



**YEARS OF
SUGAR
CREEK**

DAILY PRAYER JOURNAL

to *Love* and **LEAD**
ALL PEOPLE
Life change to
in **CHRIST**

THE JOURNEY

50 DAYS OF PRAYER

This year, Sugar Creek celebrates its 50th anniversary. This is a huge milestone in the life of our church. What an amazing journey our Lord has taken us through these past 50 years. It is also an opportunity to imagine the adventures God is taking us on during the next 50. What began as a Bible study in a home in the Sugar Creek neighborhood where people prayed, asking God to start a church in that community, has turned into one of the most amazing churches anywhere.

One of the greatest joys of my life has been serving you as your lead pastor for the last couple of decades. When I look back at my tenure here, I am blown away by the powerful things God has done as we have pursued our God-given vision to love and lead all people to life change in Christ. Sugar Creek is a beautiful family of thousands of people from more than 90 countries who worship in two languages on three campuses. Yay, God for what only He has done!

All of it has happened because of God's power and blessing. Through the years, we have prayed many prayers asking God to move in His favor, and He has. There is power in prayer. That is why this prayer journal is so important. We honor the Lord for our past 50 years and the great blessings we have experienced. We honor all of those who come before us.

Our 50th anniversary is also about looking forward to what God is doing to expand His Kingdom. I invite you to imagine the journey before us.

This prayer journal is a tool to guide you in praying for our church once a day for the next 50 days. In it, you will find a weekly devotional written by one of our pastors and daily prayer points to help you pray for specific areas of our church and our future. As we humble ourselves before God and ask Him to do what we cannot do for ourselves, I pray we can know Him more and see Him grow us. Let each of these devotionals and prayer times be a transformative time for spiritual growth in your life.

I love being your pastor,

PASTOR MARK

Lead Pastor

WEEK ONE:

ROOTED IN CHRIST

Written By: Ender Palencia, Pastor of Multisite & Missions

Every one of us has the need to feel loved, accepted, and secure. Unfortunately, we try to meet those deep needs in the wrong places. We seek identity, purpose, and security in what our hearts and society call success; status, beauty, financial wealth, relationships, the approval of others, and material possessions are examples of what we believe will make us happy.

However, the happiness those things bring is short and temporary. They can only satisfy us briefly, leaving us longing for more. In our attempt to find identity, purpose, and security, we drive ourselves to work more than what is considered healthy, purchase items we rarely need, and try to impress people we might not even know. We often feel like running on a treadmill, running and running but not getting anywhere.

We feel this way because those things are not designed to meet our deepest needs. Only God can do this. Blasé Pascal, a mathematician and philosopher from the 1600s, said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ."

God, in His grace, sent Jesus to do what we could not do for ourselves. He lived the perfect life we should have lived but couldn't. Then, He died on the cross to receive the punishment we should have received because of our mistakes; He died in our place! But He didn't stay dead; He resurrected from the dead to prove our sin and its consequence (eternal death) have been defeated; therefore, we have nothing to fear.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Good News that because of Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection, we can be confident we are loved by the Almighty God (Rom. 5:8), we have been accepted as His children (John 1:12), and nothing or no one can ever change this (Rom. 8:37-39). This Good News is not just our ticket to heaven but also the source from which we draw wisdom and power to live each day.

Because of what Jesus did for us, we can find our identity, purpose, and security in Him and not in what our flesh or the world tells us. That's why Paul said these words in his letter to the Corinthians:

“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

The word translated as “controls” can also be translated as “hold together.” Paul was trying to communicate that because of what we have received in Christ, we can be rooted in Christ and stand firm regardless of what may come. To know we are loved, accepted, and secure, we must meditate daily on the goodness of God and His promises.

This week, you will be challenged to read Scriptures that will help you understand who you are in Christ and the purpose for which He created you. Pray God will help you find what you need most in Him.

