

Week of November 5

ThanksLiving

IN EVERYTHING, GIVE THANKS

A Pattern for Daily Prayer

Becoming Aware of God's Presence

Christ is all things and in all people.

Colossians 3:11

Giving thanks to God

We're praying this so that you can live lives that are worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him in every way: by producing fruit ...by being strengthened...and by giving thanks with joy to the Father. Colossians 1:10-12

Listening for God's Voice

(see daily guides at right and inside)

Silence / Reflection

***Prayers for our world, the church,
those near to us, and ourselves.***

Offering of Self to God

God, what do you want to do through me today?

Blessing

The peace of Christ must control your hearts—a peace into which you were called in one body. And be thankful people. Colossians 3:15

Growing in Prayer

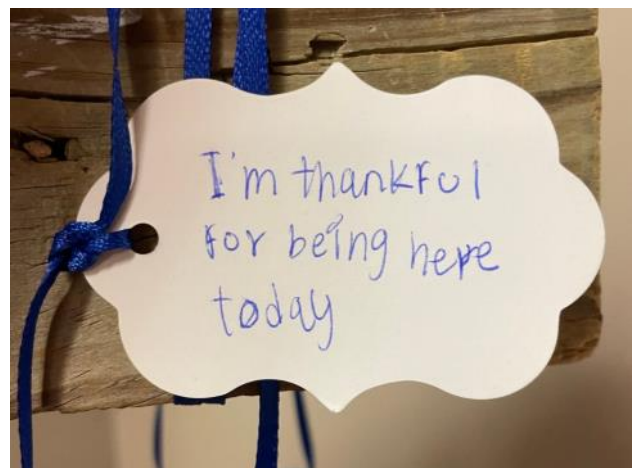
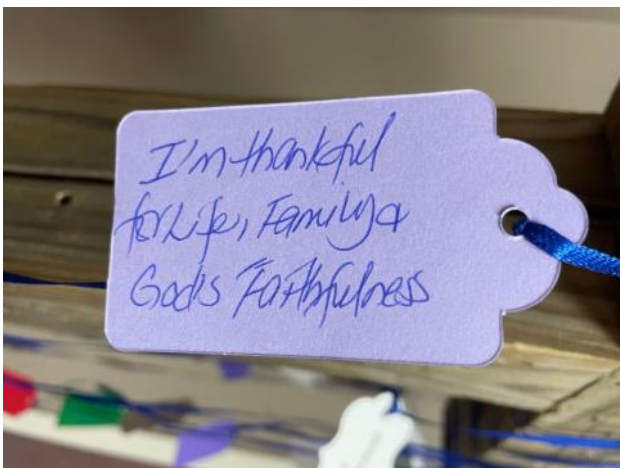
Years ago, while reading a devotional book, I sensed that the author had a deep connection to God. It seemed as though while reading, I was joining in with the author's prayers, that somehow I was connected with God through the author's connection to God. My soul seemed to open in new ways.

I began to seek out similar authors that somehow seemed to have an experience of God in prayer—authors like Brother Lawrence, Andrew Murray, Thomas R. Kelly, and Richard Foster. These trusted friends were my guides, teaching practices, and disciplines that God used in healing my relationship with God.

Later, I began praying with other people. In praying with others, I realized how limited my prayers were. I never prayed for alcoholics and addicted persons until I prayed with Rachel. I learned to pray for the children of the church from Stanley. Not only did I grow in my desire to pray for other people, but praying with others created a bond with them. Somehow, as we shared aloud to God our deepest concerns, we grew to know and care for one another.

In these times, I have learned something I should have learned from scripture—that our prayers for one another create bonds. Jeremiah knew this, as the prayers of his people became his prayers. Matthew knew this, as he wrote that what is bound here on earth is in heaven.

In hearing one another's prayers, these expressions of our deepest longings, we begin to know one another as children of God who also hurt and love and know God's joy. The healing we often need, and the healing God often provides when we pray together, is one of relationships.



DAILY REFLECTIONS

Day 1: Colossians 3:10

¹⁰ and put on the new nature, which is renewed in knowledge by conforming to the image of the one who created it.

