

HELLO
my name is

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING
FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE

A CHRISTMAS DEVOTIONAL DESIGNED TO
HELP YOU KNOW JESUS MORE DEEPLY



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READ LISTEN PRAY!

In the following pages are some weekly devotionals and prayer points for you to follow. You will be given different passages of Scripture to read and as you read through a passage of Scripture, it is essential to ask God what he wants to reveal to you from the passage and then pray it back to Him.

READ

- Pick a Bible reading plan (Bible in a year, NT in a year, 30 day plan, two week plan, etc.)
- Read the scripture passage for the day
- As you are reading it, in your journal write out any verses that pop out at you or speak to you in a particular way (that's the Holy Spirit speaking to you)

LISTEN

- Ask Jesus to reveal to you in a deeper way the truths from the passages of scripture that you wrote in your journal
- Ask Jesus if there is anything in the passage of scripture that you read today that He wants you to obey
- Ask Jesus if there is anything in the passage of scripture that you read today that He wants you to believe (something that you may know in your head is true but isn't in your heart)
- Ask Him if there is anything that He wants to reveal to you about His character, through the passage of scripture
- Ask Him if there is anything that He wants to teach you from the passage of scripture, something that you can apply to your life right now
- Ask Him if there are any actions that you need to avoid or

actions that you need to start doing from the passage of scripture

PRAY

- Thank Jesus for what He showed you in the Word today
- Confess any sin that He revealed to you today
- Pray the truths of the scripture
- Pray that you will follow through on what He showed you today
- Pray for your family, friends, the church, ministries, etc.

As you pray and spend time meditating on the truths in His Word, the Holy Spirit will begin to tenderize your heart. Be persistent in asking Him to open the eyes of your heart. The Holy Spirit will gradually cause your insight to increase.

Make sure you **record your thoughts in your journal** as you read-listen-pray through the Bible. Write down the ideas that come to you, prayers and commitments.

For further study here are some links to some teaching on prayer from Pastor Shawn:

Message Series on prayer – ALL ACCESS:

<http://subsplash.com/mainstreetchurch/s/58d6fe1/>



EFFECTIVE PRAYER & JOURNALING

One of the things that we put a high priority on at Main Street Church is the fact that we believe God speaks personally to people. We want to say right from the start that you don't have to go to a priest, pastor, televangelist, or your horoscope to hear from God. All you need to do is go to the bestselling book (the Bible) that He wrote and we guarantee He will speak to you.

This is called the discipline of Journaling. We have included some information for you below on how to get started. We know that God has some great and exciting things he wants to share with you.

FIVE THINGS TO BRING WHEN YOU JOURNAL

- 1. BIBLE** – If journaling is new to you, you may want to use a Bible that is easy to read. We recommend and teach from the New Living Translation.
- 2. PEN/HIGHLIGHTER** – When you are reading through the Bible, feel free to mark up the passages that really impress you. Circle words or underline sentences that speak to you as you are reading (note: it is O.K. to write in your Bible).

- 3. JOURNAL** – Of course this is an important part of the process. You can use any kind of wordless book, be creative and find something that appeals to you.
- 4. READING SCHEDULE** – One of the best online resources for finding a Bible reading plan is youversion.com. **You can download** this APP to your phone or tablet or visit it online to download a reading plan.
- 5. DAILY PLANNER** – As you're journaling you will discover that your mind sometimes wanders towards things you need to do or people you need to call. Simply take a moment to write them down so that your mind remains uncluttered and focused.



A right perception of God is critical to a victorious walk with God. If our perception of God is faulty then we won't have an accurate perception of ourselves or the world around us. Thankfully God has given us a clear understanding of who He is by telling us His name. Actually, He has a lot of names that give us a glimpse into His character and nature as well as His heart for His children.

In this devotional we're going to study some of the names that God has given to describe His Son Jesus. These names give us glimpses into the true nature and character of the God we serve.

So prepare yourself to get to know God better as we discover Him as our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of peace.

I am praying with you and for you,

PASTOR SHAWN



Each week will begin with a devotional. Then for the next week you will daily be given Scripture to read, a question to ask Jesus and then be directed to pray into what Jesus speaks to you about.

We encourage you to get a Journal for yourself to write your thoughts and prayers in. Be intentional about this. Write down what Jesus shows you and speaks to you about as you go through the daily devotionals.

We also encourage you to use the **New Living Translation** of the Bible. It is the translation we use to teach from and is the version we have used for the Scriptures listed.



Names carry a lot of weight. God knows the power of a name and all throughout the Bible you discover the different names that are given to describe who God is. In the next four weeks we are going to look at four of the names that were given by God to describe Jesus.

The Prophet Isaiah gave these names to Jesus 700 years before he was born. It was a prophecy about Jesus the Messiah, the one who would come and be the Savior of the world. And in the book of Isaiah in chapter 9 verse 6 Isaiah gives us four names that describe Jesus.

THIS WONDERFUL COUNSELOR IS FULLY HUMAN AND FULLY GOD AT THE SAME TIME. “FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN” – THAT IS THE HUMANITY OF JESUS. “UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN” – THAT’S THE DEITY OF JESUS.

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. –Isaiah 9:6

The first name we are going to study is Wonderful Counselor.

If you think about the Christmas story the person who probably could have used a good counselor the most was Joseph. Here was a man who had fallen in love with a woman named Mary. They were engaged to be married and things

are moving along just fine. All the plans are coming together, the venue is booked, the invitations have been sent out and he cannot wait to spend the rest of his life with the woman of his dreams.

But then Mary drops the news.

“Joseph? I’m pregnant. But it’s not what you think.”

“Umm. What do you mean it’s not what I think because the only thing I’m thinking is that the baby inside of you is not mine.”

“No. You don’t understand Joseph. I’ve been faithful to you. I’ve saved myself for you.”

“Really Mary? That’s what you come up with. You’re going to use a lie to make me believe you have not been unfaithful? So who is it? What’s his name?”

“God.”

If there was ever a situation that could use a good counselor I think we just found it.

The word counselor means to advise or to consult or to guide. This Wonderful Counselor is fully Human and fully God at the same time. “For unto us a child is born” – that is the humanity of Jesus. “Unto us a Son is given” – that’s the deity of Jesus.

Because Jesus is fully man and fully God He can counsel you from the perspective of a human who understands your struggles and issues, but he can also counsel you as the God of the universe who has complete knowledge and who is never wrong and who always has the right answer and direction. That’s a counselor worth seeing.

The problem though, is that most people don’t like going to a counselor. Most people don’t put the word “wonderful” and “counselor” in the same sentence. It’s an oxymoron. For many ‘Wonderful’ and ‘counselor’ is the same as saying “jumbo Shrimp” or “Country Music.” They just don’t go together.

