



THE WAY *Back*

TEN-DAY PRAYER GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 14–23, 2022



Grace Chapel
CHURCH OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

This 10-day prayer guide was written to be a part of the eight-week journey through the series, The Way Back. As you walk through these ten days, you may choose to fast (from food, an activity that is a part of your normal schedule, etc.) in addition to the time you spend in prayer. Each day's prayer guide is fairly short and intended simply to be a starting point for your daily conversation with God. You may choose to incorporate additional ways of hearing from and speaking to God, such as additional Bible reading, time in a quiet and reflective place, singing songs of worship, and so on.

If you would like help thinking through ways to make these ten days more meaningful, please reach out to a staff member, your small group leader, or the shepherd that helps to oversee your spiritual journey. We would be honored to walk with you through this short season.

Praying for you!

Paul



DAY ONE

SEEING GOD AS THE CREATOR

So much of what we know about God comes directly from what He reveals to us about Himself in the Bible. The Bible exists as a collection of books written over a period of hundreds, even thousands, of years by different men, all of whom were inspired by the Spirit of God. Even the first words of the Bible tell us something incredible about God. Genesis 1:1 reads like this: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” As Genesis 1 progresses, we learn that God created much more than just the heavens and the earth. He created the stars, other planets, and the sun. He created life of all kinds here on earth—trees, plants, animals, and eventually human beings. Everything that exists owes its being to the God of creation. Yes, even you!

READ

Genesis 1:1–2:3

PRAY

God, I’m grateful that you saw fit to breathe all of creation into existence. I’m thankful that you made the seas and the land, the heavens and the earth, the mountains and the valleys, the birds and the fish, and all of the animals. I’m thankful that you made me. Help me to rejoice in the good things you have created and to see the world, and other people, the way you do.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY TWO

APPRECIATING THE MAJESTY OF CREATION AND THE MAJESTY OF THE CREATOR

Early last month I issued the challenge to go spend some time in a place that moves you to think about the God who created all we see. I enjoy being by the water. For me, there is a peace I find in seeing the sky reflected in the ripples on the surface of a lake. I often find myself captivated by the power of the rolling ocean waves. And there are few colors that I find more beautiful than the blue of the deep ocean, or the aquamarine of the near-shore coral reef. You may be moved by a mountain scene. Maybe it's the night sky, far away from civilization that moves you to wonder. The moments we spend in creation have the potential to fill us with awe; not just awe of creation, but maybe more appropriately, awe of the Creator. It is good to appreciate the majesty of creation, but even better to appreciate the majesty of the One who spoke all we see into existence!

READ

Psalms 8

PRAY

Father, as I look upon your creation, I am in awe of what I see. I realize that too often I forget to reflect upon you as the Creator. Help me to be in awe of you. Help me to wonder about the God who has the power to speak creation into being. Help me to experience your beauty, your power, your attention to detail, and the vastness of your creativity through what you have made.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY THREE

A RELATIONAL GOD

The words of the chorus of the old hymn *In the Garden* say this:

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

Have you ever thought about God walking with you? If not, take a minute to imagine what it would be like to walk with God. What do you think you would want to talk with Him about? What do you think He would want to talk with you about? What do you think would happen as a result of walking together? The Bible often uses the imagery of someone walking with God to indicate that a particular person—Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and so on—had a relationship with God. In Galatians 5, we learn that God invites all disciples of Jesus to walk in step with His Spirit. In other words, God wants to share a relationship with His people. This is a powerful idea—one that moved King David so deeply that he asked God, “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” Today, I want you to spend some time marveling at the fact that the God who created the universe wants a friendship with you.

