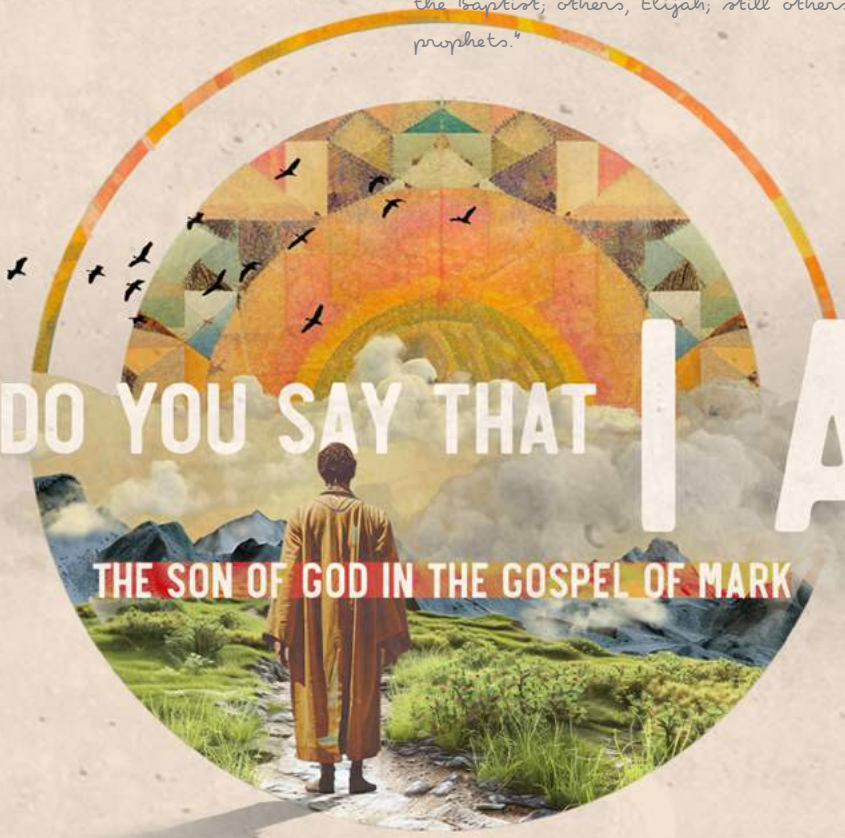
theFormed.life

"...on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets."



WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM

THE SON OF GOD IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah.""

DISCIPLINE: RHYTHM OF LIFE
COMPANION JOURNAL

Put the “formed” back in biblically “informed.”

Let’s take that next step together to be formed by God’s word, in God’s ways, with God’s people, every day.

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INTRODUCTION

In chapter eight of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus and his closest friends are on a journey and as they walk he asks them a vital question, "Who do you say that I am?"

This question has extraordinary relevance for every human who has ever lived and how each answers that question carries eternal significance.

You are invited to join us as we study the first eight chapters of the book of Mark, traveling with Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry all the way to that vital question he posed to his first followers. We hope you will rediscover him to be the one true Son of God.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The first three books of the New Testament are sometimes called the Synoptic Gospels because they each contain many of the same stories and some are presented in the same sequence. Sometimes we encounter differences in these gospels that can be confusing. The BibleProject video can help you navigate the different gospel accounts throughout this study.

Check out this BibleProject video about the Synoptic Gospels.

Rhythm of Life

The Gospel of Mark moves at an incredibly fast pace. In fact, Mark frequently uses the word "immediately." Studying a fast-paced gospel in our fast-paced world invites us to consider our "rhythm of life".

Our journey of discipleship with Christ should be one of attentive focus. Author John Mark Comer suggests that a rhythm of life discipline is an intentional schedule of practices and rhythms that create space for us to be with Jesus, become like him, and live in alignment with what matters most: God.

As we journey with Christ through the Gospel of Mark, we will create and practice a rhythm of life as a spiritual discipline. In essence, a deliberate organizing of daily activities and habits around a deepening of our relationship with Jesus, seeking for our lives to reflect his teachings and aligning our actions with his priorities.