We tend to avoid counselors and if we do go and see a counselor it’s often because our life or our marriage or our addiction or “you name the issue” has got so out of hand there’s nothing left to do. Counselors for many are a last resort.

Why is that? Why do we wait till the bitter end to seek counsel? I’ll tell you why. It’s because a good counselor is someone who will tell you the truth and help you see the truth. And if we’re honest it’s the truth that many of us don’t want to face.

Joseph was having a hard time accepting the truth of his situation. I can just picture that moment as Mary tells Joseph that the baby she’s carrying is Gods. He’s like really? Really Mary? That’s your answer? That’s the best excuse you can come up with? I mean – I’ll give you marks for creativity but you fail when it comes to reality. How can you stare me in the eyes and tell me that God made you pregnant?

Joseph has a decision to make. In the culture he lived in an engagement required a divorce and the Bible says he was a good man so he was quietly

going to divorce Mary and go on with his life. He wasn't going to shame her or make a scene. But in his mind it was over. He was done. He'd given up and now finds himself alone, confused and upset. It's the perfect moment for the Wonderful Counselor to show up.

God shows up and tells Joseph the truth.

Most of us are like Joseph. We all have issues. We have been hurt, disappointed, betrayed. We all have issues to work through and instead of facing them we often give up or run away. The last thing we want to do is see a counselor.

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We don't want to face the truth and yet – the **Wonderful Counselor** – Jesus, told us Himself that it is the truth that will set you free. Now what is the fruit of a good counselor? A good and effective counselor will help you deal with your stuff right? An earthly counselor can only take you so far – but the Wonderful Counselor can completely heal and transform your life. But it takes a willingness and a surrender and the courage to say, "Whatever you want me to do God – I'll do it."

God wants to set up some counselling sessions with you this week. As you walk through the daily devotions don't be afraid to face the truth in your life. Remember, The counselor that we have in Jesus is beyond description. He's

wonderful. He knows exactly what you need to get you to where you need to be. His heart is to heal you and make you whole.

Don't ignore Him. Don't figure it out on your own.

Embrace Him. Seek Him. Listen to Him. Obey Him.

Remember to have your Bible and Journal with you as read, ask and listen to Jesus. Make sure you write down your thoughts and the answers and direction in your journal that Jesus shows you as you spend time listening to Him.

week one

monday



Read – Matthew 1:18-25 & memorize Isaiah 9:6

Ask – Lord is there anything in this passage of Scripture that you want to teach me?

Ask – God, what are the circumstances or issues that I am having a hard time accepting in my life?

Personal Prayer – Use what God shows you to focus your prayers on and thank Him for what He shows you.

tuesday

Read – Proverbs 11:14; James 1:5 and memorize Isaiah 9:6

Ask – God, where in my life do I need your wisdom? (Be specific. Invite the Holy Spirit to show you where you are lacking wisdom. Write it down).

Personal Prayer – Use what God reveals to you as your focus for prayer. Write down the insights He gives you. Ask him to be your Wonderful Counselor.

wednesday

Read – James 3:17-18 and memorize Isaiah 9:6

Focus – Make a list of the words that describe God’s wisdom from this passage of Scripture in James. Write them down in your journal.

Ask – Look at your list of words and ask; “Jesus, which of these words do you want to develop in my life in order to make me wise?”

Ask – Where can I apply your wisdom in my life so that I can plant seeds and reap a harvest of righteousness?

Personal Prayer – Ask Jesus who he would like you to pray for and what He wants you to pray for them. Make a list and write it down.

thursday

Read – John 14:15-26 and memorize Isaiah 9:6

Ask – Read John 14:26 and ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything He wants teach you or remind you of? Write down what you hear.

Personal Prayer – Use what the Wonderful Counselor shows you as a focus for your prayer time.

friday

Read – Read Joshua 1:8 and memorize Isaiah 9:6

Ask – God, what are the area(s) in my life that I am not obeying You?

Personal Prayer – Take what Jesus shows you and confess by name the areas of disobedience you are living in. Ask Him to forgive you and receive His forgiveness.

Read – 1 John 1:9-10

Personal Prayer – Ask Jesus to protect you from temptation. Invite the Holy Spirit to teach you, remind you and guide you in the areas of your life where you are struggling with sin. Thank Him for His love for you.

saturday

Read – James 1:17-18 and memorize Isaiah 9:6

Ask – God, what does it mean that I'm a "prized possession"?

Personal Prayer – Pray though the response God gives you.

Corporate Prayer – Ask God to continue to help us be a church that treats all people as "prized possessions." "Lord, in what way can I specifically honor and care for the people around me? Is there someone specific you want me to pray for and serve today? Listen and then obey!

sunday

Read – Acts 2:42 and memorize Isaiah 9:6

Ask – Ask God to give you a joy and passion as your worship at church this morning.

Personal Prayer – Spend time thanking God for His desire to counsel and lead and guide you.

Corporate Prayer – Ask God to continue to fill His church with people who are willing to be counselled by the Holy Spirit.

Read – 1 John 1:9-10

Personal Prayer – Ask Jesus to protect you from temptation. Invite the Holy Spirit to teach you, remind you and guide you in the areas of your life where you are struggling with sin. Thank Him for His love for you.

notes



week two
SHAWN VANDOP
LEAD PASTOR



All of us have seen a picture of an ultrasound. It's when a picture is taken of a baby while inside the mother's womb. What that ultrasound does is give us a glimpse of the baby before it's actually born. It's like a prophetic picture of who that baby is before they come into this world.

That's what the prophet Isaiah did in regards to Jesus. 700 years before Jesus would be born Isaiah gives us a picture of who he would be. He gives

THIS NAME – 'MIGHTY GOD' MEANS MORE THAN YOU THINK. IT LITERALLY MEANS "POWERFUL ONE." ONE WHO IS FULL OF 'STRENGTH AND POWER'" OR ANOTHER DEFINITION IS "HERO!" JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE SUPER HERO. HE IS THE MIGHTY HERO!

a Messianic prophecy foretelling the coming of Jesus Christ. A Messianic prophecy is like an ultrasound. It does for Jesus what an ultrasound does for an unborn child. It gives us a glimpse into who and what Jesus would do way before He arrived on earth with skin on. In fact there are hundreds of Messianic prophecies that tell us about Jesus and what he would do and what would happen to him. The prophetic proof for Jesus is quite amazing and would be worth your time to look into.

The specific prophecy that we have been studying and memorizing is pretty special. It's like God gives us a divine ultrasound in order for us to get a glimpse of Jesus and who He will be and what He will do. Last week we looked at the first name

given to describe Jesus. We learned that He is our Wonderful Counselor and we spent time inviting Him to fill us with His wisdom.

