



**DISCOVERING
MORE**

**DEVOTIONS
BOOKLET**

**WEEK THREE
HOLINESS
MARCH 13-19**



THE DISCOVERING MORE DAILY DEVOTIONAL IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CENTRAL COLLEGE AS A FELLOWSHIP TO EXPLORE THE VARIOUS AVENUES IN WHICH WE ACCESS, PARTICIPATE IN, AND EXPLORE OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH JESUS CHRIST-- BOTH ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, BUT IN OUR CHURCH, LOCAL COMMUNITY, COUNTRY, AND THE WORLD AT-LARGE.

CHRISTLIKENESS, THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE, THE VIRTUOUS LIFE, THE PRAYER-FILLED LIFE, THE WORD-CENTERED LIFE, THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE, AND THE COMPASSIONATE LIFE. JOIN IN EXPLORING THE WORD OF GOD EACH DAY, WITH PASTORS, STAFF, PARTNERS, LIFE GROUP LEADERS, AND MORE ALL SHARING THEIR REFLECTIONS AND VIEWPOINTS ON THE DAY'S REFLECTIVE PASSAGE.

**FROM SUNDAY, MARCH 13TH
"THE GIFTED PSALMIST"
WRITTEN BY CONNIE TRACY**

THE PASSAGE:

Psalm 51:10-13

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

THE DEVOTION:

King David, the gifted psalmist and valiant warrior whom God anointed to lead Israel found himself in unfamiliar territory after his sinful actions with Bathsheba and his deceitful plot that caused her husband's death. David's sin alienated him from the Holy God whom he loved, served, and communed with.

Still, God forgave and pursued David through the prophet Nathan who confronted him about his sin. Psalm 51 depicts David's truthful, humble plea for forgiveness and restoration. With sincere repentance, he poured out his heart to God, confessed his transgressions, acknowledged God's unfailing love and infinite power to forgive sin, and sought a clean heart and steadfast spirit that would bring him and others into a right relationship with God.

We were created for communion with our Heavenly Father and He pursues us today, offering His unmerited grace and right standing with Him through the redemptive power of His son Jesus. As believers, we have the Holy Spirit living within us, convicting us and calling us into a deeper relationship. May we respond with repentant, joyful, and willing hearts that long for more of Jesus and effective service for His name's sake.

Prayer: Father God, mold and shape me into your likeness, transforming me into a person after your own heart. Thank you for sending your Son to redeem me and for your Holy Spirit to prod and guide me into wisdom and a close relationship with you. Forgive my natural, worldly wanderings. Turn them into supernatural yearnings for more and more of you so that I will know, worship, and serve you better. Amen.

**FROM MONDAY, MARCH 14TH
"THE ONE WHO KNOWS MY HEART"
WRITTEN BY PASTOR DAVID REDDING**

THE PASSAGE:

Psalm 139: 23-24

"Search me, God, and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"

THE DEVOTION:

This is one of those underappreciated Psalms. Psalm 139, however, is very nearly as poetic and meaningful as Psalm 23 but you have to be patient in searching for it in your Bible because while Psalm 23 appears early in the book Psalm 139 is way at the back end. You'll find it's well worth your time and attention though. I hope you'll find that it cracks open a window into the heart and the holiness of the Almighty One: the only one who not only meets us wherever we may wander but we'll find he's already beat us there.

This is a love song sung by the perfect and all-powerful to the imperfect and frail. Here, God, through David reassures us. We sing to the one who is our maker who has known all there is to know about us from day one. He has loved us long before we could come to know him, love him, and even begin to try to live as he desires.

As we immerse ourselves in this wonderful Psalm may we become increasingly aware and appreciative that the all-powerful, all-knowing Holy One is interested in our daily considerations, our deepest concerns, and the condition of our innermost being. He knows us from beginning to end and can discern our most intimate thoughts even those we were sure were hidden away. Lay open bare your heart also to him today and let your sins fall like scales beneath the Cross of his Son, Jesus. May his precious blood, and the ministry of his Holy Spirit make us holy as he is holy.