Intent of Rhythm of Life

A rhythm of life is unique compared to other spiritual disciplines in that it is a framework for intentionally practicing the spiritual disciplines. Six different spiritual disciplines will be practiced each week. These disciplines are fasting, prayer, Scripture memorization, witnessing, community and a weekly sabbath. We will also reflect on how these disciplines impact and shape our walk with Jesus, creating our rhythm of life.

Over the weeks of this study these six different disciplines serve as examples of what it might look like to practice a spiritual discipline perpetually and habitually. Remember, the focus is not to check off each of the disciplines like a checkbox, but to develop a lasting and enriching rhythm of life.

As we practice and experience these disciplines, find the ones that bring refreshment and a deepening of your relationship with Jesus Christ. Do not feel the need to incorporate each and every one of them but curate your own rhythm that enriches your life with Christ, bringing the answer to his call, "Who do you say that I am?"

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets."

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him,

"You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27-29

Almighty God, in you are hidden all the treasures
of wisdom and knowledge. Open our eyes that we
may see the wonders of your word and give us
grace that we may clearly understand
and freely choose the way of
your wisdom, through
Christ our Lord.

How do I make the most of my journal?

01 | Sign up.

This journal is NOT *theFormed.life*, but it is a companion, a place to process what you're learning through prayer, sermons, songs, and confessions. It's a place to help you capture prayer requests and questions to discuss in groups. This journal is where you record your personal story in the journey, but the guide is still the Spirit of God through *theFormed.life*.

02 | Carry it with you.

Bring this journal to church gatherings on Sundays for your sermon notes, community group gatherings throughout the week, and your daily quiet time. If it's not with you, you won't use it.

03 | Use it daily.

Write something in it EVERY DAY. Even if you can only write, "God, where are you? You feel far," do that. Each day there is space to capture what God is saying and doing. God wants to hear you, and sometimes we need to see our own feelings, thoughts, and desires written out to process what God is doing in our lives.

Following along with *theFormed.life*

Here is the weekly flow:

Monday - Study of Mark/ Focus on Fasting

Tuesday - Matthew's Perspective/Focus on Prayer

Wednesday - Scripture Memorization

Thursday - Luke's Perspective/Focus on Witness

Friday - Old Testament Perspective/Focus on Community

Saturday - Rhythm of Life

Sunday - Sabbath

MONDAY ____/ ____ / ____

STUDY OF MARK

READ: **Mark 5:1–20**

How did the demon-possessed man change after his encounter with Jesus? Why do you think the people asked Jesus to leave after this miracle? What might cause you to respond similarly to them?

WATCH:

Watch the introduction to Lent video

theformed.life/lent

FOCUS ON FASTING:

Practice the discipline of fasting by abstaining from all food for 24 hours. Remember to listen to your mind and body as you gain a deeper sense of dependence on God. Do you notice or feel a drastic difference between fasting for two meals and fasting from all food? Has increasing the amount of fasting made you more aware of your need for God?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

There is no true comfort apart from enjoying you and being engaged in your service. You are everything, and any joy I have comes from you alone.

I am content with your will, whatever it may be. And if you ask me to decide anything for myself, I would still choose to trust it all to you, because you are infinitely wise and cannot make mistakes, unlike me.

I find joy in knowing that all things are in your hands, and it brings me peace to leave them there.

Then my prayers become pure praise, and all I can do is worship and bless you.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

MATTHEW'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Matthew 8:28–34**

Why do you think the people asked Jesus to leave after he healed the demon-possessed men? Does Jesus' power ever feel intimidating or disruptive? How can you invite him into those situations?

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS:

Check out this BibleProject video to help you navigate the different gospel accounts.

FOCUS ON PRAYER:

Kneel in prayer three times today. Bringing your body into submission by kneeling can bring your mind into submission as well. By involving your body, you may find it easier to focus on prayer, even in discomfort. Your prayers don't need to be long or perfectly crafted—even one minute is enough. Slow down three times today to simply be with Christ in prayer.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have,
out of love, willingly, not of necessity;
that I may come to you at any time,
to lay open my needs acceptably to you;
that my great sin lies in my not keeping
the savour of your ways;
that the remembrance of this truth is one way
to the sense of your presence;
that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed
by my own lusts for my own ends.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

WEDNESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

MEMORIZE:

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27–29

WRITE: To aid in memorization, write the verses out.