This week we're going to look at the second name given in Isaiah 9:6 which is Mighty God. As we discover what it means for Jesus to be our Mighty God I want to give you a truth to meditate on throughout your week. Here's the truth: **Because Jesus is our Mighty God – Anything is Possible!**

When you think of Jesus what comes to mind? How do you view him in your mind's eye? Is he always nice and calm and sitting under a tree teaching people about nice things? Is he boring? A lot of people think Jesus is

boring. We kind of picture Jesus like a monk living in a monastery who when he speaks says smart things but then that's about it.

Not many people think of Jesus as wild. We don't see Him as a warrior or a King or a radical. We have tamed him. This name – MIGHTY GOD means more than you think. It literally means "Powerful One." One who is full of "Strength and power" or another definition is "HERO!" Jesus is the ultimate super hero. He is the Mighty Hero!

Now Isaiah gives Jesus this name – MIGHTY GOD. People for 700 years are waiting for this MIGHTY GOD to show up on the scene and deliver them. They are looking for the superhero to come and save the day. Deal with the corruption. Slay the enemy. Make things right. And so they wait and they watch and they pray and they call out – but nothing happens.

Then 700 years later MIGHTY GOD shows up, in a stable, lying in a manger with the smell of manure and urine all around him. Looking over him is a stressed out father and a relieved mother. Joseph pushes away a goat as he looks for some clean fresh straw to lay in the feeding trough so Mary can put MIGHTY GOD to sleep.

This is not a very MIGHTY moment. This is not what people were expecting. It's why most people missed him.

The truth is – heroes never meet the expectations of those around them.

They are different. They aren't normal. And for 30 years people wouldn't notice that there was a hero in their midst. He worked quietly. Learned the family business. Built furniture and waited for his moment.

He would begin quietly. Held some bible studies. Started teaching anyone who would listen. As he taught he would watch those on the fringes. The outsiders. The ones who kept their distance. The ones that people ignored or didn't notice or in some cases even hated.

He would approach them and simply say, "Follow me." And in no time he had twelve men willing to follow Him. They were a rag tag group. Three of them smelled like fish. Then there was the tax collector who I'm sure took

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a while to gain the others trust. One of them questioned everything and seemed to always doubt everything Jesus asked them to do. And on it went. Just a bunch of men that no one else ever paid much attention to.

They followed him. They were intrigued by Him. They liked his teaching. They were drawn to him but to be honest they realized that this wouldn't probably last that long. They could afford to take some time off as it was an honor to be chosen by a rabbi in that culture. It would be fun for a while.

But little did they know that soon they would discover that this man Jesus was more than they ever could imagine. They would be fully introduced to the MIGHTY GOD and realize that with Jesus ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

One of the clearest moments that defined Jesus as Mighty God took place in the middle of a lake. Jesus is sleeping in the boat in the middle of a terrifying storm. The disciples are bailing water and fighting the sails and rowing with all their might. Then they decide to wake Jesus up. The least he could do was grab a bucket and help bail. But He does more than that. He speaks to the wind and the waves and commands them to stop and before they know it the boat is bobbing quietly up and down on a lake that is now reflecting the shine of the moon on the water.

The twelve disciples don't know what to do or say. In fact they're more scared now than when they were about to sink. Land can't come soon enough and as they get closer they jump out and begin to pull the boat to shore when out of the bushes jumps a crazy naked demon possessed man. He was a desperate man. You know you're a desperate person when you live in a grave yard. He was the living dead among the very dead. A man full of dysfunction. A man out of control. He was a modern day Incredible Hulk breaking any chains that people used to try and restrain him. He was a stark raving crazy naked man who lived in a graveyard and cut himself all day long. And he greets the disciple as they hit land.

Do you want to know who this crazy demons possessed man is in your life?
He is the person in your life that you don't believe can or will ever change.

Who is that person in your life that when you think of them you think –“I don't know what to do with them?” You think of that person and you just throw your hands in the air because there is no way they are ever going to change. They are too far gone. They have burned too many bridges. They have hurt too many people. They have done too many stupid things. This crazy man represents the person in your life that you believe will never change. Never get free. Never deal with their stuff. And even though you may love or care for them deep down you have given up on them because it would be impossible for them to turn things around.

18 Maybe that person is you. You don't believe you can change. You have too many regrets. Too many bad choices have been made. You've been hurt

too deeply and you know that you have already used up your second chance.

If that's you remember the truth of this name for Jesus. **Because Jesus is our Mighty God – Anything is Possible**



Jesus steps in and does the impossible. He casts the demons from this man and changes his life. Jesus is making sure His disciples understand that He is the Mighty God and that nothing is impossible for him.

What Jesus did was radically change this man. He goes from craziness to sanity. From chaos to calmness. From bondage to freedom. All because of our Hero – the MIGHTY GOD! Jesus!

**BECAUSE JESUS IS
OUR MIGHTY GOD –
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE!**

As you press into Jesus this week remember that God knows exactly what you need. Jesus knows that you are ordinary. He specializes in the ordinary. He loves to take the ordinary and impart His power in and through you. That's what he did with the 12 disciples he called to follow him. He took 12 ordinary people and imparted to them His power and they went on to change the world with the power of the Mighty God working in them and through them.

It's the same for us today. We're all a bunch of ordinary people who are experiencing an extraordinary God. All around you are people who have "Anything is Possible" stories. People who have found deliverance and freedom from addictions, abuse and financial despair. There are people who have seen God restore their Marriage that were on the edge of divorce. There are others who have seen God redeem their kids who had gone off the rails, who have been able to forgive when it seemed impossible to forgive. All because we serve a Mighty God!

So where do you need to experience the power of the Mighty God in your life today?

What is the thing or person or circumstance in your life that you don't believe will ever change?

This week Jesus wants to show you how He is and how He will be your Mighty God.

Remember to have your Bible and Journal with you as read, ask and listen to Jesus. Make sure you write down your thoughts and the answers and direction in your journal that Jesus shows you as you spend time listening to Him.

week two



monday

Read – Luke 8:22-25 and memorize Philippians 4:13

Ask – Lord in what areas of my life do I believe you are not capable?

Personal Prayer – Lord give me a clear picture of your power and might. Help me see that you are capable of calming the storms in my life. Help me to exercise my faith in you more consistently.

tuesday

Read – Luke 8:26-39 and memorize Philippians 4:13

Ask – Lord who in my life do I believe could and will never change? (Write the names of the people God shows you)

Personal Prayer – Use the names God gives you and begin to pray for God to change their hearts and that the Holy Spirit will get a hold of their lives in a fresh new way. (Pray for these names every day for the next 3 months)

wednesday

Read – Use the names God gives you and begin to pray for God to change their hearts and that the Holy Spirit will get a hold of their lives in a fresh new way. **(Pray for these names every day for the next 3 months)**

Ask – Lord is there anything in my life that I am afraid to let go of? What are the things that I am treating as being more powerful than you in my life?