Prayer: O God, my Heavenly Father, help me to be more grateful for all you've done for me from the very beginning, from the cross of your Son to eternity stretched out before me.

Enable me daily and at every turn to become increasingly aware of your presence wherever life may take me. May the perfect beauty of your holiness be what awaits me when I one day find myself in your throne room, Father. I pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

FROM TUESDAY, MARCH 15TH
"BEAR GOOD FRUIT, AND STOP PUTTING ON THE DOG"
WRITTEN BY PETE ELLSWORTH

THE PASSAGE:

Luke 6: 43-45

"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."

THE DEVOTION:

From the Life Application Bible: "Jesus reminds us that our speech and actions reveal our true underlying beliefs, attitudes, and motivations. The good impressions we try to make cannot last if our hearts are deceptive. What is in your heart will come out in your speech and behavior." It seems clear that we must first fill our hearts with Jesus, then our speech and behavior will consist of good fruit.

What does good fruit look like? Galatians 5: verse 22 tells us that "...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Like a gardener who cares for a fruit tree, we can maintain our trees through daily prayer, bible study, fellowship, and worship. Hopefully, this will keep us from getting cut down and thrown into the fire!

My mom used to tell me to "Stop putting on the dog."

That meant, stop dressing up and pretending to be someone else. Put on simple clothes and be the person God made you be. Good advice and I'm sure it kept me from producing a lot of bad fruit.

Prayer: Dear God. We want to produce good fruit for you. Please fill our hearts with Jesus so that we can produce the fruit of the Spirit. Luke 6, verse 45 states that "...A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart.." Help our hearts, our speech, and our behavior all to be consistent and pleasing to you. If our hearts are filled with you, then we can only produce good fruit. Bless our fruit so it can be helpful to others, make someone's day better, and hopefully bring someone closer to You. Amen.

FROM WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16TH
"DEAD TO SIN"
WRITTEN BY ROGER & KATHY WADSWORTH

THE PASSAGE:

Romans 6:11-14

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

THE DEVOTION:

To count ourselves "dead to sin" means that every day we should consciously be reminded that our old self is gone and should be unresponsive to sin because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. We must firmly believe that we are a new creation in Christ. We are not a remodeled sinner but a newly created saint.

Sin's penalty of death has been paid in full by our Lord Jesus and frees us to belong to Him. This is necessary if we want to live the holy life that God calls us to do, and we must have this knowledge of who we are in Christ or it will be impossible to live out our righteousness in Christ. In order to do this, we must identify our personal weaknesses, recognize the things that tempt us and stay away from those temptations, invest our time in good habits and service, always lean on God's strength and grace and let the peace that only comes from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, fill our hearts and minds.

We can use our minds and bodies for many things, good or bad. Sin makes every part of us vulnerable to attack but with the help of prayer and the grace from Christ Jesus, we can overcome sin.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We give you thanks and praise for all you have done for us. We have accepted your Son, Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Savior. Please guide us every moment of every day to do your work and your will to show others your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 17TH
"BETTER UNDERSTANDING OUR WALK WITH THE LORD"
WRITTEN BY KENT & LORI ROBINSON

THE PASSAGE:

Romans 12

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

THE DEVOTION:

Our experience is that it has been easy to fall into damaging patterns of the secular world. We let our focus remain on the daily activities and distractions. We have frequently fallen into the trap of assuming that we are good people and doing good things, but frankly, that is not enough.

As Christians, we are beginning to understand our own ignorance and complacency when we study the Bible. We have to take a more holistic approach in our journey with Christ. We cannot just read the Bible, we need to practice and dissect the meaning and apply it to our daily lives.

Through the church sermons and personal biblical studies, we are learning to transform our hearts and minds to God's will. We are studying how to better align our lives to please God and not please ourselves.

Gaining knowledge on how to please God has helped us grow with the Church and in our own lives. This should be considered a journey rather than a destination. Ultimately, our path will include not just understanding and practicing the Word, but how we can please God.