PRAY:

Thine honor is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that, by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
the guilty pardon,
the unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
unsearchable riches for the needy,
treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
fullness for the empty.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Luke 8:26–39**

How did Jesus transform the life of the demon-possessed man and what was the man's response? How can you share what God has done for you, just as the healed man did?

FOCUS ON WITNESS:

Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is an important part of our walk with him and should be done with those who do not know Christ as well as those who are in relationship with him.

Share a Scripture that is transforming you with someone you encounter.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying that God would bring people into your life to share Christ with. Pray these divine appointments would be obvious to you and for strength and fearlessness to share Christ.

Gracious God, just as your holy Apostle St. James left his father and everything he had without delay to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately gave his life for the sake of the gospel, help me also to let go of all worldly desires and be ready to follow your commandments. And when your will makes it my duty, may I willingly and courageously face even death rather than abandon or deny you.

Let me rejoice whenever I have the chance to prove my love by enduring hardship for your truth. May the firm belief in the glorious, eternal rewards you have prepared for those who lay down their lives for your sake strengthen me through any persecution. Grant this, O blessed Lord, who died and rose again for me, and now sit at the right hand of the Father, interceding for me and all your faithful followers. Amen.

– Liturgy of St. James

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

READ: Isaiah 65:1–5

In Mark 5:1–20 Jesus fulfills this Old Testament passage. How does God describe his people's response to him in this passage? Are you resisting God's call in any way? How can you respond differently?

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY:

Find time this weekend to deepen the relationships you have in your community. You might invite a friend over for dinner, have coffee with a fellow church member or a family member.

Deepen a relationship by making plans to hear the story of an older Christian.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for the people in your community. This can be your family, work community, church community, friends, or anyone in your life.

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

RHYTHM OF LIFE

READ: Acts 16:16–18

How does Paul's confrontation with the spirit of divination encourage you to face spiritual challenges boldly? In what ways can fasting and prayer help prepare you for spiritual warfare?

BUILD:
Take some time today to work on building your own rhythm of life on **page 62** of this journal.

FOCUS:

Reflect on the last nine weeks. In what ways has Scripture shaped your understanding of God's character? Think of ways to encourage others with Scripture.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

May I never be content with my current spiritual growth but instead add to my faith virtues like goodness, knowledge, self–control, godliness, kindness, and love.

May I never overlook what is essential to build and complete my Christian character.

Help me to cultivate what is wise, develop what is beautiful, bring honor to the gospel, represent Jesus well, and adapt myself to Your will.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

JESUS LIBERATES

READ: Mark 5:1–20

FOCUS ON SABBATH:

The Lord's Day is a day for rest. Prepare for the Sabbath by completing tasks ahead of time, allowing you to fully focus on God. Embrace the Sabbath as a gift, celebrating God's provision and resting in his care. Reflect on his goodness and find joy in trusting him with the coming week ahead. Spend the day communing with God through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with other believers during Sunday
worship services.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

This is Your day, the holy day of rest, the open door for worship, the reminder of Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the rest to come, the day when believers on earth and in heaven unite in praise.... Cover all my past Sundays with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may today bring deep growth in me.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Why do you think the gospels record so many stories about Jesus driving out demons?
- What explains the reaction of the people who plead with Jesus to leave? What are the ways that we might act similarly?
- What are some of the ways Jesus brings healing to the man with the unclean spirit? How was the man's life transformed? What do you imagine he felt during the experience?
- What keeps you from fully embracing the transformation offered by Jesus?

SERMON NOTES:

READ: **Mark 5:21–43**

How does God meet *both* Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood in their suffering? What do the attitudes of Jairus and the woman reveal about faith? How has Jesus met you in your desperation?

FOCUS ON FASTING:

Over the last nine weeks, we have practiced fasting by abstaining from food. However, it is also wise to fast from other activities or habits. What might have control over you, even in a small way? It could be social media, TV, your phone, etc. Identify the activity or habit and fast from it for 24 hours.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

There is no true comfort apart from enjoying you and being engaged in your service. You are everything, and any joy I have comes from you alone.

I am content with your will, whatever it may be. And if you ask me to decide anything for myself, I would still choose to trust it all to you, because you are infinitely wise and cannot make mistakes, unlike me.

