

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of June 19, 2022

Weekly Prayer: God of all creation and God of relationships, how good it is when we can live together in unity! Knit us together as your people in one family. Equip us for the hard work of living as fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers. As we are blessed through our relationship with you, may we become a blessing to each other and a witness to all the world; in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Monday, June 20

Scripture: Genesis 27:34-38; Jeremiah 1:12-13

When Esau heard what his father said, he let out a loud agonizing cry and wept bitterly. He said to his father, "Bless me! Me too, my father!" Isaac said, "Your brother has already come deceitfully and has taken your blessing." Esau said, "Isn't this why he's called Jacob? He's taken me twice now: he took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing." He continued, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me?" Isaac replied to Esau, "I've already made him more powerful than you, and I've made all of his brothers his servants. I've made him strong with grain and wine. What can I do for you, my son?" Esau said to his father, "Do you really have only one blessing, Father? Bless me too, my father!" And Esau wept loudly.

The LORD then said, "You are right, for I'm watching over my word until it is fulfilled." The LORD asked me again, "What do you see?" I said, "A pot boiling over from the north."

Observation: Fathers play a major role in the development of children. The Bible is full of stories where the blessings of God are passed from father to children. This was vital, because the blessing gave both honor and identity to the child in whom it was passed. To receive favor, honor and blessing brings a strong positive sense of who you are and whose you are. The lack of this affirmation causes many people to seek it in addictive behaviors like workaholicism, power, and any relationship whether good or bad.

Application: What kind of affirmation did you receive from your father and how did that make you feel when he gave it? Where do you seek affirmation for your life today? How do you think your current identity reflects how you related to your dad while growing up?

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for those persons in my life past and present who guided and shaped my sense of self. As I have been blessed by such persons, let me seek ways to bless others. Amen.

Tuesday, June 21

Scripture: Genesis 27:21-27; Mark 10:13-16; Mark 1:40-42

Isaac said to Jacob, "Come here and let me touch you, my son. Are you my son Esau or not?" So Jacob approached his father Isaac, and Isaac touched him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the arms are Esau's arms." Isaac didn't recognize him because his arms were hairy like Esau's arms, so he blessed him. Isaac said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am." Isaac said, "Bring some food here and let me eat some of my son's game so I can bless you." Jacob put it before him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank. His father Isaac said to him, "Come here and kiss me, my son." So he came close and kissed him. When Isaac smelled the scent of his clothes, he blessed him,

“See, the scent of my son
is like the scent of the field
that the LORD has blessed.

People were bringing children to Jesus so that he would bless them. But the disciples scolded them. When Jesus saw this, he grew angry and said to them, “Allow the children to come to me. Don’t forbid them, because God’s kingdom belongs to people like these children. I assure you that whoever doesn’t welcome God’s kingdom like a child will never enter it.” Then he hugged the children and blessed them.

A man with a skin disease approached Jesus, fell to his knees, and begged, “If you want, you can make me clean.” Incensed, Jesus reached out his hand, touched him, and said, “I do want to. Be clean.” Instantly, the skin disease left him, and he was clean.

Observation: Since it is vital that you give your blessing to your children, how do you do that effectively? The first way to show blessing to a child is through healthy affection and healthy physical touch. And physical affection doesn’t end when a child becomes an adult. It is important to continue to give healthy physical touch and affection at all ages and stages. Jacob was 40 years old when Isaac blessed him, and he did it with touch and affection. Jacob did the same for his children when they were even older.

Application: Did you grow up in a house that showed healthy affection and touch or one that didn’t show much at all? Is your home right now a place of healthy touch and affection? What can you do to improve this vital relationship builder?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you continually got physically close to those who were hurting. Help me to stay physically close to those in my family and circle friends so that through words and actions I may be a blessing to them. Amen.

Wednesday, June 22

Scripture: Genesis 27:27-29; Jeremiah 29:11; Proverbs 18:2

So he came close and kissed him. When Isaac smelled the scent of his clothes, he blessed him,

“See, the scent of my son
is like the scent of the field
that the LORD has blessed.

May God give you
showers from the sky,
olive oil from the earth,
plenty of grain and new wine.

May the nations serve you,
may peoples bow down to you.

Be the most powerful man among your brothers,
and may your mother’s sons bow down to you.
Those who curse you will be cursed,
and those who bless you will be blessed.”

I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.

Fools find no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing their opinion.

