Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of November 22, 2026

Prayer for the Week
Thank you, God, for everything. Thank you for life, for relationships, for the resources I have received. Most of all, thank you for always being faithful and at work in my life. Help me to see my life and everything I have as a gift from you to be your hands and feet in this world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Monday, November 23

Scripture: Mark 12:41-44
Jesus sat across from the collection box for the temple treasury and observed how the crowd gave their money. Many rich people were throwing in lots of money. One poor widow came forward and put in two small copper coins worth a penny. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than everyone who's been putting money in the treasury. All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had, even what she needed to live on."

Observation
The Jerusalem Temple was a huge religious, social and even business center, bustling and noisy. Sustaining the institution took many large gifts—and many people gave such gifts. (Matthew 6:2 even hinted that some people hired a bugler to attract notice as they gave large gifts to good causes.) But Jesus noticed, and honored, a different kind of giver. He praised a generous, trusting widow who gave her "fortune"—two tiny copper coins—to the Temple.

Application
How much equipment or staff would the widow's offering, which Jesus praised, have made possible for the Temple? Sometimes we think we give just to boost the church or other worthy institutions. In honoring the widow's trusting generosity, what spiritual impact of generosity did Jesus recognize? How does giving, of any amount, enrich you spiritually?

Prayer
Lord of heaven and earth, teach me how to love you as much as the widow Jesus noticed. Teach me how to offer my time, my talents, my treasures, and myself for your glory. Amen.

Tuesday, November 24

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-24
"Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don't eat them and where thieves don't break in and steal them. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"The eye is the lamp of the body. Therefore, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how terrible that darkness will be! No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be loyal to the one and have contempt for the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Observation
We must choose what we value most even in our hobbies (e.g. if a band you love has a concert on the same night your favorite team has a big game, which do you attend?). Jesus focused on the biggest choice all of us are called to make in life, the choice of our ultimate, governing loyalty. Wealth in and of itself is value neutral, but Jesus said putting it at the emotional center of your life is not. He taught that "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," and added, "You cannot serve God and wealth."

Application
We can spend money on many things, vacations, various collectibles, prized belongings, tickets to special events, houses, retirement savings. Have you ever put money into something touted as "secure" that proved to be insecure? What do you think Jesus meant by collecting "treasures in heaven"? Where is your heart? Do you put as much time and energy into "investing" in heaven as into earthly investments and spending choices?

Prayer
Lord Jesus, you are Lord of my life, and I want to "collect treasures" in heaven. As I make concrete, everyday choices of how to spend my time, energy and money, increase my capacity to live out your values. Amen.

Wednesday, November 25

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34
"Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body, what you'll wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds in the sky. They don't sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are? Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? Notice how the lilies in the field grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth. But I say to you that even Solomon in all of his

splendor wasn't dressed like one of these. If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it's alive today and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace, won't God do much more for you, you people of weak faith? Therefore, don't worry and say, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?' Gentiles long for all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. Instead, desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Observation
Using exaggeration to make a point (as in "That bag weighs a ton"), Jesus warned against worry, not against planning. So, today's passage may feel radical at first, against all common sense. That may have been even more true for Jesus' first hearers. Jesus' audience would have been ordinary peasant people who had to worry about their next meal all the time, yet Jesus tells them not to worry about anything. He asks them instead to view the world with new eyes, in order to see all around them evidence of God's care and provision.

Application
Jesus didn't condemn planning, if we do it with our values straight. How easy or hard do you find it to live out Jesus' wisdom to "desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness"? What wishes or dreams matter so much to you that (if you're honest) you might want them more than God's kingdom and righteousness? What choices have you made (or do you want to make) to keep those wishes and dreams in proper perspective?

Prayer
Lord Jesus, you modeled a life of peace and trust. Help me to keep learning how to live a life in which my energy can focus on your purposes rather than my fears. Amen.

Thursday, November 26 - Thanks Giving Day

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Observation
Thanksgiving is a day set aside to pause and recognize the blessings in our lives. But the Apostle Paul reminds us that gratitude is more than a holiday tradition; it is a way of life. He encourages us to "rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances." Notice that Paul doesn't say to give thanks *for* all circumstances, but *in* all circumstances. Even when life is difficult, uncertain, or disappointing, we can find reasons to be grateful because God's love and faithfulness remain constant. Gratitude helps us shift our focus from what we lack to what we have received, reminding us that every good gift is an expression of God's grace.

Application
It's easy to give thanks when life is going well, but gratitude can be more challenging when things don't turn out as we hoped. As you celebrate Thanksgiving today, take a moment to look beyond the food, family, and traditions to recognize the many ways God has been present in your life. What blessings have you overlooked or taken for granted? Who has been an expression of God's love and grace to you this year? How might practicing gratitude each day shape your attitude, deepen your faith, and inspire you to share God's blessings with others?

Prayer
Gracious God, thank you for the countless blessings you pour into my life, both seen and unseen. Open my eyes to recognize your goodness in ordinary moments and your faithfulness in difficult times. Give me a grateful heart, not just today, but every day. May my gratitude overflow into generosity, kindness, and love for others. Amen.

Friday, November 27

Scripture: Luke 24:44-48
Jesus said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. He said to them, "This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Observation
Jesus, with his disciples after the crucifixion and resurrection, taught them to reflect on Israel's history to find their ongoing mission. They were to preach to all nations the life found in his resurrection. Jesus charged the disciples to preach the story of repentance and forgiveness of sins. He opened the disciples' minds to see the big picture: that their history as a people, from Moses to the Psalms, said that in the Christ there is salvation and justice.

Application
Your personal story of a changed heart and life is powerful to the non-religious and nominally religious people you interact with wherever you live, work or play. You, like the disciples, are a witness to God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ. In what ways can you share your personal story of a changed heart and life with those around you?

Prayer
God, keep me alert for chances to faithfully share the story of your son's life, death, burial and resurrection. Give me courage when afraid, confidence when unsure, passion when indifferent. May I make you proud as I share my personal story of a changed heart and life. Amen.

Saturday, November 28

Scripture: Acts 1:3-8
After his suffering, he showed them that he was alive with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God's kingdom.
While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. He said, "This is what you heard from me: John baptized with water, but in only a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?"
Jesus replied, "It isn't for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Observation
Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give his followers power to bear witness to God's work in the world. The Spirit still gives us guidance, courage, strength, alertness, and passion to share the person and work of Jesus. The mighty wind that is the Holy Spirit (John 3:7-8) empowers Christians to be storytellers of God's great love for the world. God calls us to radiate hope, to live with a confident expectation that God's work is real and present in the world today.

Application
The "end of the earth" could be anywhere -- your office, your favorite restaurant, your health club or your cul de sac. Where are the one or two places where you can most effectively share your faith story with others? Which one of your friends, family members, or co-workers can join you in this mission?

Prayer
God, give me chances to share my faith story with others. Show me where you are already at work around me so I can join you in your work. Help me remember that my power comes from the Holy Spirit. Amen.