

# April

## Week 1

**Monday. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me... Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me."**

(from Ps. 51:10,11)

O God, this is my prayer as I begin this week, a week for which I have plans but, from experience, I know they can be changed in a moment by developments not of my own making. So my plans, however logical and good they seem right now, could become of little importance. What is of real importance is remembering every day that you are my guide to a clean and steadfast heart. You save me from my errors and you sustain me. So make that my focus today and every day. Make the joy of my salvation the chief joy of my life. I pray also for...

**Tuesday. "Happy are those who reject the advice of evil men, who do not follow the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God. Instead, they find joy in obeying the law of the Lord. They are like trees that grow beside a stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up." (Ps. 1:1-3)**

Father, your promises have held true since the beginning, through to the time when your servant, David, said these words and on until now and into forever. Thank you for your word which makes it clear that happiness and joy always mark the paths of all the multitudes of your children who obey and follow your lead. I want to be one of them, one who bears fruit consistently. And I want to understand happiness and joy as you define those words, not some poor imitation that we with our finite minds and experience might imagine. Lead me to be a fruitful disciple, ready to demonstrate your love in just the right way and just at the right time, I pray, and I pray also for...

**Wednesday. “Lord, who may enter your temple? Who may worship on Zion, your sacred hill? A person who obeys God in everything and always does what is right, whose words are true and sincere, and who does not slander others...does no wrong to friends, nor spreads rumors about neighbors...but always does what he promises no matter how much it may cost...”** (from Ps. 15:1-4)

God, again your glorious promises are there for all of us who obey you in all things. Shunning evil, clinging to good and doing so unflinchingly – give me your strength, your guidance so I may do this and live within the aura of your temple and worship you in spirit and in truth. Help me to be thoughtful and considerate in all my connections with people. But, most of all, cause my promise to follow you in all things be my preeminent purpose. I pray, too, for...

**Thursday. “I will lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber...the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”** (from Ps. 121)

O God, the more I read of your love and care, the more I understand that your grace has no end and – how I thank you! – it includes me. What an elevating joy and what a comfort to know that the God of all eternity watches over my life. You know all my comings and goings, all the errors I might make. You are there to guide me and all I have to do is just lift up my eyes to you. Thank you, gracious God. I praise you and thank you. And I pray now for...

**Friday. "...this is what the Lord says...'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned...For I am the Lord, your God...'"** (from Isa. 43)

Lord God of us all, yet again you reassure me of my redemption, of my safekeeping, of life without fear. The waters, the rivers, the fire – the pitfalls which would endanger me and those I love – are always there; some I know about and some, I'm sure, I never see. But the greatest danger is straying from you. And you will save me, for you are, indeed, my Lord God. I worship you. I pray also for...

**Saturday. "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God...he gives strength to the weary...even youths grow tired and weary...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."** (from Isaiah 40:28-31)

O God, you have given such beautiful words of comfort to your children through all the ages, and I thank you that I may hear them and claim them as my own. Help me to hide your words in my heart so that I shall never lose them, so that they will be the source of what my life is to be for all my days. As we come together for worship tomorrow, I pray that you will encourage, strengthen and renew all among us who are facing trouble, who are weary and burdened. You are the everlasting God for all of us. Give us the strength that comes from your love. Cause all of us to soar with you. I now pray for...

## Week 2

During the days and weeks following the death and resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian church began developing into the vibrant force it soon became and has continued to be throughout the world. Peter was a central leader in that process. What he had to say to the people then – and how they responded – applies to us now.

**Monday.** Peter recalled the words of David, **“I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me...”** (from Acts 2:25-27).

Eternal God, the words of your children come to us from centuries long past – thank you. Just as Peter recalled some of those words in his time, I recall them today. Help me to see you always before me. Remind me that you are at hand in all the moments of my days. I will surely be glad and rejoice; I will live in hope because I can rely on you, on your great faithfulness. I thank you with all my heart as I pray in the name of Jesus now for...

**Tuesday.** Peter said, **“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off...”** (from Act. 2:38 39)

Father, I have made the initial steps in my relationship with you, but, as you know fully, I have faltered so many, many times. But you have given me the promise of forgiveness for all my sins, no matter how grave the sin, no matter how often I go awry. And you have gifted me with the presence of the Holy Spirit to guide and support and comfort me. And, even more, you have promised these same gifts to everyone – my family, my friends, my neighbors, all who will come to you. I pray that I may be the tool you want me to be so that through me, this promise will be heard and understood by others. I pray, too, for...

