

# October Prayers

## Week 1

**Monday.** “It is written, ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ With that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus...” (from 2 Cor. 4:13,14)

O God, without you to reach out to me, to enfold me, to lift me up, I cannot simply create faith. But I thank you: you, in fact, do those very things for me. You come to me where I am. You show me the joy of the clean heart and right spirit which you create in me. You plant the thoughts and desires which grow into an understanding that you love me. And faith is born. My heart fills with thanksgiving, my God. I pray that I may think about and enjoy the depth and breadth of all this more often, because then it will become more of who I am, and then I can speak of it more openly and confidently. Keep raising me up, and help me to raise up your name to others. And I pray...

**Tuesday.** “Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

Eternal God, thank you for these words you gave your servant, Paul, so that we may be encouraged. The truth is that we do lose heart. We often do feel that life is overwhelming. And it erodes us. Our troubles seem enormous, not light and momentary. They don't seem short-term at all, for we cannot find solutions to bring them to an end. But your word gives us courage and hope. Renew us inwardly, O God. Cause us to turn our eyes to you and get everything back into focus. Take us to that place where our perspective is set aright. Cause things that might tear us apart to fade in importance. Replace them with the beauty of living with

you *right now*, as well as the hope of an *eternity* with you. Within that beauty, that hope, I also pray for...

**Wednesday. "Our firm decision is to work from this focused center: One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat. He included everyone in his death so that everyone could also be included in his life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own."**

(from 2 Cor. 5:14,15, *The Message*)

Lord, thank you for these words. Here is a confession of major importance and we don't come to it lightly: you know about the things in our lives that separate us from each other – economic and social status, life experiences in general, personal conflicts, disagreements about things that seem important and really aren't, even the ways we read your word, even the ways we worship you – all this and more. It's all so wrong. Your word says it's wrong. And yet we're all caught up in these things, some by accident of circumstance but, worse, some by our own choosing. Forgive us, forgive us, forgive us, O Lord! *We truly are in the same boat.* You love us all the same. So take us one by one. Erase the ways we split ourselves apart. Show us how to be one body in you, that *far better life than we ever lived on our own!* I pray too for...

**Thursday. "...we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. ...we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other."** (from 2 Cor. 5:16-18, *The Message*)

Thank you, Jesus, for this reminder of the sacrifice you made to show us about life in you, about the fact that we don't have to live in some "old" life where wrong seemed right! Help us to keep looking upward, never drifting back into carelessness. And while we're learning the joy of our personal connection with you, keep us in tune with each other. Keep us in sure and true harmony, not dragged back into seeing people through the eyes of that "old

life" – what they have, how they look, how they act, *none* of those kinds of things. And I pray for...

**Friday. "God put the world square with himself through the Messiah... a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he's doing. We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them." (from 2 Cor. 5:19,20, *The Message*)**

Dear Lord, what a responsibility you give us! And what an honor! Keep us true and square with you, then show us how to tell others about it, right here where we are, and even going beyond the folks we usually see, into the community around us. And let that be just a start to an even wider range of where we witness! I pray now also for...

**Saturday. "As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." (1 Cor. 6:1,2)**

Thank you, God, for the grace which saves us. When we give you such thanks, we don't want it to be some kind of idle "thank you" because we hear it said in our liturgies, in our songs of worship, or in other ways that fall too easily off the tongue. We want our thanksgiving to be so heartfelt that it rings true every time, so that when we say it, we know you are hearing it and loving us back. Every time we call on you in prayer and praise, help it to be as fresh and thrilling as if it were a new discovery. For it's true that every day is another day of our salvation, a day of walking with you, a day of receiving your favor! Help us to bring our personal, joyful thanksgiving into our worship as we meet together tomorrow, as we come to that place you have given us to join as one body. Take us one by one and multiply your peace and joy for all of us. And now I pray for...

## Week 2

“Since the best teacher of prayer is the Holy Spirit, the best way to learn to pray is by praying.

“We have become satisfied with mere church, mere religious exertion, mere numbers and buildings – the things we can do. There is nothing wrong with these things, but they are no more than foam left by the surf on the ocean of God’s glory and goodness.

“There are things way out in the depths that only God can give us. They can be ours only if we launch out in our little prayer boats and learn to sail, even one day walk, on those waters.

“Bon voyage, my friend.”