DAY 1

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Prayer Prompts: Identity in Christ

1. What words does this passage use to describe those in Christ?
2. What does it mean that we are reconciled with God?
How was this accomplished?
3. Spend time asking God to show where you have wrongly placed your identity. Then, write down a prayer asking God for forgiveness and to help you embrace your identity in Christ.

DAY 2

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9-10

Prayer Prompts: Called for a Purpose

1. What words does Peter use to describe those in Christ?
2. For what purpose are we called?
3. Spend time praying, asking God to help you live for your purpose. Then, write down things to do to proclaim the Good News to others.

DAY 3

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3-10

Prayer Prompts: Accepted by God

1. According to these verses, what blessings do we receive in Christ?
2. What does having redemption mean?
3. Spend time thanking God for forgiving your sins and giving you a new identity and purpose as His child. Journal your thoughts and prayers.

DAY 4

Scripture: Romans 5:8

Prayer Prompts: True Love

1. What is the clearest demonstration of God's love for you?
2. How does that kind of love make you feel?
3. Pray, asking God to help you accept His love and your new identity and to help you not find identity in your performance or the approval of others.

DAY 5

Scripture: Romans 8:31-39

Prayer Prompts: Safe at Last

1. What are some of your biggest fears and insecurities?
2. What does this passage say about those fears?
3. Write a prayer of gratitude for God's promises to those in Christ.

DAY 6

Scripture: Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:13-14

Prayer Prompts: Empowered by the Spirit

1. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life?
2. How can you depend more on the Spirit to do what God called you to do?
3. Ask God to show you how you can live guided by the Spirit, and write down the ideas that come to mind.

WEEK TWO:

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP

Written By: Tony Price, Pastor of Worship

During the devastating flood caused by Hurricane Helene in North Carolina, which destroyed over 1,000 homes and claimed numerous lives, our social media platforms were flooded with pictures. One picture in particular broke my heart. It was a picture of a little girl in a life jacket, on a canoe, holding her puppy. She was terrified, and as I looked at that picture, I had to wipe away my tears. A few days later, I discovered this picture, along with several others, were AI-generated. They were fake, not authentic. Sometimes it can be hard to discern who or what is authentic. We may struggle to see what is real, but our Heavenly Father knows. He is not fooled. When it comes to worship, His desire is for His children to offer Him genuine, authentic worship that springs from purity, not from superficial, pious, or self-serving motives.

One of my favorite passages in scripture that deals with the subject of authentic worship is John chapter 4, when Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman at the well. The woman thought genuine worship was found in a location of worship (verse 20). To her, that was the only place or way to worship and encounter God. Jesus was speaking of a drastic change in perspective regarding worship. From Old to New Covenant. (verses 22-23) In the Old Covenant, you go to the temple. In the New Covenant, you are the temple. Worship is not about a place, a form, or a style, such as traditional or modern. God is not seeking a certain kind of worship; He is seeking a certain kind of worshipper, one who is authentic and worships in Spirit and Truth.

If “Spirit and Truth” worship is the kind of worship the Father seeks and requires, it would be most important for us to offer this form of authentic worship to our Lord. We understand God is Spirit, so in worship we must communicate and express our love spiritually. It’s not the musical style or the song lyric that gains the attention of the Father but the heart of the worshipper He adores. When the worshipper’s heart is truly broken before God, uninhibited praise and passionate worship will flow.

“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You take no pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” Psalm 51:16-17

Jesus said He was the “way and the truth (John 14:6).” No one can have a relationship with the Father except through Christ. No one can offer acceptable, authentic worship unless “the truth,” Jesus Christ is exalted and is the centrality of their worship. Worship is not about us. It’s about Jesus! Every song, every word, every deed offered to God must sift through the grid of God’s word. If it aligns with the truth of scripture, it is acceptable worship to God.

Authentic worship transcends the boundaries of the walls of a church and its worship service. Authentic worship is an everyday choice to live a life of obedience to God.

