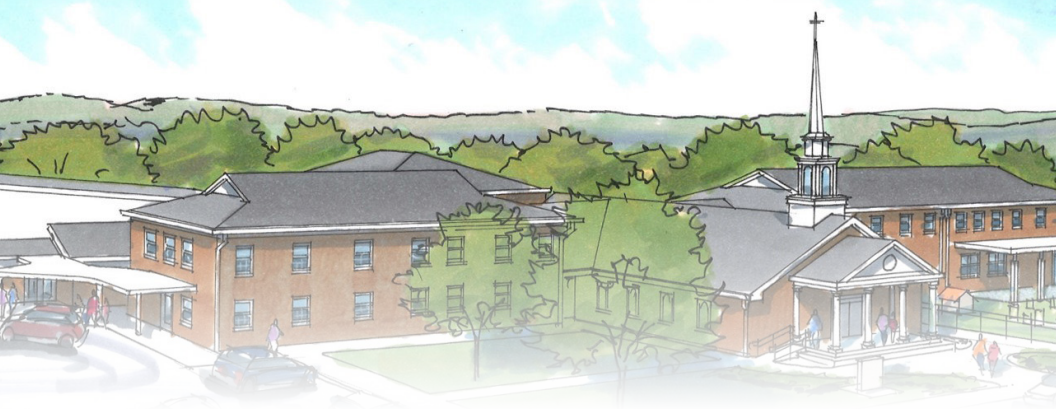




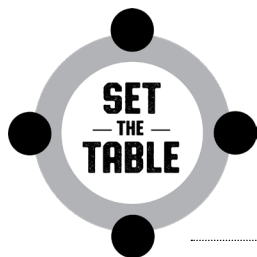
DEVOTIONALS



Prayer is a vital role in our relationship to God.

Join us this week as the Jasper family calls on God together in prayer. These devotionals are written by our own church family to challenge us each day this week. Read a devotional each day, and pause to pray about what God is calling you to do.





DAY 1

DEVOTIONALS

Moving Forward

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus." — Philippians 3:13-14

Have you ever felt lonely, worthless, or unloved?

As a young person I felt like something was missing in my life. Why didn't I belong? Why didn't I feel loved? Why wasn't I good enough?

From my teens through adulthood, I suffered from anxiety and depression. My spiritual life consisted of sporadic visits to church. Seeking acceptance in the world, I lived a life of sin. I was plunged into darkness time and time again. It was debilitating at times, even to the point of longing to end my life.

After being completely defeated and broken, I asked God to help me, to fill me and make me whole. I prayed for Him to forgive my sins and to transform me. I asked Him to take charge of my life and come into my heart. And I asked Him to take away all my sinful desires, acts, and habits. I asked Him to forgive my sins. I surrendered everything to Him. In return, He filled my heart with peace and love.

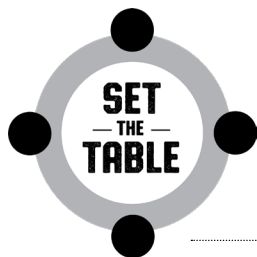
In reflection, it has not been easy by any means. I do my best to live a life that He would approve of. Even though I am still a sinner, I know I am forgiven if I repent and ask for forgiveness. In exchange for my surrendering to Him and allowing Him to be the boss of me, I feel His presence in my heart. I don't feel unloved, unwanted, or alone anymore.

— Karen Lambert

PRAYER THOUGHT

There remains only our response to God.

Pray, "I am ready and willing to trust God in all things."



DAY 2

DEVOTIONALS

Hearing God Speak

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer." — Psalm 19:14

Words -- we see and hear them. It is hard to close them out. They tumble around in our heads at night and can threaten our well-being. Negative words can cause us to question our abilities and listen to Satan's lies. This verse helps me to remember to encourage and not to destroy with the words I speak.

How is it possible to keep my words constructive and acceptable to God? What am I thinking about? Are my thoughts on God's promises or on the continued blabbering and noise of the World around me? There is plenty of advice people want to share, but is it what God wants me to hear and think on? God's Word and being aware of His presence offers a peace the World cannot give us.

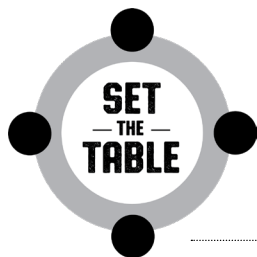
Our strength comes from the Lord. I can testify of His strength as I have walked through the valley of death. His words and eternal promises have given me something to hold on to in days of solitude and uncertainty. This Psalm continues to be one of my prayers because I need His strength each day.

Let us sing words of praise to the one who created the mouth to speak and the ears to hear. With our eyes, help us see, understand and reflect on the truth of God. May the Word and your words provide the guidance we seek daily.

— Karen Westbrook

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, help me to watch through the windshield of my life and discover your direction for me.



DAY 3

DEVOTIONALS

God's Love Is Deep

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." — Romans 5:8

It is easy to forget that our Heavenly Father loves us perfectly. Even though He has blessed me with loving parents, family, friends, and a loving church family, sometimes I just feel unlovable. However, He is faithful in reminding me of His love through scripture, messages and songs.

One of my favorite hymns is "How Deep The Father's Love For Us." The words of this hymn paint a perfect picture of God's deep, sacrificial love for His children. I am often moved to tears every time I sing or hear the words of this song, because I am reminded of His great love for me. It's an unconditional love so deep that I cannot comprehend it. I am overwhelmed by the thought that He loves me so much that He sacrificed His only Son to cover my sins. This act of love proves the depth and extent of how much God cares for not only me, but all of His children.