Personal Prayer – Lord please help me to trust your mighty power more than the things in my life that lie to me and tell me they are more powerful. Help me to surrender those areas that I am holding on to. Loosen the grip they have on my heart and life and help me to live fully trusting in the power that you offer.

thursday

Read – Acts 1:6-11; Ephesians 5:15-20 and memorize Philippians 4:13

Ask – Lord what must I do to receive the power you promised in Acts 1:8? Show me how to be filled with your Holy Spirit. Is there anything you want to teach or correct or show me from these Scriptures (write down what God shows you)?

Personal Prayer – Lord help me to live my life with an awareness of your Holy Spirit. Fill me with your power and help me to live in the power you promise to give your children.

friday

Read – Isaiah 55:6-9; Romans 12:2 and memorize Philippians 4:13

Ask – Lord, show me the areas where I am thinking in my own power. Reveal any pride in my life that is leading me to think on my own rather than trusting your ways. Lord where in my life are my thoughts not being submitted to you?

Personal Prayer – Pray that you would live with the ‘mind of Christ.’ Lord help me to submit my ways to your ways and my thoughts to your thoughts. May I submit to the mighty power that you hold in your hand and live my life asking you to lead me instead of doing things on my own.

saturday

Read – Ephesians 6:10; Exodus 14:14; 2 Chronicles 20:17 and memorize Philippians 4:13

Ask – Lord, what battle do you want to fight for me? What battle(s) do I need to stop fighting and turn over to you?

Personal Prayer – Lord thank you that you fight my battles for me. Lord it's because of your mighty power that I can live with confidence knowing that you will bring the victory I need in my life as I submit and obey to your voice.

sunday

Read – Psalm 100 and memorize Philippians 4:13

Ask – Lord, show me the things, circumstances and people that I am to be thankful for. (Write down all the things you are thankful for)

Personal Prayer – Lord as I go to worship you with my church community may I have a heart that is full of gratitude and thankfulness because of your great power. Thank you that you are the mighty God and that nothing is beyond you and nothing is impossible for you. May I live in the light of that truth today.

week three

SHAWN VANDOP
LEAD PASTOR



It was another day behind the counter of the family business. Every day after school he would come home get changed and take his post. He would take care of the customers as they paid for their gas and groceries. In between serving he would stare out the window and get lost in his thoughts. Usually it was at that point that they would roll in. He could hear them coming before they arrived. It was the bass from the stereo in Billy's old car that introduced his arrival minutes before he got there.

They would wave at him through the window as they got out of the car.

WHEN ISAIAH DESCRIBES JESUS AS THE EVERLASTING FATHER HE'S SPEAKING TO THE CHARACTER AND HEART OF JESUS JUST AS A FATHER HAS TO THEIR OWN KIDS.

One of them would pump the gas while the others would come in to buy snacks. They'd look at his name tag and ask, "Hey Tyler do you wear that name tag to help you remember your name?"

"Good one guys."

Tyler had a name tag because he was one of the sons of the owner. The other employees just had the family logo on their shirts. He and his brother Phil had their names embroidered in their shirts.

It defined them as permanent. Employees come and go – but sons are supposed to stick around.

"So – are you coming to the lake with us today? It's beautiful outside. The whole gang's going to be there including Brittany."

Tyler had his eye on Brittany for a while and the guys knew it. But his Dad needed him to help out at the store leaving no time for him to get a chance to be with her.

"C'mon Tyler – you never come with us. Let's go."

"I can't guys. Maybe next time.

I have to work."

And once again he watched as his friends drove off into an afternoon of fun

and friends while he sat behind a counter selling snicker bars and gas.

Tyler felt the sting as he watched his friends drive away. “I never get to do anything. I’m always stuck here” he thought to himself as the grip of resentment squeezed his heart a little tighter.

It’s been the same thing ever since he could hold a broom. Right from a young age his Father had him and his older brother working in the store. He swept. He unloaded trucks, he stocked shelves. He cleaned windows and now he had worked himself to front of the line, the Front Counter.

Every day it was the same thing. He’d get up before school and open the store and gets the employees going. Then he’d go off to school and by 3:30 be back at the store taking his shift till closing time. He didn’t play sports. He seldom got time with friends. For Tyler it was just work.

“I don’t get to do anything. This store is just a ball and chain. It’s not fair.” He said to himself.

It must have been the last straw for him because it would only be a few days later when his buddies would roll up again to get gas and snacks that his life would change. This time they were stocking up on more than usual. One of them looked at Tyler, made fun of his name tag and then then said. “You should come with us.”

“Where are you going this time?”

“Las Vegas. Billy’s mom is out of town so he got the mini-van and we’re going to drive down to the strip. We got fake “ID’s” and it is going to be awesome. Remember Tyler what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.”

Tyler paused and then looked at his friends and before he could stop himself he said, “I’m in.”

They didn’t believe him. “But don’t you have to work?”

“No – I’m in. Go wait in the van. I’ll be out in a moment.”

Tyler quickly takes off his company shirt and throws it under the counter. He walks to the back of the store where the office is and turns on the light. In the corner is a desk with a stack of filing boxes on it. He pushes them aside and there in the wall is the company safe.

Only three people know the combination to that safe. His father, his brother and him. He spins the wheel - 22 right – 14 left – 39 right – CLICK.

He opens the door and pulls over an empty cardboard box. He places it on the desk in front of the safe and reaches in. His hands are shaking as he pulls out the cash watching it as it falls into the box. He tries to close the lid but there's is too much in it.

Picking up the box and turning to leave he is met with a shadow in the doorway. It's his brother Phil.

"What are you doing Tyler?"

"I'm leaving."

"Not with that box you're not."

"Well then you'll have to take it from me."

A GOOD FATHER IS WISE AND KNOWS THE MOMENT WHEN TO LET THEIR KIDS MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES EVEN WHEN IT MAY BE THE WRONG ONE. THERE COMES A POINT WHERE GOD STANDS BACK AND LETS YOU CHOOSE.

Phil lunges at Tyler when another figure shows up at the door and pulls him back. "What's going on here?" He sees the box in Tyler's hand and asks, "What are you doing Son?"

Tyler looks at his father and says, "I'm done with this place. I'm tired of never being able to have any fun or do what I want. I've helped earn this money and I'm taking my piece of the pie and leaving."

Phil tries to step in and grab the box but Dad stops him. "Let him go Phil."

"What do you mean let him go? You're just going to let him leave.. with all that money?"

"Yes son I am. Go ahead Tyler, your friends are waiting."