Until college, I thought I was good at taking tests. Listening in class and reading the book wasn't enough; I had to learn new ways of learning. Flash Cards didn't work for me, but writing did. I would rewrite my notes. Then, list the essential points. Create a one-page summary, writing important formulas and critical ideas. The more I wrote, the better I remembered and understood the material.

Paul writes about renewing in knowledge the new nature we have in Christ. The kind of knowledge we need is not found in lectures or textbooks but in our conforming to, or behaving like, Jesus.

Like my old exercise of writing and rewriting, this new kind of knowledge comes about by using our bodies. Not learning by writing, but by practicing imitating Jesus.

There are times when I'm reluctant to practice this. I'm not always at ease talking one-on-one with people; with prayer and practice, I've grown more comfortable. At times when I haven't felt like helping or serving, I find my attitude changing with the action of helping. Most remarkable, serving outside my comfort zone, I have been surprised when God's unexpected grace is present. Perhaps that is the knowledge that I most need. Just try to imitate Jesus and trust God.

Pastor Cyndi McDonald

Day 2: Colossians 3:13

¹³ Be tolerant with each other and, if someone has a complaint against anyone, forgive each other. As the Lord forgave you, so also forgive each other.

As we go through life, our feelings get hurt, others will make us mad, and life will seem unfair through others' actions towards us. Paul tells us to bear with each other and to forgive them. Sometimes that seems almost impossible to do. However, that is exactly what we are called to do. It says it in the Lord's prayer when we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

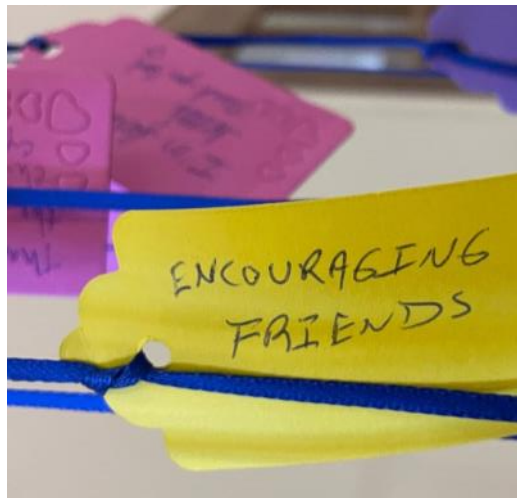
The singer, Matthew West has written a wonderful song about the power of

forgiveness. If you haven't heard it, I'd encourage you to listen to it. The lyrics were inspired by a true story about a mother who lost her 20-year old daughter to a drunk driver. She chose to do the impossible and forgive the driver who took her daughter's life. She even went to the courts and spoke on his behalf and helped to get his sentence reduced when the judge and the jury both said that she

had a right to hold a grudge.

She has stated that through the power of Jesus Christ she's able to forgive this man. Because of the forgiveness that Jesus gives to us, we as Christians are called upon to give forgiveness.

Catherine Holland



Day 3: Colossians 3:15

¹⁵ *The peace of Christ must control your hearts—a peace into which you were called in one body. And be thankful people.*

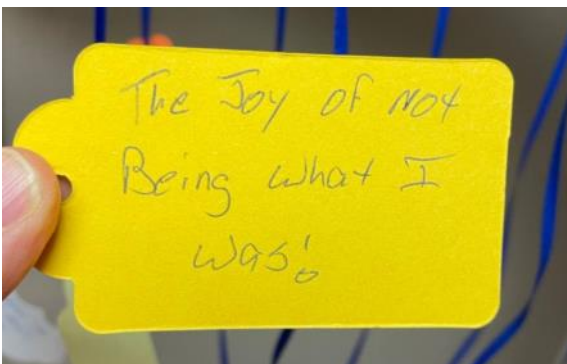
Peace on Earth? How can one access peace on earth in the middle of the storms that life presents? I am reminded of this in the book of Matthew:

Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

Matthew 8:24-27 NIV

In this story, Jesus was at total peace and was even asleep when all of the disciples were full of fear for their lives. He told his disciples they lacked faith and didn’t understand why they were so afraid and full of fear. Without faith in God we are like a ship tossed in the wind. Through Jesus, we have access to the peace of God that transcends all understanding and can calm any storm. This knowledge can be a source of strength and comfort during the next storm of life that hits.