I find joy in knowing that all things are in your hands, and it brings me peace to leave them there.

Then my prayers become pure praise, and all I can do is worship and bless you.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

MATTHEW'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: Matthew 9:18–26

How does Jesus' willingness to stop and care for individuals reflect his love for each of us? How can you reflect Jesus' compassion in your interactions with others this week?

FOCUS ON PRAYER:

Kneel in prayer three times today. Bringing your body into submission by kneeling can bring your mind into submission as well. By involving your body, you may find it easier to focus on prayer, even in discomfort. Your prayers don't need to be long or perfectly crafted—even one minute is enough. Slow down three times today to simply be with Christ in prayer.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have,
out of love, willingly, not of necessity;
that I may come to you at any time,
to lay open my needs acceptably to you;
that my great sin lies in my not keeping
the savour of your ways;
that the remembrance of this truth is one way
to the sense of your presence;
that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed
by my own lusts for my own ends.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

WEDNESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

MEMORIZE:

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27–29

WRITE: To aid in memorization, write the verses out.

PRAY:

Thine honor is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that, by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
the guilty pardon,
the unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
unsearchable riches for the needy,
treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
fullness for the empty.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: Luke 8:40–56

What does Jesus' response to the needs of those around him show you about his heart for those who seek him? How can you reach out in faith even when you feel hopeless?

FOCUS ON WITNESS:

Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is an important part of our walk with him and should be done with those who do not know Christ as well as those who are in relationship with him.

Invite someone to church this Sunday.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for five people by name to share Christ with. Pray for divine appointments with them and strength and fearlessness to share Christ.

Gracious God, just as your holy Apostle St. James left his father and everything he had without delay to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately gave his life for the sake of the gospel, help me also to let go of all worldly desires and be ready to follow your commandments. And when your will makes it my duty, may I willingly and courageously face even death rather than abandon or deny you.

Let me rejoice whenever I have the chance to prove my love by enduring hardship for your truth. May the firm belief in the glorious, eternal rewards you have prepared for those who lay down their lives for your sake strengthen me through any persecution. Grant this, O blessed Lord, who died and rose again for me, and now sit at the right hand of the Father, interceding for me and all your faithful followers. Amen.

– Liturgy of St. James

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

READ: 2 Kings 4:32–37

Like Jesus does in Mark 5:21–43, Elisha raises someone from the dead. How can you trust God for miracles in situations that seem hopeless? Pray for faith like Elisha, expecting God to move in the lives of those around you.

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY:

Find time this weekend to deepen the relationships you have in your community. You might invite a friend over for dinner, have coffee with a fellow church member or a family member.

Deepen a relationship by asking a family member how you can pray for them.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for the people in your community. This can be your family, work community, church community, friends, or anyone in your life.

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

READ: James 5:14–15

What role does faith play in your prayers for healing for yourself and those around you? How can community support and prayer lead to deeper spiritual healing?

BUILD:

Take some time today to work on building your own rhythm of life on **page 62** of this journal.

FOCUS:

Reflect on the last 10 weeks. How has witnessing to others changed or challenged your walk with Jesus? Write down how the discipline of witnessing might deepen your walk with Christ.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

May I never be content with my current spiritual growth but instead add to my faith virtues like goodness, knowledge, self–control, godliness, kindness, and love.

May I never overlook what is essential to build and complete my Christian character.

Help me to cultivate what is wise, develop what is beautiful, bring honor to the gospel, represent Jesus well, and adapt myself to Your will.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____ **JESUS RAISES**

READ: **Mark 5:21–43**

FOCUS ON SABBATH:

The Lord's Day is a day for rest. Practice sabbath by setting aside all work and focusing on God's presence. Use this time to slow down, reflect on the past week, and allow God to restore your heart and mind. Prioritize spiritual refreshment over productivity by communing with God through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with other believers during Sunday worship services.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

This is Your day, the holy day of rest, the open door for worship, the reminder of Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the rest to come, the day when believers on earth and in heaven unite in praise.... Cover all my past Sundays with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may today bring deep growth in me.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Put yourself in the shoes of Jairus and the woman suffering from bleeding. What do you imagine they felt throughout this experience?
- What stands out to you about Jesus' pace and posture in this story?
- Where are you experiencing deep, unmet longing? Have you experienced this in the past?
- What would it look like for you to trust Jesus with your desperation and/or unmet longings?