READ

Galatians 5:22–25

PRAY

God, I pray that you will help me to keep in step with your Spirit. Thank you for wanting a relationship with me. Help me to value the relationship you offer me more than anything else this world has to offer. I want to walk with you. I want to know you. I want to have a real relationship with you.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY FOUR

THE RELATIONAL FRACTURE

Sometimes, when reading the story of the fall of mankind in Genesis 3, I'm tempted to become quite critical of Adam and Eve. In the Garden they had everything they could ask for—security, friendship (with God and each other), food, meaning and purpose in life, and the list goes on. And in one moment, they gave all of that up. And for what? In moments like this I need to take a step back and be honest with myself. Had I been in their shoes, I would probably have made the same mistake. Their sin is my sin. Their mistrust of God is my mistrust of God. I'm no better than they are, in fact, I'm likely worse off. Adam and Eve's sin separated them from God. The walks they had once experienced with Him in the Garden became a thing of the past. My sin, and yours as well, also serves to separate us from God. It is important that we own this truth—we are sinners. We are all broken, and we have all messed up.

READ

Romans 3:10–18, 23

PRAY

God, just like Adam and Eve, I am guilty of walking away from the relationship you have offered me. I have chosen my will over yours. I have sometimes mistrusted that you know, and even that you truly want, what is best for me. I have lived like I know better. As the apostle Paul says, I have turned away from you. Help me to accept this truth, so that I can, in turn, choose something much better from this point forward.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY FIVE

HUMILITY (PART ONE)

We live in an age in which it is hard to find genuinely humble people. Books have been written discussing the waning of this quality within our society—one even bears the title, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement*. Yet, humility is a quality that God wants to see in all those who would follow Him. As we try to embrace genuine humility, we may feel like we are trying to swim upstream of culture. But, it will be worth it! Deep, authentic relationship with God can only begin when we humble ourselves before Him. The first few days of this devotional guide, as with the first few weeks of this message series, were designed to help us see God more clearly. Here's why: I believe something amazing and truly transformative happens when we begin to see God clearly—we begin to see ourselves clearly as well. It is this honest reflection upon the majesty of God, and the equally honest reflection upon our own brokenness that moves us to come before Him humbly.

READ

Isaiah 6:1–8

PRAY

God, I want to be humble before you. As I see you clearly, I recognize that I have no choice but to be humble before you. As Isaiah was, I am a man/woman of unclean lips, and I come from a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty. Help keep me humble as I walk before you today. Keep me humble tomorrow and each day forward.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY SIX

HUMILITY (PART TWO)

First Peter 5:5 says that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. It seems as though God is almost magnetically drawn to those who are genuinely humble, and equally magnetically repelled from those who are proud. It's not that He doesn't want to know those whose hearts are pride-filled, or that He doesn't want them to know Him; it is that pride creates a barrier between God and people that can only be broken down by humility. God makes incredible promises to those who come before Him humbly. He will give them grace. He will offer them true relationship. He will offer them forgiveness, love, and hope. The way back to God begins with humility.

READ

2 Chronicles 7:11-16

PRAY

Father, help me see that the way back to you truly does begin with humility. Help me to read and take to heart these words: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." Help me, in humility, to pray to you. Help me to seek your face. Help me, in humility, to turn from my wickedness and want nothing more than what you want for me.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY SEVEN

TURN

Throughout history, God has held a deep hope that people would turn to Him. In the Old Testament the word we often translate as “repent” can also mean “turn, renounce, and return.” God’s people, the Israelites, often walked away from Him, and just as often God called to them asking them to turn back to Him. God is calling us back to Him as well. He’s inviting us to turn from the things that have led us away from Him. He’s inviting us to turn from the things that keep us from being fully committed to Him. And when we do, He promises to give us a heart to truly know Him. As the old song says, “Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling...Calling, O sinner, come home!”