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, this is your true and acceptable worship.” Romans 12:1

Paul tells us authentic worship is more than a song, and it’s more than attending a service. Worship is a lifestyle. It is a daily offering of our minds, hearts, and bodies in service and obedience to God.

Our Heavenly Father is seeking worshippers who will worship Him authentically in “Spirit and in Truth.” Jesus Himself said true worshippers must worship in this way. The Father’s heart is not moved by the sound of our voices, the eloquence of our speech, or even the outward physical expressions of our adoration. What moves the heart of God is the purity and motive of the heart and the surrender of our lives to the Lordship of Christ. This is the sacrifice of worship that is acceptable and pleasing to our God. It is truly “authentic worship,” the only kind of worship the Father receives.

DAY 1

Scripture: James 4:6-10

Prayer Prompts: Humility

1. Why do you think God opposes the proud?
2. How can you submit yourself to God and draw near to Him today?
3. Spend some time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal any pride, hidden sins, or idol that is coming between you and God. As He reveals these things, humbly confess them and commit to turning away from what is hindering your spiritual intimacy with Christ.

DAY 2

Scripture: Psalm 139:23-24

Prayer Prompts: Open Hearts

1. Why do you think David is asking God to search and test him?
2. How do you think our anxious thoughts and offenses can prevent us from worshipping God?
3. Spend time reflecting on these verses. Ask God to search your heart and reveal anything keeping you from experiencing the fullness of worshipping God.

DAY 3

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Prayer Prompts: Repentance

1. As we worship God, we are called to humble ourselves. What does that look like in my life and how can I practice humility before Him?
2. In what areas of my life do I need to repent (turn from wicked ways), and what practical changes do I need to make to align not just my heart but my way of life following God's word?
3. Take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to show you what areas of your life you need to humble yourself and repent. Ask Him to help you overcome these areas and give you the strength to change.

DAY 4

Scripture: 1 John 1:9

Prayer Prompts: Forgiveness

1. What does confession of sin do for the believer?
2. Think about what this verse says about God's forgiveness. How does this description encourage your worship of Him?
3. Ask the Lord to show you any unconfessed sins. Then, take time to confess them out loud to Him as you trust in His faithfulness.

DAY 5

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-8

Prayer Prompts: Surrender

1. What do these verses teach us about the glory of God?
2. Does the presence of God move you? Does it lead you to surrender?
3. Take intentional time today to take in what Isaiah saw and experienced. Write down what you need to surrender to Him.

DAY 6

Scripture: John 4:24

Prayer Prompts: Authenticity

1. What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth?
2. Worship is more than just singing; how we live should be a sign of worship. So what are some actions in our lifestyle that should exemplify authentic worship?
3. Write down what you feel is holding you back from being authentic in your worship, and spend some time in prayer asking the Lord to remove those things from your life.

WEEK THREE:

COMMITTED DISCIPLES

Written By: Jeff Land, Pastor of Children Ministry

From a very early age, we teach kids about the story of Jesus calming the storm found in Matthew 8:23-27. While the story shows us a picture of Jesus displaying His power and divinity, the story also shows the disciples displaying their fear and humanness. In a moment of fear and terror over the rising waters, the disciples lost their faith in the One they had seen perform miracles repeatedly. One of the most important lessons for the disciples at this moment, was to stay committed to following Jesus, even in the midst of fear.

This is still true for all disciples today. Matthew 28:19 says:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

However, the command is more substantial than just evangelism and baptism. Christians are called to be committed disciples who make other committed disciples. Being a committed disciple involves genuinely spending time in the word of God, praying, fellowshiping with other believers, and serving. That is why our church has the pathway of worship (in the big room), connect (being a part of a connect group), serve (volunteering with a ministry), and share (being on a mission to reach the lost). By following this pathway, one becomes attuned to the call that Christ has put on the life of every Christian.

