



grow. pray. study.

February 23, 2020 “Walking with Christ”

Scripture: Matthew 4:17-20, 16:24, John 1:12 and Romans 10:9

Questions in this GPS marked with an arrow bullet point are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

Family Activity: As a church and as KiDSCOR, our children’s ministry, we are excited to partner with your family on your faith journey. On this journey, it is important that your child is also engaging in the Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life. While in KiDSCOR, your child participates in worship, study, serving, giving, and sharing. Along with offering many church-based opportunities for your child to grow in their faith, we desire to support you at home as you lead your child to do the same. Each week we provide you with resources. These resources contain information about the lesson your child experienced, and ideas you can use throughout the week to put these lessons into practice at home. We also post a lot of tips, information, and resources on social media and in our newsletter. For more information about KiDSCOR visit <https://cor.org/leawood/kids>.

Walking with God

MONDAY 2.24.20 Micah 6:6-8, Romans 6:1-4

The prophet Micah lived at a time when Israel was practicing ceremonial religion and “conspicuous consumption” side-by-side. On God’s behalf, he urged a change of course. Pious rituals, he said, are no substitute for simply treating people justly. The apostle Paul said baptism identifies us, includes us in Jesus’ death. He carried on the metaphor—as Jesus was raised from the dead, so our baptism means that now we can “walk in newness of life.”

- In what ways do your culture and community fall short of doing justice, embracing faithful love and walking humbly with God? Scholar Gary Smith wrote, “Micah’s delineation of God’s requirements is noteworthy insofar as it includes no negative statements about what is forbidden to the Israelites. It presents a positive case of what God thinks is best for humankind.” * How can you actively move yourself, your family, your workplace and your community toward what God thinks is best for humans in not only words but in actions?
- To some who said, “Let’s continue sinning so that grace can multiply,” Paul replied that we only truly accept God’s grace as we “die” to our old way of living. Our baptism, he said, is the acted-out symbol in which we show that we’re serious about that. What are your ongoing areas of struggle? In what ways have you seen Christ’s gift of new life break the ruling power of sin in your life? (If you’ve never been baptized, but want to be, you can find information at <https://cor.org/baptism>.)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, my goal is to walk humbly with you. Lead and guide me into the newness of life that you died and rose again to offer me. Amen.

* Gary V. Smith, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hosea, Amos, Micah*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001, p. 555.

Worship God with gratitude

TUESDAY 2.25.20 Psalm 95:1-7, Revelation 5:8-13

Israel's understanding that they worshiped the one God developed over time. At times, they adapted language from the cultures around them, as in Psalm 95:3. They sometimes called all supernatural beings "gods." (The New Testament and most Christians call them "angels.") But God was the great person they worshiped and thanked, the "great king over all other gods." In their Temple, the smaller altar burned incense continually. Revelation 5 picked up on [Psalm 141:2](#) in saying the fragrant smoke constantly ascending was a sign of prayer connecting God's people with God.

- Psalm 95:7 echoed many other psalms (including the beloved [Psalm 23](#)) in saying we are sheep for whom God cares as a shepherd. Sheep are utterly dependent on their shepherd to keep them fed, watered and safe. Left to their own devices, they tend to be helpless to ensure their own survival. How grateful are you that in a big, complex universe you are one of God's sheep, watched over with divine caring and love?
- The vision of Revelation pointed the way to our personal practice of worship by its use of the Temple's incense symbolism. Of course we pray together in our worship services. But there is a personal closeness and trust when we make it a point to share our individual gratitude and concerns with God in personal prayer. In what way(s) can you weave prayer more fully into your daily routine?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for the promise that your ears are always open to my prayers ([Psalm 34:15](#); [1 Peter 3:12](#)). Help me to make this practice a constant part of my walk with you. Amen.

Study God's message of truth

WEDNESDAY 2.26.20 Psalm 119:103-105, 2 Timothy 2:14-15, 3:14-17

All that many of us know of Psalm 119 is that it is "the longest chapter in the Bible." It was so much more than that! Today's passage offered a poetic image of valuing the light we find in God's word on the pages of Scripture. And as Timothy's spiritual mentor, the apostle Paul urged him to "Present yourself to God as...a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." All of us, like the psalmist and Timothy, need to value reading and applying the Bible's principles accurately.

- The psalmist's activity was not haphazard or casual: "I'm studying your precepts." Can you recall one or more times when, as you studied the Bible asking God for wisdom, you had the sense of a lamp shining on some dark issue or challenge you faced? Earlier the psalmist said, "I keep your word close, in my heart" ([Psalm 119:11](#)). How can memorizing key parts of the Bible store them in your heart, always accessible to you in any circumstance?
- Article 5 of the United Methodist Articles of Religion, which date back to church founder John Wesley, says "The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation." (To read article 5, or the whole document, [click here](#).) That grew from Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:15. The Scriptures wouldn't solve all historical, scientific or financial issues, but they would "lead to salvation." What parts of the Bible's story most powerfully led you to Christ's gift of salvation?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I aim to worship and serve you. Thank you for the long procession of dedicated followers of yours who wrote and transmitted the Bible as the primary source for me to study to learn the way of salvation. Amen.

