

ACTION STEPS FOR THE WEEK	
Monday Action Step 1	Are you studying God's Word daily? If not, make a habit of that starting today!!
Tuesday Action Step 2	Think about things that keep you from investing in God's Word. How can you overcome those things?
Wednesday Action Step 3	How's your prayer life? Do set aside time each day to talk with the Lord <i>and</i> sit in silence to listen for His voice? If not, start carving out that time today.
Thursday Action Step 4	
Friday Action Step 5	Are in invested in the Body of Christ? Are you part of a Bible believing church? If not, start praying that God will guide you to one.
Saturday Action Step 6	
My biggest area for prayer and work this week	

DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR:

GROWING IN CHRIST



Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ.
 ~ Philippians 3:8

MONDAY

READ: Psalm 119:49-72

George Muller, who was known for his strong faith, once confided, "The first 3 years after conversion, I neglected the Word of God. Since I began to search it diligently, the blessing has been wonderful. I have read the Bible through one hundred times and always with increasing delight!"

John Bunyan, who wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*, testified, "Read the Bible, and read it again, and do not despair of help to understand something of the will and mind of God, though you think they are fast locked up from you. Neither trouble yourself, though you may not have commentaries and expositions; pray and read, and read and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal from man."

1. Looking again at verses 49&50, how is it that the promises of God are strong enough to comfort suffering and preserve life?
2. Since all of God's promises prove true, how did that give the psalmist confidence as he studied God's Word?
3. How can this give you confidence as you study God's Word?
4. According to verse 72, how precious was God's Word to the psalmist?
5. How precious is God's Word to you?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His Word which teaches us to know Him better and love Him more
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not clinging faithfully to the promises of God
- ◆ Ask God to strengthen your trust in His promises
- ◆ Ask God to help you view His Word and His ways as infinitely precious

SATURDAY

READ: Titus 2

Having people in the church of all ages is a great blessing. However, such age differences can cause real problems. This is why Paul gives Titus counsel on how to help various ages of people deal with each other.

In multigenerational churches, older people are to teach younger ones by their words and example. This is how faith and values are passed on from generation to generation. The whole idea of "the generation gap" is one of Satan's great traps. If he can get older people thinking, "I can't relate to this new generation," while at the same time getting younger people to think, "Old people just don't get us!" then he was won a great victory. The coming generations need to see and hear from current generations what it means to serve, follow, and grow in Christ.

1. According to verses 3-5, how are the older women to be an example in word and deed to the younger women?
2. According to verses 2 and 6-8, how was Titus and the older men to be examples by word and deed to the younger men?
3. What are you doing to help teach the coming generation?
4. How have you seen Satan use "the generation gap" trap in this church or anywhere else?
5. Set aside a time when you can pray for the coming generation

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for those in generations gone by that have taught you
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, a failure to teach the next generation about what it means to live for Christ
- ◆ Ask God to show you how you can be used to teach the coming generation

FRIDAY

READ: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

With the human body, many parts come together to form a whole. Likewise, with the body of Christ, many Christians come together to form one body. Now, just as a body is only healthy when all the parts work together, so the body of Christ is only healthy when all the parts are working together.

If my stomach refused to accept food, it wouldn't matter if my mouth, throat, and esophagus all worked to bring food to it. One part can effect the whole. The same is true in the body of Christ. If one part is missing or not working, the whole church will feel it. This is why Satan likes to create and stir conflict in the church, or make us think we can grow as Christians on our own. Both are lies.

1. Satan will keep us from growing in Christ by using pride, making us think we don't need anyone else, or he can get us with doubt, making us think no one needs us. But what does verse 27 say?
2. Can you think of a time when you have seen a church in real turmoil because of the decisions or actions of just a few people?
3. Do you think the body of Christ can do just fine without you (or without a person or two you might be picturing!)? How does Paul prove that kind of thinking wrong?
4. Satan wants to keep you from growing in Christ and fulfilling your part in the body of Christ? Is he succeeding in you?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God that He has specially designed each person to fit perfectly in the body of Christ
- ◆ Thank God for the vital and necessary role He has given you
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not fulfilling your role in the body of Christ
- ◆ Ask God to help you see that each and every person in the body of Christ is valuable and necessary

TUESDAY

READ: Psalm 119:137-176

Timothy Dwight wrote, "The Bible is a window in this prison world, through which we may look into eternity."