What did you do today to please God?

How did that make you feel?

Heavenly Father, thank you for Central College Presbyterian Church. Thank you for bringing us here to help grow our relationship with You. Thank you for the messages and many opportunities to enhance our walk with You. Use us Lord to help spread your word and teachings. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

FROM FRIDAY, MARCH 18TH
"JOY IN SERVING"
WRITTEN BY DAN & SHERRI BISHOP

THE PASSAGE:

Philippians 2:12,13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

THE DEVOTION:

Paul writes “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed- not only in my presence but how much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.” Paul used the word obeyed which may conjure a variety of images in our minds.

One definition of obeying is “to trust” and another is “to hear God’s Word and act accordingly”. We often hear about ways to serve God in our church, our community, and our world. The opportunities are limitless as are the needs around us. We know we should obey God but do we want to?

Do we choose to? When we listen, God will show us where He wants us to serve Him. He has given us gifts and talents for that very purpose. Some of us feel we know what those spiritual gifts are and others of us are still searching. Nothing wrong with that. God will reveal them in His time but we continue to serve, search and listen for His still, quiet voice. God is with us even in our struggles to obey. He waits patiently full of love.

God’s power gives us what we need to obey and serve. When we as church partners are presented with opportunities to live out the Gospel and make the kingdom of God visible let’s ask ourselves where He is directing us. Then we ask how He wants us to do it and who are we to walk alongside to serve.

From serving in the food pantry, making lunches for the homeless, teaching on Sunday mornings, volunteering for Vacation Bible School to being a faithful prayer warrior, all are heeding the call to obey and serve for the glory, honor, and praise of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Questions: Where is the Lord calling me to obey and serve in my church and community? What can I do to be a shining light for His glory and a beacon of His love?

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your great love for me and all people. Help me to hear your Word, to obey your calling, and to share it with family and friends. Help me to make your kingdom more visible to everyone I meet. In your precious name. Amen

**FROM SATURDAY, MARCH 19TH
"VALUABLE TRAINING"
WRITTEN BY MATT KERNS**

THE PASSAGE:

1 Timothy 4:7-10

"Spend your time and energy in the exercise of keeping spiritually fit. Bodily exercise is all right, but spiritual exercise is much more important and is a tonic for all you do. So exercise yourself spiritually, and practice being a better Christian because that will help you not only now in this life, but in the next life too. This is the truth and everyone should accept it. We work hard and suffer much in order that people will believe it, for our hope is in the living God who died for all, and particularly for those who have accepted his salvation."

THE DEVOTION:

Before COVID hit my wife Laura was really into running. She decided to attempt to run a couple of short races including a 5k and a 10k. Even though she was in good shape and had been playing soccer for 20+ years she knew that some extra training would be beneficial. For several weeks leading up to her races, she would take a couple of nights and go for a run around the neighborhood. Each week her goal was to either run farther or increase her speed. The training was not burdensome but rather met with joy. She saw the value in running not only to get in better shape but also to help relieve stress from a busy workday.

This training not only helped her with her immediate goal of running a 10k but what her sights were really set upon, the Cap City half Marathon! She knew that her training would not only help at the moment but for a later and more rewarding goal.

Spiritual training can be looked at the same way, we can train ourselves for the short term (this life) and also use it to focus on the long term goal (life to come). When we value the outcome the training can become more enjoyable. As Christians, our focus must not solely be on the immediate gratification but also on the approaching reward. Spiritually exercise your mind so that you may continue to prepare yourself for God's heavenly reward for those who trust in his salvation!

Reflection Questions: How do you view spiritual training? Is it burdensome or valuable? Are you continuing to grow in your faith and knowledge of God, or are you satisfied with where you are?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for loving us and continually showing us patience. As we strive to get closer to you, protect and encourage your loved ones. Let the hard work and pain we suffer to be used to train us for our heavenly reward. In Jesus' name, Amen.