If you have children or grandchildren, the call to be disciple-makers is pivotal. The church ministries don't exist to be the primary Bible teachers of children, but they exist to partner alongside families in their quest to raise committed disciples. Read Deuteronomy 6 to see the importance that God placed on being His committed followers. In verse 7, God shares that parents should impress His commandments on their children. It doesn't say the church should impress them, or even YouTube should impress them, but rather the parents. Parents are the primary disciple-makers of their children.

You might have read that last paragraph and thought, “I don’t have children,” or maybe, “My children are gone.” This command is still applicable to you as well. Perhaps you don’t have children, but you probably have nieces or nephews. How can you partner with their parents to raise committed disciples? One thing that I love about the Bible is that there isn’t a “retirement age,” so if your children are grown, you can still influence and encourage them to raise their children in the path of God. Perhaps your children aren’t taking their roles as primary disciple-makers seriously. Maybe you could step in and disciple your grandkids. How can you prevent the circle of Christ’s followers from being unbroken in your family?

This week, you are encouraged to pray for and consider serving with our education ministries in our church. As you go through this week, ask God to show you how to show Christ to our church’s nations.

DAY 1

Scripture: Matthew 19:14

Prayer Prompts: Creek Kids

1. What are some ways children are hindered in their spiritual growth today?
2. How can you help alleviate these hindrances in your own family?
3. Spend time asking God how you can support Sugar Creek Kids Ministry's efforts to partner with parents to disciple children.

DAY 2

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:12

Prayer Prompts: Students

1. How do you feel about young people serving in the church?
2. What can you do to encourage your students or the students you influence to become involved in our church's ministries?
3. Spend time praying for students in our church and asking God to embolden them to be committed disciples.

DAY 3

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2

Prayer Prompts: The Collective

1. How do you support and encourage our church's college-aged and young professionals?
2. How can you be involved in supporting "The Collective" ministry?
3. Spend time researching "The Collective." Ask God if this is an area of our church He would have you serve.

DAY 4

Scripture: Matthew 19:4-6

Prayer Prompts: Marriage

1. How are you actively pursuing a stronger marriage? If you are not married, what qualities in a godly spouse are you praying for?
2. What are ways marriages are under attack?
3. Spend time praying for married couples in our church. Pray God will protect them from the world's temptations.

DAY 5

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

Prayer Prompts: Connect Groups

1. How connected are you to people in our church? Are you a part of a connect group? Why or why not?
2. In what ways are you following today's Scripture when fellowshiping with other believers?
3. Spend time praying for godly friends who will hold you accountable and direct you toward Christ instead of the world.

DAY 6

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Prayer Prompts: Love for God's Word

1. How committed are you to daily Bible study? What is preventing you from becoming more committed?
2. What benefit do you find from studying God's Word?
3. Spend time thanking God for the gift of His Word. Pray that God will show you His plans through the Scripture.

WEEK FOUR:

RADICAL FAITH

Written By: Xavier Maryland, Pastor of Missouri City Campus

Have you ever seen or had one of those parenting moments where the child gets a simple instruction and they react as if you asked them to climb Mount Everest?

Maybe you've seen a parent ask a kid to put their shoes on. A simple request, right? Instead of just obeying, the parent is asked, "Why? Where are we going? Do I need my big shoes or my little shoes? Can I bring my toys? Will there be snacks?" Before an answer is given, the child is halfway into a full-blown strategic planning session.

I think about how often we do the same thing with God. He gives us simple instructions: love our neighbor, forgive someone, take a step of faith. Instead of obeying, we start interrogating. ("Why? Where will this lead? What if this thing happens?") But what God wants from us is what most parents want from their children—simple obedience.