Philip Brooks wrote, "The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks at his telescope, he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it..."

As members of the human race living here on earth, it is easy to fall into the trap of looking at our own earthly pursuits. But when we read the Bible, we encounter something much greater than ourselves. And that Great One changes our perspectives, challenges our views, and shakes us free of earthly thinking so that we can focus on the things of eternity.

1. The psalmist is having his life threatened, yet he continues to praise God and focus on His Word. How does that help change His focus?
2. How can shifting your perspective to the eternal perspective of God help you when you encounter the fleeting issues of this world?
3. How can a continual study of God's Word help you to keep God's perspective?
4. What does your daily devotional life look like? How can it improve?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His Word and the eternal perspective it gives
- ◆ Thank God for who He is, for His kingdom, and for His perfect will for your life
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not seeing life through His eyes
- ◆ Ask God to help you invest in His Word so that you can begin to see things from His perspective

WEDNESDAY

READ: Matthew 6:5-15 —Part 1

For the next two days, I'd like us to look at a model. Now, I recently saw on the news where France is actually trying to introduce a law that would ban all "ultra-thin super-models"! Models would be required to be "curvier," so as not to send a message to young girls that starving yourself is good. However, this is not the kind of model I am talking about!

Further, I know people who like to build model boats and planes and cars. They will spend hours building and painting these models. However, this is not the kind of model I am talking about either. The model I am referring to comes from Matthew 6. There Jesus gives us a model prayer. Not a model to be copied verbatim and repeated as some rote mantra, but a model to be adapted and used in our every day lives.

1. In verses 5-7, why does Jesus want us to guard against "show prayers" and "rote prayers"?
2. What is the benefit of praying in a quiet place from a sincere heart?
3. Since Jesus condemns repetitious prayer, yet urges persistent prayer. What is the difference between repetitious prayers and persistent ones?
4. Do you have a quiet place you like to go to be alone with God? If not, why would it be good for you to find such a place?
5. How can connecting with God through prayer every day help you know Him better and better?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His desire to hear from you His dear child
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, making shallow and repetitious prayers
- ◆ Ask God to help you pray from a sincere heart
- ◆ Seek to stay in communion with God through prayer

THURSDAY

READ: Matthew 6:5-15 —Part 2

While living in Wisconsin, we had our basement finished. Once it was done, I had the not so great pleasure of putting together three bookcases that we had purchased for the basement. Following the directions given, I was able to put them together with great effort and near loss of my sanctification!

Later, we got a little matching end table to go with the bookcases. Being me, I thought, "Since I put those big bookcases together, I think I can put this little end table together without the directions. How hard could it be?" Several mistakes (and hours) later, I decided it was best to follow the model and directions given to me.

Models are important and can help us greatly. And when Jesus is the one giving the model, we can be sure that the model is incredibly important and of immense help!

1. Jesus starts His model prayer by focusing on God. Why is it important that we live our lives with a focus on God?
2. Jesus moves from a focus on God to a focus on His kingdom and His will. Why is it important that we make sure our focus is on God's kingdom and will?
3. Look at verse 12 and then verses 14&15, why is forgiveness in our hearts and in our prayers so important?
4. Looking at verse 13, why is it vital to daily (and continually) pray to be delivered from Satan and his temptations?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank Jesus for the model prayer that He provided you
- ◆ Thank God for who He is, for His kingdom, and for His perfect will for your life
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not spending time communicating with Him
- ◆ Ask God to help you focus your prayers on God, His will, and His kingdom
- ◆ Ask God to help you know Him better and better