Serve as Jesus served

THURSDAY 2.27.20 Isaiah 58:5-8, Matthew 20:24-28

Isaiah 58 spoke to Israelites who did many “religious” things, including fasting, but only from self-serving motives. (The prophet Micah made the same point in [Micah 6:6-8](#) which we read on Monday.) Why, they asked, didn’t God honor their feasts and fasts? The prophet said they didn’t need showy, external fasts. They needed to “fast” from mistreating other people. Jesus called his followers to excellence, but not in human status and power. Jesus said his example would show them that in his kingdom true greatness grew from serving others.

- Fasting, whether from food or some other valued activity, is a helpful spiritual practice. But most Israelites’ fasting only seemed to go skin-deep. [Isaiah 58:3-4](#) noted sadly that the pious “fasters” kept abusing their workers and fighting each other. How do verses 6-7 speak to your heart and your life today? What is one step you can take this Lenten season to make your spiritual practices truly life-changing, as the prophet called Israel to do?
- We have a pretty good idea what human power, privilege and importance look like. Down deep, most of us likely wish for some of the perks that go with power. But Jesus’ view of greatness was succinct and direct: “that’s not the way it will be with you.” Jesus said he didn’t come to be served, but to serve, and even give his life. In what specific ways does (or will) walking with Jesus change your approach to life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in a world obsessed with seeking power and honor (a world a lot like mine), you relentlessly focused on serving others. Please walk with me as I seek to live a life that embodies your servant spirit. Amen.

Give generously

FRIDAY 2.28.20 Exodus 36:3-5, 2 Corinthians 9:6-9

Moses led the people in building the Tabernacle to honor God (cf. [Exodus 35:30-35](#)). The workers met a welcome but surprising problem. They told Moses, “The people are contributing way too much material for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do.” Amazing generosity! As the apostle Paul gathered a gift for Christians in Jerusalem, he cared more about the spirit in which people gave than the amount raised. “God loves a cheerful giver” was not a catchy slogan, but a call to check why they gave. “They shouldn’t give with hesitation or because of pressure,” he said.

- Moses told the Israelites, “Whoever freely wants to give should bring the Lord’s gift offerings” (Exodus 35:5). Exodus 36:3 described the people’s contributions as “spontaneous” gifts. What needs to happen in your heart, in every human heart, in order for us to give “freely” and “spontaneously”? Have you at times been able to give freely, and found joy in the process?
- On the other hand, have you ever been in a situation where you felt you had to give reluctantly or under compulsion? What was that experience like? For what reasons would God desire that we give from free, grateful hearts without coercion or pressure? How does giving from the overflow of gratitude in your heart differ from giving under either social/peer pressure or a sense of fear?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you pour out your gifts freely, from the “ordinary” ones like morning sunshine to the biggest gift of forgiveness and salvation. Help me keep learning how to live in your generous spirit. Amen.

Share Jesus’ love to bless all people

SATURDAY 2.29.20 Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 28:16-20

God made great promises to Abraham, “the ancestor of all those people...who have faith in God” (cf. [Romans 4:11](#)), including “a land I will show you,” and “I will bless you.” Human nature might read promises like that as “God thinks I am more special than anyone else!” But God had a completely different mission in

mind. God blessed Abraham so that he and his descendants could share the blessing: “All the families of earth will be blessed because of you.” And Jesus told his disciples to “go,” a command that harmonized with the call to Abraham. As you walk with Jesus in the daily rhythms of your ordinary life, the Savior said, prioritize the mission of making disciples. Share the good things God has brought to your life. And never forget that the empowering presence of Jesus is with you every day.

- Scholar Theodore Hiebert wrote of the promise to Abraham, “The Israelites who [first] listened to these stories experienced these promises as coming true in their own time....Much later...when Israel and Judah had been conquered...these old promises gave a vision about who God’s people might be again in the future.” * In what ways is God’s promise and mission statement to Abraham not just ancient history, but a pointer to God’s ideal for you as one of God’s people? For people to become disciples means submitting to Christ as the Lord of their life and coming into community with other believers in his Lordship. Teaching disciples means leading them toward a life of obedience to Jesus, not just intellectually teaching doctrine. ** As he did to Abraham, Jesus said “go” to all his followers. How’s the “going” part of your walk? As you make Christ the Lord of your life, in what ways is your Lord leading you to make disciple-making a priority?

Prayer: Loving Jesus, not everyone you invited chose to follow you. But enough did that someone repeated that invitation to me. Help me to take my place in the ranks of your followers who share as a key part of walking with you. Amen.

* Theodore Hiebert, sidebar note “The Promises to the Ancestors” in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 23 OT.

** *NIV Bible Commentary, Volume 2*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994, page 134.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

Janet Holt and family following the death of Denver Holt (father-in-Law), 1/31/2020

Family and friends following the death of Jason Collins, 2/4/2020

Chuck Hornback and family following the death of Sally Hornback (wife), 2/6/2020

Laurie Matson-Ritter and family following the death of Neola Mae Matson (mother), 2/7/2020

Howard (Gene) Hinemeyer and family following the death of Helen Hinemeyer (wife), 2/9/2020

Pamela Place and family following the death of Dan Eugenides (partner), 2/10/2020

David Seelen and family following the death of Nancy Seelen (mother), 2/11/2020

Bill Carter and family following the death of Walter Carter (brother), 2/14/2020

Mary Galloway and family following the death of Doug Galloway (husband), 2/15/2020

Mark Mustoe and family following the death of Bonnie Mustoe (mother), 2/16/2020

Ozzie Shoup and family following the death of Dee Shoup (wife), 2/18/2020

Shirley Betts and family following the death of Brent Trueblood (son), 2/19/2020