When we think of radical faith, we often imagine something dramatic. Missionaries selling everything they own and moving to remote jungles or fiery preachers performing miracles. But what if radical faith isn't always about doing something big but about trusting God in the small? A perfect example of this is Abram in Genesis:

"The Lord said to Abram: 'Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.' ... So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him." Genesis 12:1-4

Abram's story is often seen as a radical faith moment; God called him to leave everything and go to an unknown place. And yes, that is a huge step of faith. But what's remarkable is not just the size of the calling but the simplicity of the response: "So Abram went."

No debate. No questioning. No demand for a detailed itinerary. God said, “Go,” and Abram went. Faith is proven in small obedience.

I don’t need my son to take a giant leap of faith every day to prove he trusts me. I don’t need him to throw himself into the deep end or climb on top of the fridge to show he believes in my parenting skills. I just need him to listen, to trust my voice in the small things, such as putting on his shoes when I ask. God desires the same from us. Radical faith isn’t always about jumping out of a boat to walk on water like Peter. More often, it looks like:

- Forgiving someone who hurt you.
- Saying yes to serving in a way that stretches you.
- Trusting God when He says “wait” instead of rushing ahead.
- Showing kindness when no one else does.

Have you ever noticed how we sometimes make obedience way more complicated than it needs to be? God says, “Trust me with your finances,” and we say, “But let me check my budget five more times and stress about it first.” God says, “Be kind to that coworker,” and we respond, “But Lord, do you KNOW how annoying they are?” God says, “Step into this new opportunity,” and we ask, “Can I get a contract and a five-year plan first?” But Abram’s story teaches us that radical faith is simple. God said go, and Abram went.

Jesus modeled this kind of faith as well. In John 14:31, He says, “I do exactly what the Father has commanded me.” He didn’t need extra details; He just trusted His Father’s plan. What is God calling you to do right now that seems small? Maybe it’s forgiving someone, stepping out to lead, serving in a new way, or trusting Him with a difficult situation.

Radical faith isn’t about knowing all the details; it’s about trusting the One who does. It’s found in the daily obedience to God’s voice.

DAY 1

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21

Prayer Prompts: Knowing God

1. Pray for a deeper knowledge of God: Lord, help me to know You not just intellectually but intimately. Strengthen my faith through Your love.
2. Pray for a faith rooted in love: Father, may my faith be grounded in the truth of who You are, not in my circumstances, doubts or fears.
3. Pray for boldness in faith: God, empower me to trust You fully, believing You can do far more than I can ask or imagine.

DAY 2

Scripture: Matthew 17:20-21

Prayer Prompts: Believing Big

1. Pray for faith to believe in the impossible: Lord, increase my faith to trust You for things that seem beyond my ability or understanding.
2. Pray for a heart that expects God to move: Father, help me to believe You can do great things in and through my life. Let me not settle for small thinking when You are a big God.
3. Pray for faith over doubt: Jesus, silence the voice of fear. Strengthen my confidence in Your promises so I can step out boldly.

DAY 3

Scripture: Hebrews 11

Prayer Prompts: By Faith

1. Pray for unwavering faith in all seasons: Lord, like the heroes of faith in Hebrews, may my trust in You remain firm, in victory and in trials.
2. Pray for courage to step out in obedience: God, even when I can't see the full picture, help me walk in faith, knowing You are leading me.
3. Pray for a testimony of faithfulness: Father, let my life be a testimony of radical faith that points others to You.

DAY 4

Scripture: Isaiah 41:10; 1 John 4:18

Prayer Prompts: No Fear

1. Pray for courage to trust God fully: Lord, remove the fear that holds me back from walking in obedience. Help me trust Your promises.
2. Pray for peace in uncertainty: Father, when the future is unclear, let my heart be at rest, knowing You are in control.
3. Pray for love to replace fear: God, fill my heart with Your perfect love so fear has no room in my life.