SERMON NOTES:

READ: **Mark 6:1–29**

How does being a disciple of Jesus give you purpose and direction? How do you respond to real or potential opposition as a follower of Jesus? How is that similar to or different from how Jesus responded and expected his disciples to respond to opposition and rejection?

FOCUS ON FASTING:

Practice the discipline of fasting by abstaining from social media for 24 hours. In what ways could fasting from social media help you recognize your need for God? Does fasting from social media lead you to act more Christ-like in your interactions with others?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

There is no true comfort apart from enjoying you and being engaged in your service. You are everything, and any joy I have comes from you alone.

I am content with your will, whatever it may be. And if you ask me to decide anything for myself, I would still choose to trust it all to you, because you are infinitely wise and cannot make mistakes, unlike me.

I find joy in knowing that all things are in your hands, and it brings me peace to leave them there.

Then my prayers become pure praise, and all I can do is worship and bless you.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

TUESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

MATTHEW'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Matthew 13:53–58; 14:1–12**

We know from the gospels that the lack of healing is not evidence of lack of faith (Mark 9:14–29). How did lack of faith limit Jesus' work in his hometown? Are you limiting God's work in your life by unbelief?

FOCUS ON PRAYER:

Kneel in prayer three times today. Bringing your body into submission by kneeling can bring your mind into submission as well. By involving your body, you may find it easier to focus on prayer, even in discomfort. Your prayers don't need to be long or perfectly crafted—even one minute is enough. Slow down three times today to simply be with Christ in prayer.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have,
out of love, willingly, not of necessity;
that I may come to you at any time,
to lay open my needs acceptably to you;
that my great sin lies in my not keeping
the savour of your ways;
that the remembrance of this truth is one way
to the sense of your presence;
that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed
by my own lusts for my own ends.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

WEDNESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

MEMORIZE:

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27–29

WRITE: To aid in memorization, write the verses out.

PRAY:

Thine honor is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that, by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
the guilty pardon,
the unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
unsearchable riches for the needy,
treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
fullness for the empty.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Luke 4:16–30; 9:1–9**

How do Jesus' instructions to the Twelve inform the way we should carry out our witness? How can you respond to rejection of the gospel?

FOCUS ON WITNESS:

Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is an important part of our walk with him and should be done with those who do not know Christ as well as those who are in relationship with him.

Offer a stranger practical help (groceries, a ride, assistance with chores, etc.).

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying that God would bring people into your life to share Christ with. Pray these divine appointments would be obvious to you and for strength and fearlessness to share Christ.

Gracious God, just as your holy Apostle St. James left his father and everything he had without delay to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately gave his life for the sake of the gospel, help me also to let go of all worldly desires and be ready to follow your commandments. And when your will makes it my duty, may I willingly and courageously face even death rather than abandon or deny you.

Let me rejoice whenever I have the chance to prove my love by enduring hardship for your truth. May the firm belief in the glorious, eternal rewards you have prepared for those who lay down their lives for your sake strengthen me through any persecution. Grant this, O blessed Lord, who died and rose again for me, and now sit at the right hand of the Father, interceding for me and all your faithful followers. Amen.

– Liturgy of St. James

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

READ: Isaiah 61:1–3

This Old Testament passage speaks to the ministry of the coming Messiah. Do you need the "festive oil" instead of mourning? How can you bring this message of hope to those in your community who are struggling?

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY:

Find time this weekend to deepen the relationships you have in your community. You might invite a friend over for dinner, have coffee with a fellow church member or a family member.

Deepen a relationship by making plans to have dinner with a friend.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for the people in your community. This can be your family, work community, church community, friends, or anyone in your life.

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

SATURDAY ____/____/____

RHYTHM OF LIFE

READ: **2 Timothy 3:10–17**

How does Paul's emphasis on Scripture as "God-breathed" encourage you to prioritize Bible reading? How can you develop a rhythm of life with Scripture as central to spiritual growth?

BUILD:

Take some time today to work on building your own rhythm of life on **page 62** of this journal.