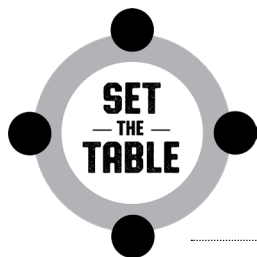
God does not love us because of anything we have done to earn His love. He loves us because He created us. He wants to have a relationship with His children. No matter how many times we fail, God continues to love us. Nothing can separate us from His love. Read Romans 8:38-39. It is comforting to know that I cannot change God's enduring love for me.

I encourage everyone to spend some time exploring scripture to discover God's unfailing and everlasting love.

— Christy Taylor Sacks

PRAYER THOUGHT

Ask the Lord to remind you of how He has already prepared you for His work through His deep and amazing love.



DAY 4

DEVOTIONALS

Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
— Psalm 34:18

This song has special meaning for both of us. Mark's mother sang it to each of her babies as she rocked them to sleep. In turn, I also did this with our own children. It's a beautiful old hymn that expresses to us that Jesus loves us so much that He will never, ever leave us. Little did we know how much we would cling to those precious words.

As most of you know, we lost our only son on October 10, 2021. Unless you have experienced the loss of a child, it's hard to comprehend the depth of pain and grief that have now become part of who you are. We quite honestly felt like we could not survive. BUT GOD!

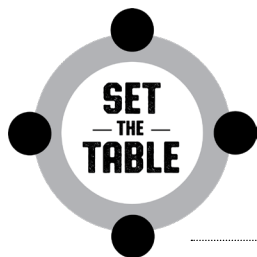
God's holy Word promises us over and over that He will be with us always and will provide for all of our needs. This Psalm tells us that God comforts his children with broken hearts and heals us when we grieve. Matthew 5:4 states, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Jesus promises comfort to those who are mourning and grieving a loss. If Jesus tells us that He will give us comfort, that means that He has to be with us all the time. So the words of the hymn must be true: Jesus is mine!

We have learned to completely lean on our Lord and Savior for everything. Mark and I now understand that without Jesus, we are nothing. In our darkest days, the only way we survived was through remembering His promises and leaning into Him. If we could trust Jesus with our shattered hearts, we can trust him with everything! So yes, it does truly give us blessed assurance to know that Jesus is ours.

— Mark and Misty O'Leary

PRAYER THOUGHT

"Lord, help me to trust you more and not try to do this in my own power."



DAY 5

DEVOTIONALS

Trusting God In All Things

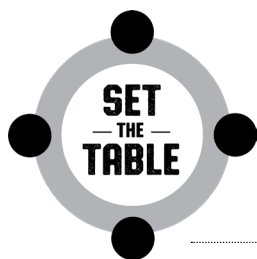
"We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." — Romans 8:28

This is my life verse. Growing up I have never met my biological father. In fact, I was originally born with my mother's maiden name before being adopted into the Berry family. Over the years I have found strength in this scripture because many times throughout my life I couldn't help but question, "why is this happening to me?" As a favored child of God, Romans 8:28 has continually brought me comfort knowing that God is in every situation and has preordained all things to work for the good of his kingdom for those who love him.

— Joshua Berry

PRAYER THOUGHT

Trusting is hard to do. It seems so much easier to be in control.
Pray that God will reveal His will for you.



DAY 6

DEVOTIONALS

Part of the Family

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near." — Hebrews 10:24-25

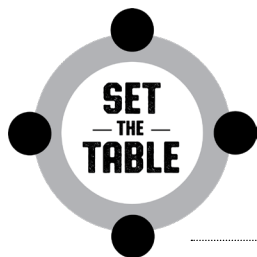
There is an old Bill Gaither song that goes, "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God—I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood! Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod; For I'm part of the family, the family of God." Since coming to Jesus at the age of 25 and joining God's universal family, I have been blessed to be a part of three Bible-believing churches—Falling Water Baptist, Ridgedale Baptist, and Jasper First Baptist. Being a part of those families has blessed my heart in countless ways, and helped me grow in my walk with Jesus.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, as a part of God's family, we are to love, strengthen and encourage one another, walk with one another in the good times and bad, and lift each other up in prayer. Let's spur one another on, as we press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God is calling us!

— Debbie Bramlett

PRAYER THOUGHT

How do you need to be prepared to answer the call of God? Pray that He will grow you and remove all that may stand between you and what He is calling you to do.



DAY 7

DEVOTIONALS

Praying And Rejoicing

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” — 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

When I think back on my journey of faith, I realize how vital a consistent and personal prayer life is to my walk with God. These verses have always been among my favorites. To rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances have transformed my life.

In this world of challenges and hardships, it can feel impossible to rejoice always. I have found that the joy that is found in these trying times is the pure joy of the presence of God. He is with me during all times.

Maintaining a spirit of continual connection with God is what I feel is meant by “pray without ceasing”. It’s finding moments throughout the day where I intentionally invite God into my thoughts. Having regular times of prayer deepens my relationship with God. “Breath prayers” all through the day keep me connected with my Father. Prayer isn’t just an activity; it is an essential part of my life.

When things are tough, prayer helps center me and reminds me that God is still good no matter what circumstances I face. I have learned to thank God for His unchanging love, His presence, and the strength He provides. Prayer is a source of deep nourishment for my soul no matter the time; God is always waiting to meet me.

— Susan Shankles

PRAYER THOUGHT

Ask God, “What are you calling ME to do?”