**Wednesday.** Peter spoke to a crippled man, **“Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”** (Acts 3:6)

“In the name of Jesus Christ...” That’s the answer of how to walk with you, O God! Help me to stop being so concerned with the “silver and gold” – the material things and, in fact, most of what takes up my time and my attention. All that – the things I want, the worries and fears I have – every bit of it fades into nothingness as I consider the enormous message of your love which invites me to walk with you. Whatever it is that keeps me from having this as the pinnacle point in my life, I ask that you rid me of it. Point me to Jesus. Teach me to live in him, not in the past, not in the futility of worry, but in him. Let my heart always sing that hymn, “O, Master, Let Me Walk With Thee.” It is in the name of Jesus Christ that I pray this, and also pray for...

**Thursday.** Peter and John were arrested for preaching the Good News of the Gospel and, after a night in jail, Peter reminded the authorities of the crucified Jesus and said, **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”** (Acts 4:12)

God, you have made this clear in so many places in the Bible just as you made it so shiningly clear on that first Easter long ago. And the longer I live in this world and seek you in my life, the clearer you make it still. So for me and those I love, I pray that our understanding of our own individual salvation will be crisp and strong – Jesus did indeed die and was resurrected to demonstrate your love for us. That’s how you tell us of your never-waning desire to have us all seek you first in life, letting all other things fall into place, just the way you want them to do. Thank you, Father! I pray also in Jesus’ name today for...

**Friday.** Peter and John were ordered by the authorities to stop speaking and teaching about Jesus. But they replied, **“Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”** (Acts 4:19,20)

Dear Lord, I learn through your word and from my own experience that obedience to you is what this life is to be about. Not adherence to some other power or influence. Not giving in to temptations which take me away from you. Thank you for revealing this to me and for showing me that it is not only the right thing to do, it is the *only* thing that makes sense for life. Show me what to do in my “speaking” about what I see and hear in my walk with you. May the urge to witness about your love be as strong in me as it was for your earliest disciples. I pray also for...

**Saturday.** After their release from jail, Peter and John met with other Christians in a worship service. Then, **“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and one mind.”** (Acts 4:31,32a)

Father, as I try to envision that day when those early Christians met in such exciting togetherness, I think about worship services in our church. I thank you for the evidence of your presence with us in past services – in the singing, the praying, the preaching. And I see that being of one heart and mind before you, even within our own individuality, is always the reason it happens that way. You show me that it’s been going on from the beginning, and it continues as the Holy Spirit dwells among us and your word goes forth with bold conviction. So I pray that this will happen again tomorrow. Enjoin us as one in your love. Let our worship be golden for everyone present. And I pray also for...

## Week 3

"By his grace we're daily kept...what grace is this?"  
(from "What Grace Is This," song by John Peterson)

It was God and God only who established the concept of love for his world. In like manner, he created grace, a way to show his love through gifts, through favors, which are specially designed for each individual of every generation. Thus, God's gifts and favors take countless forms, for they meet the countless varieties of needs we all have. Sometimes we call God's gifts "acts of mercy" because they spare us from the pain of guilt when we sin. Grace is ours for the taking, no strings attached. When we accept, there comes a grand result: we learn how to extend grace to others.

**Monday.** The Lord said, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** (2 Cor. 12:9).

Paul said, **"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."** (Heb. 4:16)

Dear God, when I come into the precious privacy of prayer, I welcome the chance to be open and straightforward. So I tell you about my weaknesses, my sins, the things I need help on. And your word tells me that's the best way to find you, because your perfect power shines through in the face of my shortcomings. And so I do come boldly now. I ask for more of your grace, for the gift of your guidance in my life, for the presence of the Holy Spirit to hold me up and keep me tuned to you. How fine is your grace, your favor. Thank you, God. I pray this in the name of Jesus and pray also for...

**Tuesday.** **"...what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and Godly lives...make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him...be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior**

**Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever!  
Amen"** (from 2 Peter 3)

**"Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the  
knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."** (2 Peter 1:2)

O God, as always, your words make a lamp for my feet, a light for my path (Ps. 119:105), and these words leave no doubt. I desire to grow – really *grow* – in your grace, your knowledge, to have them multiplied. And I ask you to increase that desire as I walk in the path you want me to follow. In the name of Jesus, I pray, and also for...

**Wednesday. "Let no unwholesome word proceed from  
your mouth, but only such a word as is good for  
edification according to the need of the moment, that it  
may give grace to those who hear."** (Eph. 4:29)

**"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it  
were, with salt, so that you may know how you should  
respond to each person."** (Col. 4:6)

Father, I am often turned inward to myself, not giving enough attention to my speech and actions and how they might affect other people. Forgive me for my self-absorption, I pray. Help me to live within an aura of your grace so that all I do and say will consistently give witness to your love – *everywhere* I am. Season me with your grace, I pray in Jesus' name and, again, in that name I pray for...