Observation: Another gift parents give their children is continually speaking words of God's promised future into their children's lives. Children most often live into the picture of life they receive while growing up. The more you can shape those God-given pictures of purpose and life the more those words will create physical realities. The spoken word has creative power to build up and tear down, and it's never too late to speak into a child's future.

Application: What are your current life pictures and where do you think you got them? Do you need elevate them from where they are now? What negative words thrown at you in the past (or recently) do you need to let go? How can you practice forgiveness or if necessary, make amends?

Prayer: God, please be the guide that I need. Give me the patience to reflect on my words and actions before I speak and before I act. Let the memory of my presence in someone's life be a cause for thanks. Amen.

Thursday, June 23

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6-7; Genesis 28:13-15

Train children in the way they should go;
when they grow old, they won't depart from it.
The wealthy rule over the poor;
a borrower is a slave to a lender.

Suddenly the LORD was standing on it and saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will become like the dust of the earth; you will spread out to the west, east, north, and south. Every family of earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants. I am with you now, I will protect you everywhere you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done everything that I have promised you."

Observation: Words alone cannot build a relationship. It is also vital that you show sustained committed action to illustrate what you are trying to communicate. Training means repeated practice and the more children see your actions, the more they will emulate what you do. You are God's covenant carrier and the means by which Jesus Christ will be advanced in your children and in the world. So, make some proactive commitments to be involved in your children's interests, to surround your family with others who are speaking God's future into their lives, and you do the same for those who come into your sphere of influence.

Application: Every time a child is baptized, the congregation is invited to make a commitment to showing God's love in all the ways possible for the sake of the children. What "spoken word" can you begin speaking into someone's life this week that will help them see God's preferred future? What proactive commitment will you make today to begin consistently passing on God's blessing to your children and grandchildren and to the children God brings into your life?

Prayer: Creator God, thank you for the children and the hope they bring to this world. In all the ways that I can, use me to bless and to show the greatness of your love to each child I encounter this week. Amen.

Friday, June 24

Scripture: Philippians 3:15-21

So all of us who are spiritually mature should think this way, and if anyone thinks differently, God will reveal it to him or her. Only let's live in a way that is consistent with whatever level we have reached.

Brothers and sisters, become imitators of me and watch those who live this way—you can use us as models. As I have told you many times and now say with deep sadness, many people live as enemies of the cross. Their lives end with destruction. Their god is their stomach, and they take pride in their disgrace because their thoughts focus on earthly things. Our citizenship is in heaven. We look forward to a savior that comes from there—the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform our humble bodies so that they are like his glorious body, by the power that also makes him able to subject all things to himself.

Observation: Haven't we all been places where we have seen children behaving inappropriately or parents interacting inappropriately with their children? It is easier for us to look at other people's children or other parents and see the problem. Maybe you've even had a few thoughts about the solution. It is far more difficult for us to recognize the words and actions in our own lives that are problematic. In fact, the last thing we often want is someone to point them out to us! In Philippians, Paul is saying "look at me." For those who are followers of Christ, we are models for others. Other people are watching us. Most importantly, our children are watching.

Application: How can you claim each day the image of Christ? What reminder do you need in order to remember before a word is spoken or an action is undertaken that you have humbled yourself before God? In verse 17, Paul says "watch those who live this way." Who are the examples that you look to as you strive to be the best father (or the best role model) that you can be?

Prayer: God, I am so grateful that I do not need to go through life on my own. You are present always, and when I fail, you are alongside to redirect. Help me to turn to you each day so that my whole day will honor you and be a source for good in the lives of those around me. Amen.

Saturday, June 25**Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:16; 6:6-7**

Honor your father and your mother, exactly as the LORD your God requires, so that your life will be long and so that things will go well for you on the fertile land that the LORD your God is giving you.

These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting around your house and when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are getting up.

Observation: The fifth of the Ten Commandments is also the first one with a promise. God desires something more for us than longevity. The quality of our lives is tied to our relationship within the family. Children are instructed to honor their parents. Such a command also assumes that parents are honorable. How do parents accomplish that? That answer is found in the second reading.

Application: What teachings did you receive from your parents that have shaped your priorities? How are you passing your faith to the next generation? What would your children or grandchildren describe as your “heart”?

Prayer: Dear God of all that is good, just as I am blessed through my relationship with you, I want to be a blessing to others and a witness to all the world. May the greatness of your love be at work in me each day. Amen.