(from *Deepening Your Conversation With God*, Ben Patterson)

**Monday.** Paul told the Christians at Corinth, “**Well, now is the right time to listen, the day to be helped. Don’t put it off; don’t frustrate God’s work by showing up late... I can’t tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life... Your lives aren’t small, but you’re living them in a small way. I’m speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively!**” (from 2 Cor. 6:2-13, *The Message*)

Lord, forgive us for hanging back, postponing, waiting for a more convenient time. You know us well: we’ve convinced ourselves that there is so much to do! And it’s so easy to put off the day when we vow to put you first in our lives. Show us that if we keep doing it, that day may never come. Show us that by delaying, we’re confining our lives to things that only seem important and, by comparison with you, aren’t at all. Open our eyes to the largeness of a life focused on you. Help us when we falter on our journeys, those days when we lose step with you, even fall back into old patterns. Keep our lives open to you, Lord. I now bring you these other prayers...

**Tuesday.** Paul told the Corinthians (and us) what God had said to the Hebrews of old (and us): **“I’ll live in them, move into them; I’ll be their God and they’ll be my people. So leave the corruption and compromise; leave it for good,”** says God. **‘Don’t link up with those who will pollute you. I want you all for myself. I’ll be a Father to you; you’ll be sons and daughters to me.’** ” (2 Cor. 6:17,18, *The Message*).

Master, thank you for this very clear claim which you place on our lives. We, of course, can never be worthy of it. Our worth lies only in the fact that you love us. We want to be your daughters and sons. We want you to live in us, to *move into us* and make us yours completely. We want our lives to be without sin, not caught up in activities where wrong is accepted, where no one is surprised by sinful behavior. If there is to be surprise, let those who don’t know you see how you live and move among your people and, thus, let their surprise turn to a curiosity that leads them to you. Allow us to be examples of that kind of surprise – people who shun sin and live in love. We are yours; make us your witnesses, we pray. I also pray...

**Wednesday.** In Chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Cor., Paul talked at length about the subject of giving money and other gifts to God’s work. He was thankful for the Corinthians’ generosity, but even more thankful for the graciousness with which they gave. Gift-giving, he said, produces joy. He added, **“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”** (2 Cor. 9:7)

Lord Jesus, we know that it takes money to tell the Good News throughout the world and to give us a place to worship and fellowship and tell the Gospel story where we are. Help us to do this joyfully. Help us make decisions about what to give out of cheerful hearts. Help us find ways to encourage each other in this part of our discipleship. It is you who has made us who we are, who gave us abilities to do what we do, who led us to find ways to have income and – most precious gift of all – it is you who leads us into lives of love. Thank you! In our giving, let us see your love. I also pray...

**Thursday.** For most of three chapters, Paul spoke of his ministry and the myriad troubles he had. But, he said, serving God was more than worth the imprisonments, stonings, beatings, shipwrecks, near-death experiences, and on and on. He said he was kept humbled by such troubles, not the least of which was some unnamed **“thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan.”** When he pleaded to be released from that, the Lord answered, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”** (from 2 Cor. Chapters 10-12, specifically, 12:9)

Lord, the troubles most of us have seem so small in comparison with Paul's troubles, or with the troubles other people right now have. But our troubles are still our troubles and, somehow, they don't seem lessened when we look at the difficulties others have. Forgive us if that comes from self-centeredness. But we do rely on your grace to carry us through, so we pray for yet more of that grace. In our weakness, show us your powerful love. I pray for...

**Friday.** **“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test?”** (2 Cor. 13:5,6)

We pray, Lord, for clear minds and honest hearts so that when we examine ourselves, we will see who we truly are. Don't let us fool ourselves into thinking our good works and public image define us. Let us see who we are through your eyes, through the eyes of your powerful and penetrating word. If, in truth, we don't see ourselves as your children, enjoin us to repent, to confess our sins, and then to accept you into our hearts. As you are in us, so we are in you. Come to us. Dwell within us, we pray. We want to pass the test with the highest reward: your blessings which will keep us growing in faith and traveling with joy on our journeys! I now pray for...

**Saturday.** As Paul ended his second letter to the Corinthians, he urged them to **“aim for perfection,”** to **“be of one mind, live in peace.”** And he promised that **“the God of love and peace will be with you.”** He closed with words which have become familiar to many as the most beautiful benediction of all: **“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,**

**and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”**

(from 2 Cor.:13:11-14)

Dear Lord and Savior, the challenge to aim for perfection seems so far beyond us, but with your grace, we can have the courage to try. So we pray for more of your grace. The promise of living out our lives together in the love and peace which come from God – that seems too good to be true, because we can in no way merit such a grand promise. So we pray that you look beyond our faults and see our needs and surround us with love and peace. The chance of having the fellowship of the Holy Spirit also seems beyond our reach, for our humanness makes us seem so small. So we pray for the boldness to believe and accept that our lives will be filled with the Holy Spirit’s presence. Teach us the daring kind of faith which brings all this about, we ask most humbly. And now I have these other prayers...

