WHERE LIFE & PURPOSE CONNECT

Grow, Pray Study for the Week of January 18, 2025

Prayer for the Week:
Loving God, quiet my heart and open my mind as I turn to your Word today. Shape me by your grace and form in me the mind of Christ. Help me to see others with compassion, to serve with humility, and to live with courage for the sake of love. As I listen, guide me to ask honestly: *What is mine to do?* And then have the courage to do it, amen.

Monday, January 19

Scripture: Philippians 2:1–5
Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other. Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus.

Observation
Paul wrote this letter while imprisoned, addressing a Christian community experiencing internal tension and external pressure. His purpose was to encourage unity rooted not in sameness, but in humility and love modeled after Christ. By calling the Philippians to adopt "the mind of Christ," Paul reframes courage—not as self-preservation, but as self-giving for the sake of others. This vision closely echoes the life and leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., whose courage flowed from a deep Christian conviction that love, humility, and justice belong together.

Application
Today, reflect on whose needs you are being called to notice and honor. Courage for others may mean speaking truth, standing alongside those who are marginalized, or choosing love when silence would be easier. Following Christ means aligning our lives with God's justice and compassion, even when it is costly.

Prayer
God of justice and peace, thank you for the witness of those who have lived with courage

rooted in love. Shape my heart with the mind of Christ, that I may seek unity, practice humility, and work for the good of all. Amen.

Tuesday, January 20

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37
A legal expert stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to gain eternal life?"
Jesus replied, "What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?"
He responded, "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.*"
Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live."
But the legal expert wanted to prove that he was right, so he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
Jesus replied, "A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered thieves, who stripped him naked, beat him up, and left him near death. Now it just so happened that a priest was also going down the same road. When he saw the injured man, he crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. Likewise, a Levite came by that spot, saw the injured man, and crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. A Samaritan, who was on a journey, came to where the man was. But when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. The Samaritan went to him and bandaged his wounds, tending them with oil and wine. Then he placed the wounded man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he took two full days' worth of wages and gave them to the innkeeper. He said, 'Take care of him, and when I return, I will pay you back for any additional costs.' "What do you think? Which one of these three was a neighbor to the man who encountered thieves?"
Then the legal expert said, "The one who demonstrated mercy toward him."
Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Observation
Jesus tells this parable in response to a legal expert seeking to define the limits of neighborly responsibility. By making a Samaritan—the one least expected—into the compassionate hero, Jesus confronts long-standing ethnic and religious divisions. The story's original purpose is to expand the definition of "neighbor" beyond comfort and familiarity, teaching that true faith is revealed through mercy that crosses boundaries.

Application
Compassion often begins with paying attention. Today, ask God to help you notice who might be overlooked or dismissed. Living out our faith means allowing ourselves to be interrupted for the sake of love and mercy.

Prayer
Compassionate God, open my eyes to those I am tempted to pass by. Give me a heart that is moved to action and a life shaped by mercy. Amen.

Wednesday, January 21

Scripture: Micah 6:6-8
With what should I approach the Lord
and bow down before God on high?
Should I come before him with entirely burned offerings,
with year-old calves?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with many torrents of oil?
Should I give my oldest child for my crime;
the fruit of my body for the sin of my spirit?
He has told you, human one, what is good and
what the Lord requires from you:
to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.

Observation
The prophet Micah speaks to a community deeply invested in religious ritual but neglecting justice and faithfulness. This verse summarizes God's desire not for extravagant sacrifice, but for a life shaped by justice, steadfast love, and humility. In its original setting, Micah reminds Israel that faithfulness to God is inseparable from how people treat one another—especially the vulnerable.

Application
Examine how you serve. Are your actions shaped by humility and love? Wesley taught that grace forms us over time, aligning our intentions with God's purposes. Choose today to walk humbly, trusting that God is at work through quiet faithfulness.

Prayer
Faithful God, teach me to walk humbly with you. Shape my service so it reflects your justice and love, and not my own desire for recognition. Amen.

Thursday, January 22

Scripture: Joshua 1:1-9
After Moses the Lord's servant died, the Lord spoke to Joshua, Nun's son. He had been Moses' helper. "My servant Moses is dead. Now get ready to cross over the Jordan with this entire people to the land that I am going to give to the Israelites. I am giving you every place where you set foot, exactly as I promised Moses. Your territory will stretch from the desert and the Lebanon as far as the great Euphrates River, including all Hittite land, up to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you during your lifetime. I will be with you in the same way I was with Moses. I won't desert you or leave you. Be brave and strong, because you are the one who will help this people take possession of the land, which I pledged to give to their ancestors.

"Be very brave and strong as you carefully obey all of the Instruction that Moses my servant commanded you. Don't deviate even a bit from it, either to the right or left. Then you will have success wherever you go. Never stop speaking about this Instruction scroll. Recite it day and night so you can carefully obey everything written in it. Then you will accomplish your objectives and you will succeed. I've commanded you to be brave and strong, haven't I? Don't be alarmed or terrified, because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Observation
These words are spoken to Joshua as he steps into leadership after Moses' death—a moment filled with uncertainty and fear. God's command to "be strong and courageous" is not a demand for confidence, but a promise of presence. The passage's original purpose is to assure Joshua that courage grows from trust in God's abiding companionship, not from personal strength alone.

Application
Where might God be calling you to courage today? It could be in a conversation, a decision, or an act of advocacy. Trust that God's grace goes before you, strengthening you to choose love for the sake of others.

Prayer
God who goes with us, when fear holds me back, remind me of your presence. Strengthen me to act with courage and faith, trusting in your grace. Amen.

Friday, January 23

Scripture: Mark 9:30-35
From there Jesus and his followers went through Galilee, but he didn't want anyone to know it. This was because he was teaching his disciples, "The Human One will be delivered into human hands. They will kill him. Three days after he is killed he will rise up." But they didn't understand this kind of talk, and they were afraid to ask him.
They entered Capernaum. When they had come into a house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about during the journey?" They didn't respond, since on the way they had been debating with each other about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be least of all and the servant of all."

Observation
Jesus offers this teaching after overhearing the disciples arguing about who is the greatest. In the cultural context of the first century, status and honor defined social worth. Jesus intentionally overturns these assumptions by redefining greatness as service. His words challenge both ancient and modern hierarchies, revealing that God's reign is marked by humility and care for others rather than power.

Application
Being "last" may mean setting aside personal preference, listening more than speaking, or elevating someone else's voice. These practices shape us into Christlike people and draw us deeper into God's transforming grace.

Prayer
Servant Christ, teach me to value humility over recognition. Help me to serve freely and joyfully, reflecting your love in all I do. Amen.

Saturday, January 24

Scripture: Hebrews 10:22-25
Therefore, let's draw near with a genuine heart with the certainty that our faith gives us, since our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies are washed with pure water.
Let's hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, because the one who made the promises is reliable.
And let us consider each other carefully for the purpose of sparking love and good deeds. Don't stop meeting together with other believers, which some people have gotten into the habit of doing. Instead, encourage each other, especially as you see the day drawing near.

Observation
The letter to the Hebrews was written to a community growing weary under pressure and persecution. The author's purpose is to encourage perseverance by emphasizing mutual responsibility within the community of faith. Rather than focusing solely on individual belief, this verse highlights the importance of encouraging one another toward love and faithful action—reminding the church that growth in holiness is communal.

Application
Consider how you can encourage someone else today—through affirmation, prayer, or shared service. Wesley emphasized that growth in holiness happens together, as we support one another in faithful living.

Prayer
God of community, thank you for shaping us through one another. Help me to encourage love and good works, growing together in grace. Amen.