FOCUS:

Reflect on the last 11 weeks. What impact have the disciplines had on your relationships with others? Ask trusted friends for insight on how to deepen your relationships.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

May I never be content with my current spiritual growth but instead add to my faith virtues like goodness, knowledge, self–control, godliness, kindness, and love.

May I never overlook what is essential to build and complete my Christian character.

Help me to cultivate what is wise, develop what is beautiful, bring honor to the gospel, represent Jesus well, and adapt myself to Your will.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

READ: Mark 6:1–29

FOCUS ON SABBATH:
The Lord's Day is a day for rest. To sabbath effectively, disconnect from distractions and embrace an unhurried pace. Engage in restful activities that draw you closer to God, such as quiet reflection, prayer, or time with loved ones. Allow this time to refocus your heart on God's peace, and commune with him through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with other believers during Sunday worship services.

PRAY:
O Lord, my God,

This is Your day, the holy day of rest, the open door for worship, the reminder of Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the rest to come, the day when believers on earth and in heaven unite in praise.... Cover all my past Sundays with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may today bring deep growth in me.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Think about a time you experienced opposition, rejection, or disapproval from others. How did that make you feel? How did you respond?
- How does Jesus respond to rejection from his hometown? Why do you think he did that?
- How does he expect his followers to respond to opposition and persecution?
- What would need to be true for you to have a similar response?

SERMON NOTES:

READ: **Mark 6:30–56**

Imagine yourself in the place of the disciples in this story. What does Jesus' miracle of feeding the 5,000 teach you about relying on him for provision?

FOCUS ON FASTING:

Practice the discipline of fasting by abstaining from television (streaming services, movies, news, etc.) for 24 hours. Does television draw you closer to God, or nudge you away from God? How might abstaining from television affect your walk with Jesus today?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

There is no true comfort apart from enjoying you and being engaged in your service. You are everything, and any joy I have comes from you alone.

I am content with your will, whatever it may be. And if you ask me to decide anything for myself, I would still choose to trust it all to you, because you are infinitely wise and cannot make mistakes, unlike me.

I find joy in knowing that all things are in your hands, and it brings me peace to leave them there.

Then my prayers become pure praise, and all I can do is worship and bless you.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

MATTHEW'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: Matthew 14:13–36

How does Peter's walking on water show both faith and human frailty? What is a step of faith God is calling you to take, even if you're scared?

FOCUS ON PRAYER:

Kneel in prayer three times today. Bringing your body into submission by kneeling can bring your mind into submission as well. By involving your body, you may find it easier to focus on prayer, even in discomfort. Your prayers don't need to be long or perfectly crafted—even one minute is enough. Slow down three times today to simply be with Christ in prayer.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have,
out of love, willingly, not of necessity;
that I may come to you at any time,
to lay open my needs acceptably to you;
that my great sin lies in my not keeping
the savour of your ways;
that the remembrance of this truth is one way
to the sense of your presence;
that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed
by my own lusts for my own ends.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

WEDNESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

MEMORIZE:

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27–29

WRITE: To aid in memorization, write the verses out.

PRAY:

Thine honor is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that, by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
the guilty pardon,
the unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
unsearchable riches for the needy,
treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
fullness for the empty.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Luke 9:10–17**

How does Jesus' instruction to the disciples challenge your role in meeting the needs of others? How can you trust God for provision this week, especially in situations that seem impossible?

FOCUS ON WITNESS:

Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is an important part of our walk with him and should be done with those who do not know Christ as well as those who are in relationship with him.

Offer to listen to someone's story.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for five people by name to share Christ with. Pray for divine appointments with them and strength and fearlessness to share Christ.

Gracious God, just as your holy Apostle St. James left his father and everything he had without delay to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately gave his life for the sake of the gospel, help me also to let go of all worldly desires and be ready to follow your commandments. And when your will makes it my duty, may I willingly and courageously face even death rather than abandon or deny you.

Let me rejoice whenever I have the chance to prove my love by enduring hardship for your truth. May the firm belief in the glorious, eternal rewards you have prepared for those who lay down their lives for your sake strengthen me through any persecution. Grant this, O blessed Lord, who died and rose again for me, and now sit at the right hand of the Father, interceding for me and all your faithful followers. Amen.