## Week 3

**Monday.** Jesus talked in Matthew 25 about the time of judgment when all people would be examined based on their actions toward one another. He stressed the importance of seeing to the needs of people we may not even know. **“...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”** And the reverse, **“...whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”** (from Matt. 25:40,45)

Dear Lord, you have taught us that we must first come to you in faith, believing in you and looking to you to lead us on our own special journeys. Thank you, Lord. And you have told us that you will support us in building our faith, that we don't have to manufacture it by ourselves. Thank you, Lord. And you have told us that we also must do some work, to witness about your love, to come to the aid of those who need help. We need you to support us in that too, Lord. Guide us to look in the right places where we are to do things for people. Don't let us just depend on someone else's ideas about it, but direct us to the specific places and special people where you want each of us to work. Whoever they are, whatever their needs, help us to do the work *as if we are doing it directly for you*. And in it all, may it be your name that is praised, not our own. I pray now for...

**Tuesday.** Jesus said: **“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”** (Matt. 23:12). And in a song his mother, Mary, sang about God, she said, **“He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.”** (Luke 1:52)

Lord, we praise you, for your power is great beyond our imagining. Reveal your power by keeping us bowed in humility to you. Never let us get so lost in ourselves that we forget who you are and who we are in our connection with you. When we are tempted to envy, or to wish others to be brought low, instantly show us the dreadful sin in that and steer us away from it. Keep teaching us that it is our own relationship with you which is our first order of business and that figuring out what is right for someone else is not really our affair at all. I also pray today for...

**Wednesday.** Paul said, **“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”** (1 Tim. 1:15, 16)

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for showing me the same mercy you show to everyone – all who sin – for I am certainly one of those. You have forgiven my sins and keep patiently forgiving me as I – why do I do it?! – persist in sinning on my journey with you. Thank you for showing me that my bond with you is so special that I don’t have to compare myself – or my sins – with anyone else. Whatever my sin is, it’s the worst, because it endangers that tight bond I so want to have with you. Lead me away from temptation, and deliver me from evil, I pray. And I also pray for...

**Thursday.** **“...godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ...people who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap... Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many grief.”** (from 1 Tim. 6:6-10)

Father, forgive us and set us straight when we start getting obsessed with money and *things*. It’s so easy to do; we confess our weakness. You show us how dangerous that can be – getting trapped by trivia and losing sight of what’s most important. The great thing is to be in a state of godliness where we enjoy contentment in you. All our gain in worldly goods will, at the end, mean nothing. So until that end comes – whenever and whatever it is to be - help us see how low on the scale *things* ought to be as we pursue our journeys with you. Escort us on the road to faith, ever skirting the path to greed and getting, we pray. I also pray for...

**Friday. "...pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your confession..."** (from 1 Tim. 6:11,12)

Almighty God, you who have forgiven when I confessed my sins, forgive me yet again, for I do waver. I am inconsistent in my pursuit of your righteousness. I am not always diligent in my faith or in my loving. I forget about the joy of imitating the gentleness of Jesus, my Savior. I do not fight the good fight of faith with the vigor which I know you will give me if I but ask. For all this faltering, forgive me, I pray. Help me to grab onto the life you want me to have, the life that will shine in your presence both presently and on into forever. I also pray for...

**Saturday. "So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord... I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."** (from 2 Tim. 1:8,12)

Dear Lord, I want to the best of my ability to entrust myself, my life, my future – all that I am or ever might be – to you. Help me to do that unfailingly. And help me to know the great pleasure of such a life in you, to be able to live and witness about it. If ever I am to be of real worth in this world, let it be from knowing you and living with you in this way. Then let my personal witness be combined with the witness of others in your household of faith. Especially do I want to be joined with the other Christians, your disciples, in our church. Make our collective testimony be ever more powerful than the witnessing we do separately. We give you ourselves individually; show us how to entrust ourselves to you as a united body, one that you can more readily use to spread the Gospel story. And guard us as we go. I pray also for...

## Week 4

### The Problem Of Me-ness

"The culture of self-realization, which is as commonplace to Americans as the air we breathe, has taught us that the most important questions in life are... 'Who am I? What do I want to get out of life? And what is it that will give me an endless measure of happiness?'