Tyler can't believe what he just heard. Before his dad can change his mind he runs past him, through the store and out the front door. His friends can't believe he's coming.

"When we saw your dad show up we thought we'd never see you again. We can't believe he let you come?"

“Oh he did. And we are going to have some fun boys.” And with that he opened the box and showed his friends what was in it.

“Is that all yours?”

“Yup”

“You’re dad gave it to you?”

Yup”

And with this new found freedom they all cheered as Billy hit the gas and made his way to the freeway that would guide them to Vegas. As you can imagine with a box like that it wasn’t difficult to create a memorable weekend for those boys. But in no time Sunday arrived and Billy says, “I gotta get home before my mom finds out I took the van.” They all load up and get ready to go.

“Aren’t you coming Tyler?”

“No. I’m staying. I’m done with the family business. You guys go ahead, I’ll see you later.”



The story doesn’t end here. In fact there are some big twists that we’ll see in a moment. But before we do I want to show you how this story gives us a glimpse into the heart of Jesus who is described in Isaiah 9:6 as the Everlasting Father. Which is kind of weird because isn’t Jesus God the Son? Yes. When Isaiah describes Jesus as the **everlasting Father** He’s speaking to the character and heart of Jesus just as a Father has to their own kids.

To the ancient Israelites, the title “Father” meant a lot more than mere biology. Fathers cared for their children and met their needs. In this sense Jesus fits the bill as father, for he cares deeply about his children. He cared enough to die for us. He protects us as our warrior God, defeating in

I DON'T KNOW WHAT CHOICES YOU HAVE MADE THAT MAKE YOU THINK THAT YOUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO TRY AND REPAY GOD BACK. WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO REPAY GOD BACK. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE

our life sin, Hell and death itself. And he meets our needs, giving us purpose and meaning and a future.

And so in this story Jesus shows us his heart through the lens of a loving Father. It's a great story and Jesus told it to some religious leaders one day who were all upset with Him because he was hanging out with imperfect people. He was seen with the tax collectors and drug addicts and pimps of the day and they're like – "If he's a holy man why is he hanging out with sinners?"

And it's at that point that sits down and tells this story. Jesus was a master story teller and he would tell these stories that we know as parables always with the goal of getting us to understand who God is and what he does. In Luke 15 Jesus tells a number of stories and then gets to the one I've been telling yo (although I've modernized it a bit). It's the story of the prodigal son. It's Jesus explaining to his listeners what His Dad is like and what His heart is like.

Take a moment and read the rest of the story in your Bible the way Jesus told it in [Luke 15:11-13](#).

Now – who does that? Can you imagine going up to your Father and saying – "Hey give me half of everything you have because I deserve it. I want to paaaartaayyy – so hand it over Pops." I don't think I'd be here today if I tried that with my Dad.

But Jesus is a master at building tension in a story to make a point. And here in this story people would be going "huh?" But if we look carefully we'll see something about the heart of a father. What a loving Father does and the first thing we discover is that a loving Father will let you decide.

The son gets his half and squanders everything in wild living. Doesn't the father know he's going to do that?

Yes.

The truth is - Jesus never forces himself into anyone's life. He's the Everlasting Father which means he doesn't change. He totally respects your choices and your free will. A good father is wise and knows the moment when to let their kids make their own choices even when it may be the wrong one. There comes a point where God stands back and lets you choose.

And if you want to live your life like your Father is dead than God will let you make that choice.



Phil (the older brother) is back at the store and he's been working extra hard. Since Tyler left there's a lot more to do. One day a family friend comes to the store and approaches Phil.

"Hey Phil, I know it's none of my business but have you seen your brother Tyler recently?"

"Nope. It's been months and I really don't care."

"Well, for what it's worth I think I saw him last week. I was in Vegas to see a show and behind the hotel I was staying at I saw a guy diving in one of the dumpsters looking for food. I could have sworn it was Tyler. I just thought you may want to know."

Tyler's money had run out, His friends have gone away. No one is there for him anymore since he no longer has anything to offer. He's messed up from the drugs and alcohol and overrun by addiction to the point where just to survive he's eating the leftovers from the hotel buffet out of a dumpster.

The only job Tyler can hold is to work on a farm outside the city feeding pigs. When the truck comes with all the slop for those pigs he has to do everything he can to restrain himself from eating with them. Somewhere in the midst of this he comes to his senses and he thinks again about his father.

"I wonder if he would take me back. What would I say if I had the chance to see dad again. I wonder if he would let me just work for him." And he runs through his head what he'd say to his dad. "I'd tell him I'm sorry, I've sinned, I've messed up please forgive me. Just put me in the back shop. I'll sweep and clean and do whatever you want. You don't have to take me back into the family – just give me a roof and some food. I'll work hard for you dad. I'll pay you back dad."

That's how a lot of people respond to God. "I'll work for you. I'll repay you. I'll make it up to you. I know I messed up. I know I took you for granted God – but just let me repay you. Let me work off my bad choices and decisions." And we fail to realize that we can't. There's nothing we can do to earn our way back or pay it all back. And what we forget about God is that He's the Everlasting Father – which means he never changes. **Psalm 103:8** tells us that God is "**...compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unailing love.**"

I don't know how far from God you may be. I don't know what choices you

have made that make you think that your only choice is to try and repay God back. What I do know is that there is nothing you can do to repay God back. It's impossible. But you know what else I know? I know that we have an Everlasting Father, a Savior who does not change. A God who patiently waits for you and me to come to our senses and return home.

And that return home begins with a change in your attitude. Coming to your senses is to shift your thinking from GIVE ME GIVE ME – to **MAKE ME**. The prodigal son went off the rails when he embraced the attitude of “GIVE ME!” Give me my share, give me my chance. Give me my rights which is always a rebellious attitude. But when you come to your senses you stand before your everlasting Father and simply say MAKE ME. Make me like you Lord. You begin to see what God is really like and all about.

It's early morning when Tyler steps out of the car he'd hitched a ride with back to his old home town. He'd been dropped off on the edge of town and now began the 20 minute walk towards the center of town where his Dads store is.

As he walks he's rehearsing in his head over and over again what he is going to say.

YOU CAN BE FAR FROM THE FATHER OR CLOSE TO THE FATHER AND STILL MISS THE HEART OF THE FATHER.

“Dad I've sinned, I've blown it, I'm so sorry – I just want to be your slave and do everything I can do to pay you back. Please forgive me...”

Before he knows it he's standing across the street from the family gas and grocery store. He just

stands there and stares. He can't move. He's frozen.

He can see his Dad at the front counter helping a customer. Should he just walk in? Should he wait off to the side till closing time? As he's pondering what to do next he suddenly realizes that his Dad is looking back at him. He's been seen.