– Liturgy of St. James

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

READ: Psalm 107:29–32

In Mark 6:31–56 Jesus fulfills this Old Testament passage. How does God's power over creation bring peace in times of distress? How can you remind yourself of God's sovereignty when you face challenges?

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY:

Find time this weekend to deepen the relationships you have in your community. You might invite a friend over for dinner, have coffee with a fellow church member or a family member.

Deepen a relationship by making plans to have coffee with a fellow church member you don't know very well.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for the people in your community. This can be your family, work community, church community, friends, or anyone in your life.

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

SATURDAY ____/____/____

RHYTHM OF LIFE

READ: John 6:35–40

Jesus declares that he is the bread of life. How can fasting help you depend more fully on Jesus as spiritual sustenance? What does it mean to you that Jesus will never cast out those who come to him?

BUILD:
Take some time today to work on building your own rhythm of life on **page 62** of this journal.

FOCUS:

Reflect on the last 12 weeks. How has the discipline of sabbath helped you hear God's voice more clearly? Write down some experiences of hearing God's voice.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

May I never be content with my current spiritual growth but instead add to my faith virtues like goodness, knowledge, self–control, godliness, kindness, and love.

May I never overlook what is essential to build and complete my Christian character.

Help me to cultivate what is wise, develop what is beautiful, bring honor to the gospel, represent Jesus well, and adapt myself to Your will.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

JESUS PROVIDES

READ: Mark 6:30–56

FOCUS ON SABBATH:

The Lord's Day is a day for rest. Prepare for the Sabbath by completing tasks ahead of time, allowing you to fully focus on God. Embrace the Sabbath as a gift, celebrating God's provision and resting in his care. Reflect on his goodness and find joy in trusting him with the coming week ahead. Spend the day communing with God through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with other believers during Sunday worship services.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

This is Your day, the holy day of rest, the open door for worship, the reminder of Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the rest to come, the day when believers on earth and in heaven unite in praise.... Cover all my past Sundays with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may today bring deep growth in me.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Imagine what it would have been like for Jesus' disciples to be asked to feed 5,000 men and to see Jesus walking on the water. How do you think you would feel? How would you respond?
- What do you think Mark is trying to reveal about Jesus' identity from these stories?
- Is Jesus asking you to trust him for provision and direction in ways that are difficult for you? What are those areas and what would it look like to follow him by trusting?

SERMON NOTES:

READ: **Mark 7:1–37**

How does Jesus' healing of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter expand our understanding of God's grace? Do you ever feel like an outsider?

FOCUS ON FASTING:

Practice the discipline of fasting by abstaining from the news for 24 hours. If you don't regularly view the news, fast from social media. In what ways might fasting from news or social media positively impact your walk with Jesus today?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

There is no true comfort apart from enjoying you and being engaged in your service. You are everything, and any joy I have comes from you alone.

I am content with your will, whatever it may be. And if you ask me to decide anything for myself, I would still choose to trust it all to you, because you are infinitely wise and cannot make mistakes, unlike me.

I find joy in knowing that all things are in your hands, and it brings me peace to leave them there.

Then my prayers become pure praise, and all I can do is worship and bless you.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

MATTHEW'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Matthew 15:1–31**

How does Jesus confront the Pharisees about their traditions, and what does this teach you about authentic worship? How can you ensure your own spiritual practices are centered on God rather than on human traditions?

FOCUS ON PRAYER:

Kneel in prayer three times today. Bringing your body into submission by kneeling can bring your mind into submission as well. By involving your body, you may find it easier to focus on prayer, even in discomfort. Your prayers don't need to be long or perfectly crafted—even one minute is enough. Slow down three times today to simply be with Christ in prayer.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have,
out of love, willingly, not of necessity;
that I may come to you at any time,
to lay open my needs acceptably to you;
that my great sin lies in my not keeping
the savour of your ways;
that the remembrance of this truth is one way
to the sense of your presence;
that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed
by my own lusts for my own ends.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

WEDNESDAY ___/___/___

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

MEMORIZE:

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27–29

WRITE: To aid in memorization, write the verses out.