Derek Nobs



Day 4: Colossians 3:16

¹⁶ *The word of Christ must live in you richly. Teach and warn each other with all wisdom by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*

Breathe.

Practice gratitude
not just in moments of abundance
but also in times of scarcity.

Even in challenges, there are blessings to be found.

Shift your focus
from what you lack
to what you have,
and your perspective will change

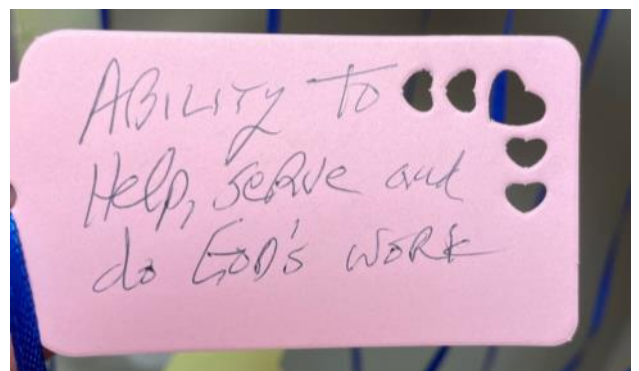
Gratitude opens your heart
to the abundance of life

Prayer:

Divine Creator,
Thank you for the blessings in my life,
both big and small.

Open my eyes to see
the abundance around me,
even in difficult times,
and help me cultivate
a heart of gratitude.

Theneshia Dixon, from her book 1 Minute Car Devotions: For Busy Moms

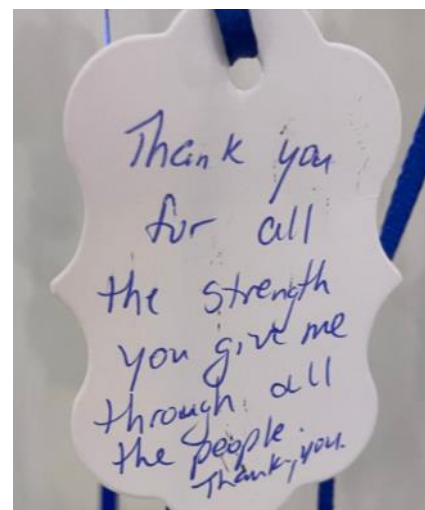


Day 5: Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ Whatever you do, whether in speech or action, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him.

My mom, Katie Doss, is who I think about when hearing this Bible verse. My mom does so much for me, and she does it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Some of the things she does for me are helping with homework, studying, and even doing fun stuff. She also helps me deal with hard times, like when my grandpa died or when I get hurt. She also helps me by talking to me about things that I can't fully understand. Like when something happens that is hard for me to process. She is definitely a blessing from God. She does so many things for so many people. She is the best Person/Mom I could ever ask for and she does all of these things in God's name, and in Jesus' name, and in the name of the holy spirit who lives within each of us.

Grady Doss



Day 6: Colossians 4:5-6

⁵ Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. ⁶ Your speech should always be gracious and sprinkled with insight so that you may know how to respond to every person.

Our calling needs to be dedicated beyond our Church to serve and make significant contributions for those in need within our community. Paul challenges us to reach outsiders around us and through gracious efforts make a difference in their lives.

"Be wise in how we show," by example, the Word that Christ has modeled for us by our understanding and empathy for those in our community. Pray that our personal approaches will provide avenues for faith, hope, and commitment to follow our Savior.

"Conduct yourselves wisely toward others, making the most of the time." Look for and respond to those in need.

Our call is to find avenues to make a difference where we live and worship. This commitment needs to come from within as it requires determination, sacrifice and reliability.

Our McKendree model of this dedication, for many years, is the Phucas Family. Andy, Carole and Christy are visible each month as they coordinate our Lawrenceville Co-Op food collections on Sunday mornings and Andy has served on the Board of the Lawrenceville Co-Op with many years of dedicated service. McKendree continues as faithful, gracious servants to help those in need with prayer, food and caring hearts.

Chuck Shackelton