Tyler's father wastes no time running from behind the counter towards the front door. Tyler's still frozen. He sees his dad coming towards him and fear overcomes him. What's his Dad going to do? He takes a step back as his Father runs through the front door. The bell that hangs on that door rings uncontrollably as the doors opens and then crashes closed behind him. His Dad is calling his name. Loudly.

“Tyler! Tyler!”

His arms are wide open and he’s running towards him. As his Dad gets closer Tyler flinches and covers his head with his hands not sure if his Dad is angry or happy. All of a sudden two big arms encompass him and pull him to his chest.



He tries to get out what he’s been practicing but all he can do is cry. After a few minutes He tries again and gets it out this time – “Father I’ve sinned against both heaven and you and I’m no longer worthy of being called your son.”

His Dad ignores him and simply holds him tighter and then turns back to the store and yells to his employees.

“Start the BBQ! We are going to have a party!”

A Party? Did Dad actually miss me? Was he actually thinking of me while I was gone? Yes. The reason he did not chase him was because he gave him the freedom to choose. But when he returns Dad is waiting. He hasn’t changed. His love is still as strong as ever. And all of a sudden Tyler looks down and looks at the shirt that his Father just placed in his hands. It’s the one he used to wear every day. The one with his name embroidered on it.

It’s not supposed to be like this. He’s supposed to just be a hired hand. But instead Dad gives him the keys to the store, the company credit card and the new combination to the safe.

Tables are being brought out, the BBQ has been lit and the entire staff is about to enjoy a huge meal celebrating the homecoming of a son.

Meanwhile – Big brother Phil is not very happy.

I always thought this story should be called the Prodigal Sons because both sons are prodigals who are missing the heart of the Everlasting Father.

You see – we clearly see Tyler’s rebellion but miss Phil’s. You know who Phil is? Phil is the guy we all want to be like. He’s the responsible one. He’s the one that serves everyone and works hard and who’s humble. He’s the one that goes the extra mile to make sure everything works out in the end.

Phil is the guy we want our daughters to marry. We look at our kids and we point to Phil and we say – “kids be like Phil!”

But Phil has an issue. He never gets to have a party. He's never been able to celebrate. He doesn't think God cares. He's working his butt off doing everything he's been asked to do, but no one throws him a party. And Phil's idea of the Christian life is to just try a little harder.

You see – **you can be far from the Father OR close to the Father and still miss the heart of the Father.**

THE HEART OF JESUS IS LIKE A LOVING EVERLASTING FATHER – WHO NO MATTER WHAT HIS CHILDREN DO IS STANDING AND WAITING FOR YOU TO RETURN HOME.

The story tells us that it was the Father who came out to the older brother to talk to him.

“Listen Phil – everything I have is yours – whether you worked for it or not. What you do does not get you what I have – you get what I have because you're my son and I love you.”

It's the same for you and me and our relationship with Jesus. Jesus is our everlasting Father in that His

love never changes based on where we are or what we've done.

This week as you spend some time with Jesus why not ask Him which son you are.

- **Are you the younger son?** – Running from God, taking what you deserve, doing life on your own terms? Your goal is to repay God for what you've done. If that's you – God loves you and when you are ready His arms are wide open.
- **Are you the Older son?** Doing things that make you look the part but still missing the heart of your Father. Your identity is based upon what you do and how you act and what others think about you. You're trying to work for God's approval. If that's you – God loves you and you don't have to earn it – you just receive it.
- **Which one are you?** One son is searching while the other son is slaving – neither place is where God wants you to be.

The heart of Jesus is like a loving Everlasting Father – who no matter what His children do is standing and waiting for you to return home. He won't chase you but He will wait for you and when you come to that place where you are willing to give up your GIVE ME's for MAKE ME's – then you will be exactly where God can shower His everlasting love on you.

week three

monday



Read – Luke 15:11-31 and memorize 1 John 3:1

Ask – Jesus, how do you see me in your story?

Am I the prodigal son or am I the older son? What do you want to tell me? Write down what Jesus shows you.

Personal Prayer – Lord, help me to see, understand and experience how much you love me no matter what I’ve done or haven’t done. Spend time thanking God for his love and kindness towards you.

tuesday

Read – Meditate on this statement from Luke 15:17-18 – *“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself....I will go home to my Father....”* (And memorize 1 John 3:1)

Ask – Jesus, where in my life do you want me to “come to my senses?” What areas or issues are keeping me from coming to you as my Heavenly Father? Write down what Jesus shows you and confess your sin to Him.

Personal Prayer – God, forgive me for my sin of _____. Help me to live dependent on your truth and voice in my life rather than on my own sensibilities. Give me your mind and your heart as I go throughout my day.

wednesday

Read – Read Matthew 7:7-11 and memorize 1 John 3:1

Ask – Jesus, show me any areas in my life where I have resisted you as my Heavenly Father? Lord, show me how I have because of my earthly struggles and pain have not run to you for protection, leadership and love. Lord, what do you want me to do to gain a proper understanding of you as my Heavenly Father? Write down what He shows you.

Personal Prayer – Lord help me to live today in the truth that you are my Heavenly Father who loves me, that you are strong enough to protect me, that you are engaged in my life in order to teach me, that you are tender enough to lead me and because you conquered death you are alive today to empower and live through me.

thursday

Read – Romans 8:12-17 and memorize 1 John 3:1

Ask – There are three things in this passage that the Holy Spirit gives us

(Confidence (v.15), Access to the Father (V.15b) and Security (v.16)). Ask the Lord to show you which area you need to activate in your life. Ask Him to show you if there is any specific truth or message in this Scripture for you. Write down what He shows you.

Personal Prayer – Jesus, thank you that because of you in my life I can live with confidence. Thank you that because I am a child of God I can call God Father and that I have access to everything my Heavenly Father offers. Help me to live today as the child of God you tell me I am.

friday

Read – Matthew 6:19-34; 1 Peter 5:7 and memorize 1 John 3:1

Ask – Lord, why am I prone to worry instead of trust you as my Heavenly Father to meet all my needs? Let Him speak to you. After you have waited on the Lord take your list of worries and one by one offer them to your Heavenly Father to carry them for you.

Tell – Tell God what you are worried about. List your worries in your journal.

Personal Prayer – Jesus, thank you that your heart is for your children. Thank you for being a loving Father who will do everything to rescue and protect his children. Thank you for pursuing me and rescuing me from my sin when I was lost and astray.

saturday

Read – Matthew 18:12-14 and memorize 1 John 3:1

Ask – Lord, what do you want me to learn and apply in my life from this passage of Scripture.

Personal Prayer – Jesus, thank you that your heart is for your children. Thank you for being a loving Father who will do everything to rescue and protect his children. Thank you for pursuing me and rescuing me from my sin when I was lost and astray.

sunday

Read – 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; James 1:17 and memorize 1 John 3:1

Ask – Jesus, these Scriptures speak of how great you are as our Heavenly Father. Where in my life do you want to show me or remind me of your great power?