DAY 5

Scripture: John 14:15-17

Prayer Prompts: Humble Obedience

1. Pray for a heart that obeys joyfully: Jesus, help me to see obedience not as a burden but as an expression of my love for You.
2. Pray for faith to trust God's guidance: Father, even when obedience is difficult, give me the faith to trust that Your way is always best.
3. Pray for the Holy Spirit's strength: Lord, empower me through the Holy Spirit to live a life of radical faith and obedience.

DAY 6

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-2

Prayer Prompts: Perseverance

1. Pray for endurance in the race of faith: Lord, when I feel weary, remind me to fix my eyes on Jesus and press forward in faith.
2. Pray for strength to overcome obstacles: Father, give me the perseverance to stand firm when challenges arise.
3. Pray for a long-term perspective: God, help me to live with eternity in mind, staying faithful to You until the very end.

WEEK FIVE:

ACROSS THE STREET, AROUND THE WORLD

Written By: Abram Haley, Pastor of Student Ministry

The heart of the gospel is a love so expansive it refuses confinement; it's a love that extends to every corner of the earth, to every soul yearning for redemption. As A.W. Tozer reminds us, "God's love is measureless. It is more – it is boundless. It has no bounds because it is not a thing but a facet of the essential nature of God." In a world often fractured by division, fear, and self-interest, this truth resounds with a call to action for every believer. God's love is not just a comforting reality; it is a transformative force that compels us to act.

This week, you are invited into a sacred journey, one that begins with the person across the street and reaches the farthest corners of the world. The Great Commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 is not a mere suggestion but a mandate to "make disciples of all nations." This call reflects the very heart of God, who "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4)."

The call is simple yet profound: Pray, go, and trust. These three steps form a powerful foundation of living out the gospel in a world so desperate for the hope of Christ.

First, pray for the lost and the broken. Prayer is a powerful engagement with the heart of God. Through prayer, we align ourselves with His will, interceding for those who have yet to encounter the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This week, set aside intentional time to pray for specific individuals, communities, and nations. Ask God to open hearts and provide opportunities for the gospel to be shared.

"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." James 5:16

Second, go to where He leads, whether that is next door or across the globe. The mission field is not confined to distant lands; it begins wherever God has placed you. In Acts 1:8, Jesus declares, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” For some, Jerusalem may be their neighborhood or local community. Wherever the Spirit prompts, go with boldness, knowing God works through you.

Third, trust in the God who calls, equips, and sustains. The task of making disciples can feel overwhelming, but Scripture assures we are not alone. Jesus promised that when we step out in obedience, we can trust He will provide the words, resources, and strength needed to fulfill His purposes.

*“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:20.”*

This week’s reflections guide you through the mission of the Gospel, beginning with the individual and extending to the nations. Start with someone in your immediate circle who needs to experience God’s love. Pray for them by name and look for opportunities to demonstrate Christ’s love. Then, widen the lens to your community and, finally, lift your eyes to the nations. Consider how you might support global missions through prayer, giving, or going.

DAY 1

Scripture: Luke 15:1-7

Prayer Prompts: Our One

1. Pray for the one person in your life who needs to know Jesus.
2. Ask God to soften their heart and give you opportunities to share His love with them.
3. Pray for courage and boldness to be the light in their life.

DAY 2

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Prayer Prompts: Our Community

1. Pray for your neighborhood, workplace, and local community to truly know Jesus.
2. Ask God to use you to meet people where they are.
3. Pray for unity and peace within your community.

DAY 3

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:13-16

Prayer Prompts: Our Region

1. Pray for revival and spiritual growth in your region.
2. Ask God to strengthen churches and ministries in your area.
3. Pray for collaboration among believers to make a greater impact.

DAY 4

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:13-14

Prayer Prompts: Our Nation

1. Pray for leaders and decision-makers to seek God's wisdom.
2. Ask for healing and reconciliation in areas of division across our nation.
3. Pray for believers to be bold in living out their faith.

DAY 5

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

Prayer Prompts: Our World

1. Pray for unreached people groups to hear the gospel.
2. Ask God to remove barriers that prevent the spread of His Word.
3. Pray for global peace and unity among believers.

