to see better exemplified in the life of our church? Why?
2. Do you exemplify this quality?
3. What steps could you take to enhance this trait in your life?

APPLICATION

God desires for the Church to be the embodiment of His love and virtues among men. Meditate on the traits listed in this passage. Imagine the impact our church could have if we fully applied these commands to our lives! Let us each encourage one another as we seek to put this passage into practice and bear with and forgive one another when we fall short.

To obtain these virtues we must “let the word of Christ dwell in [us] richly...” This is possible if we continue to spend time daily studying and meditating on God’s word and communing with Him in prayer.

PRAYER

- ◆ Pray that we as a body will grow in exemplifying these qualities.
- ◆ Pray that we (individually and corporately) will continue to seek the Lord.

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus...
Colossians 3:17*

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