**Thursday. "We have different gifts, according to the grace  
given us... prophesying... serving... teaching...  
encouraging... contributing to needs of others...  
leadership... showing mercy..."** (from Rom. 12:6,7)

God, help me to see my own uniqueness, but according to who I am in *your* sight, not in some set of standards I have contrived, not in some sense of what other people think. I want to be the person *you* designed me to be, to accept the gifts *you* give me, and to be identified by those gifts only. Teach me who I am and should be so I may use your gifts, exercising them to show your grace to others I encounter. I pray it in Christ's name, in whose name I also pray for...

**Friday. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken this seat at the right hand of the throne of God.”** (Heb. 12:1,2)

Father, you have extended your grace to your people through every generation from the beginning. Your children have seen it, accepted it, acted upon it, and demonstrated it to those around them. Thank you for this evidence which your word provides. How else would we ever know about it?! What an honor it must have been to be one of those witnesses – I want to be one too. So keep me sharply aware of your grace and lead me to accept and act on it. Thus, even I can add still more to the abundant evidence of your love for everybody, no exceptions! I pray in Christ's name, and also for...

**Saturday. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”** (Col. 3:16)

Great God of us all, as we look to our gathering together tomorrow – in our studies and our worship and fellowship – I ask that you will place your own designs on all we do. We will come with our own formats, but do not let them hinder the presence of the Holy Spirit among us. Rather, use them so that we will see the rich indwelling of your words in all that is said and thought and sung. It is your grace we need, Father, and never just programs of our own invention. For how empty they lie in the light of your gifts, your favors, your love. It is in the name of Jesus, our only Lord and Savior, that I pray this, and also for...

## Week 4

**Monday. "...God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."** (from I John 1:5-7)

O God, fellowship with you – how glorious the thought! To live in purity and honesty and in truth before you, to be free from all sinful ways, to resist temptation when it comes – all this is the gift of your love. And that's how fellowship with my Christian brothers and sisters becomes more real, more vibrant than ever. How I do praise you and magnify your name! Father, bring your very own light into my life and brighten my days as I begin this week, I pray. I pray also for...

**Tuesday. "And now I want to urgently remind you, dear friends, of the old rule God gave us right from the beginning, that Christians should love one another. If we love God, we will do whatever he tells us to. And he has told us from the very first to love each other."**

(II John 5, 6, *The Living Bible*)

Father, your word is full of both promise and instruction about love; it even defines you as the epitome of love – you are love (I John 4:16). Love is the basis, the key, epitome of who you are and who we are to be. Everything rests on that. Let me keep learning how to love you more and more. But then about other people, why is it so easy to love some and not others? Is it because I am relying on my ability to love, in some strange sort of bid for self-approval? If that's the case, then I am sorry and beg your forgiveness. It is your love at work in me that causes me to reach out in love to everyone – the hard-to-love become as lovable as the easy-to-love. Teach me your ways, O God, and keep me from straying into my own. I pray also for...

**Wednesday.** “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” (I John 2:15-17)

Dear God, I think of those I have known who have passed from us and I see how short life in this world truly is. Why do we put so much emphasis on our affairs, our accomplishments, the things that please us? We vie with each other and learn to hate. We see things we want and learn to envy. We concentrate on what seems of such enormous importance and lose sight of you, of following your will. O God, forgive us. Forgive me! Direct my focus toward you so that I may live – really *live!* I pray now for...

**Thursday.** Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

Dear Lord, thank you for these wondrous words. Your invitation and promise are so clear and so welcoming and so full of love. I wonder how I can I forget this beautiful Scripture as I rush through my days or, sometimes, wander aimlessly and lost in the confusion of my own making. I pray that these magnificent words will stay imprinted in my mind and heart so that they are central to my life. Help me to move past my worries and fears and hurts and irritations and all else that keeps me from resting in you. “Rest” – lovely word. Being easy, being light. Therein is the true perspective of what my life is meant to be. I pray for your guidance so that it happens for me. I also pray now for these other things...

**Friday.** “This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (I John 5:2-5)

My Lord, you create within me a clean heart and a right spirit and plant seeds of belief which grow into ever-increasing faith. Thus, I know in whom I have believed: Jesus, the Son of God. And so, as I consider your love, I also ask to understand your commands for me, and I ask for wisdom so I may find ways to obey them. I want always to overcome, to have a victorious life through faith in you. Thus will I await your leading with great expectations. And as I wait, I pray also for...

**Saturday. "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love." (11 John 3)**

Father, with gratitude for all you are doing within and through our church family, I pray for our worship services tomorrow that we have a special, even more intense awareness of your grace, your mercy, your peace. Be with us in truth and love in even more apparent ways than ever before. Bring excitement and encouragement. Release all of us – for we are indeed one body – from any chains that bind, from anything that might deter the working of the Holy Spirit. And from our gathering, let us move forward into a clearer understanding of your will for what you want our future to be. I pray this in Christ's name, and I also pray for...