DAY 6

Scripture: Romans 10:13-15

Prayer Prompts: Our Missionaries

1. Pray for missionaries' safety, provision, and boldness in sharing the gospel of Jesus.
2. Ask God to call more people to full-time mission work.
3. Pray for the families of missionaries to be strengthened and encouraged by God's presence.

WEEK SIX:

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

Written By: Clif Cummings, Associate Pastor

When most people hear (or read) the word stewardship, they intuitively think the conversation will focus on finances. Yes, finances are a very important part of our lives, and the Bible has much to say about how we view and use our financial resources. However, stewardship involves so much more than money.

The Bible clearly explains God is the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1). As Creator, God has absolute ownership and authority over all that He created. In His wisdom and love, God gave mankind the responsibility to steward or manage all He created. A biblical view of stewardship identifies God as the owner of everything in our lives, and we are the managers. God makes man His coworker in stewarding, or managing all aspects of our life.

When we correctly understand God as the creator and owner of everything, we can properly value not only our finances but, more importantly, our relationships, our talents, and even our own human lives.

When we think of faithful stewardship, we often think of how we manage our finances and faithfully give God's tithes and offerings. However, faithful stewardship involves so much more.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read the story of Jesus speaking to the most religious group of people in Jerusalem. The Teachers of the Law and Pharisees were faithful in their financial stewardship. However, they neglected other areas of living and relating to others that were just as much, if not even more important! Jesus said:

“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law – justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.” Matthew 23:23

Yes, faithful stewardship involves finances and possessions. However, as followers of Christ, we must recognize God's sovereignty over all areas of life. Faithful stewardship is part of our obedient witness to others. Faithful stewardship involves our thoughts, our tongue, our time, our treasure, and our talents!

Faithful stewardship means we fully acknowledge we are not our own but belong to Christ, the Lord, who gave Himself for us.

DAY 1

Scripture: Philippians 4:8; 2 Corinthians 10:5

Prayer Prompts: Our Thoughts

1. In this verse, what specific things come to your mind when you read “honorable,” “just,” “pure,” “lovely,” and “commendable?”
2. How can you actively “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ?”
3. Spend time asking God to show you areas of your thought life where you may need to be a more faithful steward.

DAY 2

Scripture: Ephesians 4:29-32

Prayer Prompts: Our Tongue

1. How would you describe “unwholesome” talk?
2. What can you do to “build up others” by your words?
3. Ask God to show you if you are bitter, angry, or malicious toward anyone. Then, ask Him to give you a heart of repentance and forgiveness.

DAY 3

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-16

Prayer Prompts: Our Time

1. What does “making the best use of your time” practically look like to you?
2. How do you plan to “walk not as unwise but as wise” today?
3. As you plan your day, ask God to show you what He has planned for you and help you use your time wisely.

DAY 4

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Prayer Prompts: Our Treasure

1. Do you sometimes “give reluctantly” or “under compulsion?” How different does it feel from when you “give cheerfully?”
2. Meditate on “whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” What is God saying to you about what and how much you are sowing?
3. Spend time thanking God for all He has already given you and sow seeds of gratitude for His provision in your life.

DAY 5

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:10-11

Prayer Prompts: Our Talents

1. Take a moment to list all the gifts and talents God has given you.
2. Are you using these gifts and talents so “God may be glorified through Jesus Christ?”
3. Thank God for each gift and talent in recognition of His goodness and grace in your life.

DAY 6

Scripture: Philippians 1:6

Prayer Prompts: Unfinished

1. What “good work” do you know God has begun in your life?
2. How do you see Him continuing to be at work in your life?
3. Even with all the time, talents, and treasures God has already provided, He is not finished. Take some time to reflect on what you believe God has for you in the future. Ask Him for the strength to continue to be a faithful steward of all things in your life.