Personal Prayer – Lord, as I commit to worshiping you today at church help me to focus on the blessing of your power and strength as I worship you and learn more about you.

week four
SHAWN VANDOP
LEAD PASTOR



Have you ever gone to the mall at Christmas? If so you know how crazy and hectic it can be. In fact one of the most chaotic and un-peaceful places in the world is a mall parking lot at Christmas time. I hope you never have to compete for an open parking spot because I'm pretty sure that you'll not be greeted with any "Joy to the World" or be encouraged to "have yourself a merry little Christmas." Yet peace is the one thing that everyone wants but so few people ever find.

You hear it all the time – Beauty Queens telling the world that "all they want is peace." Rock stars uniting together and writing songs that speak about peace. Middle aged hippies still living off the past of their marches and standoffs for peace.

Everyone wants it yet we live in a culture where there is less and less of it!

**FOR SOME REASON
WE'VE CLEANED
UP THE CHRISTMAS
STORY AND MADE IT
PEACEFUL. BUT THE
STORY OF CHRISTMAS
IS ANYTHING BUT
PEACEFUL.**

Since the beginning of recorded history, the entire world has been at peace less than 8% of the time! In 3530 years of recorded history only 286 years saw peace. There have been over 8000 peace treaties made and broken.

The **US Center for disease control** says that 50% of people who die before the age of 65 die from something related to stress. **The Harvard Business Review** put out a study that said that

60-90% of all people who go to the hospital go for stress related issues. **North Americans** consume more than \$800 million worth of anti-anxiety medication every year.

We are a culture that is not at peace with ourselves. You see it when parents yell at kids and coaches at their hockey games or maybe it's the harsh words yelled in the heat of the moment between a husband and wife. Peace? We all want it but so few have it.

Why can't we get it together and learn to live in peace. I mean if we can create Facebook, YouTube, a space station and the X-box – surely we

can live in peace? But here's the issue – peace is not found in a treaty or conference or a self-help book. **Peace is found in a person.**

'For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulder. And he will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' (Isaiah 9:6)

That was prophesied 700 years before Jesus was born and for 700 years people waited, anticipated, longed for this child to come and bring them peace and deliver them from their anxiety and stress and worry. And to be honest I sometimes think we are still waiting. I mean, when you and I look at our life what do we see? We see chaos. We see stress. We see anxiety. For many life is anything but peaceful. For many it's painful and hard. And then you see Jesus described as the Prince of peace and you don't believe it. You're still waiting for Him to show up and calm you down.

Can I challenge you for a moment to rethink what it means for Jesus to be your prince of peace? What you're looking for may not be what you need. I mean, just think about the Christmas story. The Christmas story is not a peaceful story.

In **Luke 2:10-14** there's an angel of the Lord speaking to the shepherds in the field, and this is what the angel said. **“Don't be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 1And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”**

Jesus is called the Prince of Peace. When He appeared, the angel said, “Peace on earth;” but yet, when I think about the birth of Jesus, I don't envision a very peaceful moment. Think about it.

A little teenage girl named Mary finds out she's pregnant, and she's pregnant by God. That's tough to explain. You know, “God got me pregnant.” That's not very peaceful news to try and explain.

Then you travel through her journey, and at some point, she's nine months pregnant and they discover they've got to travel across country - on a donkey. Nine months pregnant sitting on a donkey. Nothing peaceful about that. I took my wife three different times to the hospital in a minivan. It wasn't pleasant for any of us. That's bad enough but here we're talking pregnant and on a donkey. They pull into town, and you know she's a little anxious.

“JOE! You better get me a place to stay, NOW! And so Joseph goes to get a room and he tries every hotel in Bethlehem but everything is booked up. And Mary is like, “Did you not make reservations? What were you thinking?” And so finally, Joseph negotiates a deal with some guy who says he has a stable behind his house they can rent. Now he has to tell Mary the news. I’m guessing that conversation wasn’t very calm.

So here you’ve got this young girl, nine months pregnant, who just travelled a long way on a donkey, now laying on some hay bales in a barn. She gives birth, and there is no epidural and as I understand it? “No epidural, no peace.” And the whole time I’m sure Joseph is getting blamed for this even though he wasn’t responsible. I’m sure he had to bite his tongue a few times.

Then Jesus is born. The Prince of Peace enters planet earth. Meanwhile there is another King named Herod who is feeling threatened. He has heard rumors about this new King and is worried that his throne is up for grabs.

WE ALL WANT A “SILENT NIGHT” SO WE WORK AT MANUFACTURING PEACE – AND THAT CAN LAST FOR A WHILE BUT IT WILL NEVER LAST FOREVER BECAUSE WHAT THE WORLD OFFERS IS TEMPORARY.

He’s jealous. He’s concerned - and so, he says, “Let’s just kill this baby. But he has no idea where to find him so he tells his soldiers to find any baby under the age of two that’s a male, and kill them. So the Prince of Peace is born, and all of a sudden all of these innocent baby boys are being murdered. It seems like they may have got this name for Jesus wrong.

Christian marriages are full of turmoil. No peace. There are people who make more money today than they ever have and they are stressed out financially. Where’s the peace in that? Turn on the news, and what do you see? Car bombings, school shootings, countries at war, people being taken hostage, people being killed and beheaded and kidnapped and raped. If Jesus is the Prince of Peace He doesn’t seem to be living up to His name.

Many people still believe that to be true today. Jesus does not seem to be all that good at making peace. People are still just stressed out. No peace. Just anxiety. Tension.

Now let’s step back for a moment and ask a question: What if the Christmas story is a picture of peace that the world knows nothing about?

For some reason we have cleaned up the Christmas story and made it peaceful. But the story of Christmas is anything but peaceful. It’s messy.

It's dirty. It's full of hardship and struggle and murder and tension. It's why Isaiah said that Jesus would be the Prince of Peace. He was given that name because he would come into a world that was messed up and full of anxiety and stress and pain and questions.



And what we have done is understood peace as something that comes and takes away all our problems and mess and struggles and issues. We look at Jesus and wonder why he won't make everything better. But the reality is – Jesus never said He would make everything better – but he did promise to give us peace in the middle of our anxiety, stress and struggles. If we invite him to, the Prince of peace shows up in our mess and says “let me be your comfort as you go through all this. Let me walk with you and let me assure you that you are going to make it.” His peace does not make us comfortable but His peace does comfort us.