Much to the contrary, disciples of Jesus Christ, whose lives are built on the foundation of the Bible and the tradition of the Reformation, know that there are far more important questions to ask, such as '*Whose* am I? How am I called to live as a person who belongs not to myself but to Jesus Christ? And how can I serve God in my small corner of the world, even when serving God requires personal sacrifice and self denial?'

...it is possible for a person to go through all the motions of congregational life without hearing and internalizing the one story that conveys to the world the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is no wonder the mainline churches in America are in decline and in need of reformation."

(From *This We Believe* by Stephen W. Plunkett)

**Monday.** Paul warned Timothy about the days to come when people would be "**lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive... slanderous... brutal... treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure...**" And some, he said, would even have "**a form of godliness but denying its power.**" So he said, "**Have nothing to do with them.**" (from 2 Tim. 3:1-5)

Lord, as you guide us into your holiness, you lead us away from this kind of behavior, and how you bless us as you do! Thank you! Teach us how to separate ourselves from the life patterns of those whom Paul describes here, but lead us into their company in ways we can be witnesses of your love. You tell us to go into the world and witness; that's why we pray that we will see where to go and how far to go and what to say and to whom to say it.

Without your direction, we are bound to do things wrong – maybe even bring the Gospel to ridicule, and how bad that would be! But with your leading, we're bound to do things right. As we walk with you, give us the confidence that comes from you. But clearly distinguish it from any false and harmful self-confidence – *loving ourselves* – that we might generate. As in all things, we must have you by our side. I also pray for...

**Tuesday.** Paul wrote to Timothy about how to get along with people who had not come to know the truth of the Gospel: **“Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth...”** (from 2 Tim. 2:23-25)

Dear Lord, we thank you for all we have learned and how it has helped us grow as your disciples. Your word and your messengers open our minds and hearts and we are enlightened. Part of that learning has told us to be witnesses, and we look to you to help us know how to do that. But there seems a danger here of becoming know-it-alls, maybe even condescending – what an abhorrent sin that would be! So that's another major reason why we'll always need you with us as we witness. Guide us to those to whom you want us to testify about your love, and guide our actions and words. Let us point always to you, never to ourselves. I pray now for...

**Wednesday.** Nearing the end of his letter to Timothy and believing he was nearing the end of his ministry, Paul said, **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”** (2 Tim. 4:7,8)

Dear Lord, we pray that our lives will be clearly marked with the kind of meaning you want them to have. Don't let us be people who just react to what comes our way; cause us to be people of purpose, a purpose of your design. Put us in the race where we

run in faithfulness to you. We want to enjoy the race, to rejoice on our journey with you – such joys are rewards enough. But then to think about the possibility of even greater rewards – your appearing, an eternity with you – such treasures are beyond our human abilities to take in. Thank you for this call to discipleship! We lift your name on high, we love you, we praise you... I now pray also for...

**Thursday. “So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear... Don’t lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn’t know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God’s life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, ‘I am holy; you be holy.’”** (from 1 Pet. 1:13-16, *The Message*)

God, you gave Peter the right words to say about how to follow you, so help us all to do just that. We confess that we get lazy-minded and ignore your word and the other messages you give us from so many other resources: pulpits and hymn books and writings of other believers and the witness of the lives of others. Peter was right – we do know better. So take us unto yourself, God, so that obedience to you is a way of life, a life of energetic holiness. What a glorious picture! Put us firmly in it, we pray. I now pray for...

**Friday. “Now that you have cleaned up your lives by following the truth, love one another as if your lives depended on it. Your new life is not like your old life.”** (1 Pet. 1:22, *The Message*)

Thank you for this Scripture, Lord; it matches up with others that say loving each other is so important that it ranks right there next to your command that we love you first. And here I see that you’re telling us our lives as your people really do depend on whether we carry through in this loving. Help us to do it, we pray. Without you, we’ll no doubt slip back into the old habits we used to have – that’s when we so carefully picked out the people we wanted to love but so quickly rejected all those others who didn’t suit us. We’re not like that now and don’t want to be again; keep us moving firmly on our journeys. I also pray today for...

**Saturday. "Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like new born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (1 Pet. 2:1-3)**

I'm sure that all by myself I'll never be able to rid myself of sinning, Lord, so I'll always be asking for your help. Help me to get stronger in my faith. Help me to grow far beyond these kinds of sins – any such list of sins looks plain ludicrous and way out of place when I consider how life with you can be. But even as I build strength, keep me from thinking I can get along without you. Don't let my determination turn into independence. I would become my own stumbling block. You are the rock of my salvation; never let me forget it. Now I bring you these other prayers...