WEEK SEVEN:

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Written By: Juan Carlos Heredia, Pastor of Spanish Ministry

We all struggle with wanting to be in charge of our lives. Our nature and society encourage independence, so we naturally try to do things on our own while giving God the backseat. We want Him in the car, just not driving, because we want to do it ourselves. However, this mindset is a significant impediment to spiritual health.

In John 15, Jesus presents a well-known metaphor to describe our relationship with Him. Jesus uses the image of a vine and branches to help us understand He is the source of our spiritual life, and, apart from Him, we can do nothing. This passage offers key insights into why we must abide in Christ to see fruitfulness beyond what we can provide on our own. It is an invitation to a life of deep connection and dependence on Jesus. Our spiritual health and fruitfulness depend entirely on staying connected to Him.

Abiding in Christ means cultivating a continual, living connection with Him. Just as a branch draws its life and strength from the vine, we draw spiritual nourishment and power from Christ. Without this connection, we cannot bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, righteousness, or any other attributes that reflect God's character.

But abiding also involves surrender and trust, which should be our proper response as the vinedresser prunes us, removing dead or unhealthy growth to maximize our spiritual health. As the vinedresser, the Father actively works in our lives to shape us into the image of His Son and increase our fruitfulness (verse 2). This involves eliminating distractions, sin, and anything that hinders our growth. Though pruning can be painful, it is always purposeful, ensuring we bear even more fruit that helps us magnify Christ. This clipping process may involve trials, discipline, or spiritual refinement, always done in love and for our benefit. Pruning requires us to let go of things we cling to, leading to our growth and His glory. Trusting His work in our lives allows us to flourish.

To abide means to stay closely connected to the source of life. Jesus reminds us that just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains attached to the vine, we cannot bear spiritual fruit apart from Him (verse 4). That's why we need to practice spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Scripture reading and application, and private and public worship, which continually strengthen this connection.

When we remain in Christ, His Word remains in us, and we align with His will. This results in answered prayers, spiritual growth, and a life filled with His joy (verses 7, 11). The fruit we bear, love, patience, kindness, and more, points others to God and glorifies Him.

This abiding relationship is not about striving but about remaining in Jesus through His Word, dwelling in His love, and walking in obedience. As we do so, our joy becomes complete (verse 11), and our lives manifest spiritual health that demonstrates His grace and truth.

DAY 1

Scripture: John 15:1-11

Prayer Prompts: Abiding in Christ

1. What does abiding in Christ look like in your life?
2. How does abiding in Christ lead to bearing fruit in your life?
3. Are there areas where you feel disconnected from the vine?

DAY 2

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-18

Prayer Prompts: Strong in the Lord

1. What parts of the armor of God do you feel are strong in your life?
2. Which areas need strengthening?
3. How can prayer help you stand firm against spiritual battles?

DAY 3

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-6

Prayer Prompts: Unexplainable Peace

1. What are you anxious about today?
2. How does prayer transform anxiety into peace?
3. How can gratitude be part of your daily prayers?

DAY 4

Scripture: John 17:6-12

Prayer Prompts: Protection from the Enemy

1. How does Jesus' prayer for His disciples encourage you?
2. In what ways do you need God's protection in your spiritual life?
3. How can you trust God's keeping power more fully?

DAY 5

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:10

Prayer Prompts: Alignment - One Church, Two Languages, Three Locations

1. What does unity look like within a church family?
2. Are there any areas where you struggle to align with others in mission and purpose?
3. How can you contribute to unity in our church?

DAY 6

Scripture: Revelation 7:9-10

Prayer Prompts: God-Honoring Future

1. How does this vision of heaven inspire your worship?
2. What steps can you take to help our church reflect God's diverse kingdom?
3. How can you keep your eyes fixed on the eternal future God has prepared for you?

ONE CHURCH.

TWO LANGUAGES.

THREE LOCATIONS.

sugar  creek