In Hebrew, the word **Prince of Peace** is the word **Sar Shalom**. “Sar,” means the “one who was in charge.” It means the captain. It means the Lord. It means the chief. It means the general. **It was the one that was in charge.** Jesus is the captain, the chief, the Lord, the “Sar” of Shalom. What does Shalom mean? Shalom was actually a greeting that one person would give to another. Shalom means rest. It means tranquility. It means wholeness. It means completeness. Jesus is the “Sar Shalom.” You could say He's the Captain of rest. He is the Lord of tranquility. He is the Chief of contentment.

WHEN WE ARE UNDER JESUS, THE PRINCE OF PEACE, HE GIVES US PEACE. IT'S NOT OUR PEACE. IT'S HIS PEACE

You see – Peace is available to anyone who would choose to bring their life under the command of King Jesus. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The amazing thing is, when we are under the Lordship of Christ, He can give us a peace that most people don't understand. When your private world is falling apart, Jesus can

give you an inward peace that goes beyond human understanding, and just as Jesus can give you peace, He can also take that same peace away. Why would He do that? Because He is the Prince of Peace. He may remove your peace to get your attention. He may remove His peace when you've left Him to draw you back to Him. Why would He do it? He's the Lord of peace, the Prince of Peace. When you are under Him and surrendered to Him, you can experience His peace. When you step outside of His will and His way, you may not experience His peace.

So what does that mean for us today? Here are a couple thoughts.

Because Jesus is peace you can be comforted. He is the peace who comforts you. Not the one who makes you comfortable - but the one who comforts you. You may have some things in your life that are just going haywire, and there is no inward spiritual peace. Understand that Jesus, wants to bring you comfort. Here is what Jesus said in **John 14:27**, **“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.”** Notice, it’s not your peace. It’s His peace that Jesus gives to you.

The problem is that many of us try to create our own peace. We try and calm things down. We all want a “Silent Night” so we work at manufacturing peace – and that can last for a while but it will never last forever because what the world offers is temporary.

Jesus went on to say, **“I don’t give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.”** Who’s peace does He give to you? It’s His peace. It’s the peace of the One who is in charge of Shalom. He gives you His peace.

I’ll explain it this way. When I was renovating my house I wanted to do some stuff on my own to save some cash. So I asked my electrician if I could change out all the plugs myself? He said sure so I said “please show me.” You see – if I tackled it myself I would not have peace or at least the peace I would experience would be because I would be with Jesus after I electrocuted myself. So my electrician showed me what to do. He’s a professional and he says, “Put this wire here and twist them together and plug it in,” I follow his instructions and I’m not stressed out. It’s not because I know what’s going on, but it’s because he know what’s going on, I have his peace not because of my own abilities but because of his abilities. He gives me his peace. It’s the same with Jesus. When we are under Jesus, the Prince of Peace, He gives us peace. It’s not our peace. It’s His peace.

Some of you might say, **“Well, what if I don’t have His peace?”** Here’s one reason why that may be true in your life.

You may believe in Jesus but you’re trying to do everything by yourself. You’re trying to solve everything on your own. You’re trying to do and cope with life outside of the Prince of Peace. So what do you do then? The Bible tells us in **Philippians 4:6-7**, **“Don’t be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God. And then, the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.”** What do we do? When we are outside, trying to cope on our own, and we don’t have peace, we simply step under the lordship of Christ, and then we take our requests and we present them

to Him and say, "I can't do this. It's no longer mine. I trust You with it, and because You are in charge, I have Your peace."

This week as you spend time with Jesus invite Him to bring you the peace you need in your life in spite of your circumstances or situation. Ask Him to remind you that no matter what you are going through or what you are facing you can live with a deep peace in your heart and life.



Remember to have your Bible and Journal with you as read, ask and listen to Jesus. Make sure you write down your thoughts and the answers and direction in your journal that Jesus shows you as you spend time listening to Him.

week four

monday



Read – Read Philippians 4:6-7 and memorize Isaiah 26:3

Ask – Lord, where in my life am I anxious and stressed? What is the cause of that anxiety and stress?

Personal Prayer – Take what Jesus shows you and confess worry and stress as your sin. Receive His forgiveness.

tuesday

Read – John 14:15-29 and memorize Isaiah 26:3

Ask – Lord do I tend to ask you for peace in order to change my circumstances or do I ask you for peace to change me amidst my circumstances? How can I apply your peace so that I can experience it in the middle of my circumstances?

Personal Prayer – Lord – show me how to receive and apply your peace when I am overcome with worry and stress. I ask you to fill me with your peace right now.

wednesday

Read – John 16:33 and memorize Isaiah 26:3

Ask – Write down in your journal what you are thankful for then meditate on how being thankful can bring peace into our lives.

Personal Prayer – Take some time and use what you are thankful for as prayer points (i.e., if you are thankful for your family pray for them by name...)

thursday

Read – John 20:9 and memorize Isaiah 26:3

Ask – specific area in your life do you need Jesus to show up and speak peace into.

Personal Prayer – Use what Jesus shows you as your focus for prayer. Journal your prayer to Jesus.

friday

Read – Romans 14:17-19, 2 Corinthians 13:11 and memorize Isaiah 26:3

Ask – Lord, is there anyone in my life that you want me to make peace with? Is there anyone I am harboring un-forgiveness towards? Confess your sin and forgive whomever God shows you.

Personal Prayer – Lord today I confess my sin towards _____ . I choose to forgive them and I thank you that you are faithful and just to forgive me of my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. May I live and move towards being a person of peace inviting you to work in the areas and relationships that you have shown me.

saturday

Read – Colossians 3:12-15 and memorize Isaiah 26:3

Ask – Lord, what specifically do you want to speak or correct or encourage me from this passage of Scripture (Read it through a few times and journal what Jesus shows you).

Personal Prayer – Use what Jesus shows you as your focus for prayer.

sunday

Read – 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Romans 15:13 and memorize Isaiah 26:3

Ask – Lord, how can I be an ambassador of your peace today, specifically as I go to church to worship with my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Personal Prayer – Lord, help me to model to those around me what it means to live in and with the peace of your Son Jesus.

HELLO

my name is

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING
FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE



main street
CHURCH

our values

We are whole life, faith filled, all in risk takers

We'll never insult God with small thinking & safe living

We are all about the local church

The local church is God's "Plan A" to reach the world - He has no "Plan B!"

We will do anything short of sin to reach people who don't know Christ

To reach people no one is reaching, we'll have to do things no one is doing

We will contribute more than we consume spiritually

The church does not exist for us. We are the church and we exist for the world

We will keep short accounts

The greatest weapon we have against the Devil is repentance and confession

We will be relentless with truth and grace

We will teach and model the hard truths of Jesus so that we can experience and model the deep grace of Jesus

We will practice irrational generosity

We truly believe it is more blessed to give than to receive

We will intentionally listen to the voice of God

We recognize that the voice we listen to the most will determine the direction of our life



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