READ

Jeremiah 24:6–7

PRAY

God, I want to turn from my ways so that I can see you. I ask that you give me a heart to know you. Help me see that your plans for me are good, and that you promise to always be faithful. Help me believe that what you have for me is better than what I chase after when left to my own desires. I need to be freed from all that keeps me from being fully committed to you. I ask you to help me turn to you.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY EIGHT

REPENT

Repent. Turn. Renounce. Return. Come back to me. These are God's words to a people who have made their own choices—and those choices have so often led us away from Him. As Isaiah 53:6 says, we are like sheep, who choosing our own way have gone astray. But He, Himself, has paved the way back to Him. He has paved it through love. He has paved it through sacrifice. He has paved the way through winning, on our behalf, a victory we could never win on our own. And what does He ask of us? He asks that we choose to walk the path He's laid out for us. He asks us to trust that He truly does know and want what is best for us—and for all those with whom we come into contact, as well! Will you trust and choose His Way for you over your own? In Acts chapter 2, when Peter was asked by the crowd, "What can we do?" His answer was, "Repent." Turn back to God. Choose His Way. Choose Jesus over all else, knowing He did just that for us!

READ

Acts 2:29–39; Luke 9:23–24

PRAY

God, I want to repent. I want to choose your way over my own. I want to place you first, as Lord and King over my life. I confess that I am like a sheep that has gone astray. I thank you that you have not given up on me—that you are like a shepherd who would leave his ninety-nine sheep to find the one who was lost. I see that the road back to you is paved with your own sacrifice. It is paved with your love. I know it is paved with the victory you have already won on my behalf. I'm asking you, from this day forward, to help me choose your way over everything else.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY NINE

RETURN

God makes amazing promises to those who choose to return to Him. This is true in the case of unfaithful Israel in the stories of the Old Testament, and it is equally true today. As we read yesterday, the promise of forgiveness of sins and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit have been made to “you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39). In today’s passage we see the promise of God’s presence amplified in the words of Peter’s second gospel sermon. God promises that if His people return to Him, He will return to His people. This begins when we start to see God and ourselves clearly. This humbling moment moves us to come before Him with a contrite heart. Then, like the Acts 2 crowd we ask, “What can we do?” That’s when we hear His words, “Repent, return to me, and I will come back to you!” Today, know that God promises to send His presence and times of refreshing and renewal into your life, daily, if you will choose Him first.

READ

Acts 3:13–20

PRAY

God, your promises are amazing. It’s hard to believe, after all I have done to walk away from you, that you still call me back. Thank you again for not giving up on me. Thank you for promising to send your Holy Spirit to live in me. Thank you for wanting a relationship with me. God, I ask you to help keep me humble. Help me to see you clearly each day. Help me to see that there is nothing better than knowing you.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?



DAY TEN

NEW LIFE

So, what would you expect if you heard that someone who had previously lived as Lord and King of their own life had now chosen to make God their Lord and King? Would you expect this person to live much the same as they had before this decision? Would you expect to see significant changes in what he or she valued and pursued in life? What do you think? What do you think might change if someone suddenly began to live life in the presence of the Creator of the universe? Everything! The Bible, especially the New Testament, is filled with passages that describe the change that takes place in those who live life in the presence of God. People like this find a power over sin and temptation that was previously absent. They discover a newfound joy in loving God and loving others. At its core, all of life is given new meaning, value, and purpose. This is the new and abundant life that God wants followers (disciples) of Jesus to experience daily. He offers us an entirely new life.

READ

Romans 6:1–11

PRAY

Father, I want to experience the new life you offer. I want to live life in your presence. I know this means I will have to deny myself daily, take up my cross, and follow after you, but I trust that what you have for me is better than what I have often chosen for myself. You promise that if I give up my life for you and for the sake of your Kingdom, I will find real life. You promise freedom from the addiction to sin. You promise meaning, value, and purpose that goes far beyond what this world has to offer. I confess that I have, at times, struggled to fully embrace your new life. Sometimes I have held on to pieces of the old life. Help me to live fully devoted to you, fully in relationship with you, and help me to walk fully in the abundant life you offer.

Is there anything else you feel moved to pray about today?