PRAY:

Thine honor is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that, by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
the guilty pardon,
the unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
unsearchable riches for the needy,
treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
fullness for the empty.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Luke 7:21–22**

Do the miracles of Jesus reassure you about who he is? How can you reflect the love and compassion of Jesus in your interactions with others?

FOCUS ON WITNESS:

Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is an important part of our walk with him and should be done with those who do not know Christ as well as those who are in relationship with him.

Plan to have a meal with someone who does not know Christ.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying that God would bring people into your life to share Christ with. Pray these divine appointments would be obvious to you and for strength and fearlessness to share Christ.

Gracious God, just as your holy Apostle St. James left his father and everything he had without delay to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately gave his life for the sake of the gospel, help me also to let go of all worldly desires and be ready to follow your commandments. And when your will makes it my duty, may I willingly and courageously face even death rather than abandon or deny you.

Let me rejoice whenever I have the chance to prove my love by enduring hardship for your truth. May the firm belief in the glorious, eternal rewards you have prepared for those who lay down their lives for your sake strengthen me through any persecution. Grant this, O blessed Lord, who died and rose again for me, and now sit at the right hand of the Father, interceding for me and all your faithful followers. Amen.

– Liturgy of St. James

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

READ: Isaiah 19:11–14

Isaiah is warning Israel to trust God rather than Egypt. How does this passage remind you of the importance of seeking godly wisdom rather than relying on your own understanding? How can you commit to seeking God's wisdom in your decisions?

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY:

Find time this weekend to deepen the relationships you have in your community. You might invite a friend over for dinner, have coffee with a fellow church member or a family member.

Deepen a relationship by making plans to hear the story of an older Christian.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for the people in your community. This can be your family, work community, church community, friends, or anyone in your life.

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

READ: Acts 10:34–48

How does the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles demonstrate God's inclusion of all people in his plan of salvation? How does this passage challenge you to share the gospel across cultural or social boundaries?

BUILD:
Take some time today to work on building your own rhythm of life on **page 62** of this journal.

FOCUS:

Reflect on the last 13 weeks. Do you find it easier to depend on God for guidance or strength? Write down a list of disciplines that have helped you rely more on God.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

May I never be content with my current spiritual growth but instead add to my faith virtues like goodness, knowledge, self–control, godliness, kindness, and love.

May I never overlook what is essential to build and complete my Christian character.

Help me to cultivate what is wise, develop what is beautiful, bring honor to the gospel, represent Jesus well, and adapt myself to Your will.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

JESUS RECEIVES

READ: **Mark 7:1–37**

FOCUS ON SABBATH:

The Lord's Day is a day for rest. Practice sabbath by setting aside all work and focusing on God's presence. Use this time to slow down, reflect on the past week, and allow God to restore your heart and mind. Prioritize spiritual refreshment over productivity by communing with God through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with other believers during Sunday worship services.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

This is Your day, the holy day of rest, the open door for worship, the reminder of Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the rest to come, the day when believers on earth and in heaven unite in praise.... Cover all my past Sundays with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may today bring deep growth in me.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- In what ways do we "abandon the command of God to hold on to human tradition (7:8)"?
- What do we learn about Jesus from his debate with the Pharisees?
- Why does Jesus initially seem to respond so harshly to the Syrophoenician woman? How might she have felt?
- Contrast Mark's portrayal of the Pharisees versus the Syrophoenician woman. How is the way Jesus deals with "outsiders" radically different from what's normal? What would it look like for you to act similarly?

SERMON NOTES:

READ: **Mark 8:1–26**

Why might the disciples struggle to understand Jesus' mission, even after seeing his miracles? Do you need Jesus to open your eyes to see his work more clearly?

FOCUS ON FASTING:

Practice the discipline of fasting by abstaining from your phone for 24 hours. If your phone is essential today, fast by *only* using it when absolutely necessary. Physically distance yourself from your phone for as long as you can. Consider how it feels to use the phone only when necessary. How does this affect your dependence on God?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

There is no true comfort apart from enjoying you and being engaged in your service. You are everything, and any joy I have comes from you alone.

I am content with your will, whatever it may be. And if you ask me to decide anything for myself, I would still choose to trust it all to you, because you are infinitely wise and cannot make mistakes, unlike me.

I find joy in knowing that all things are in your hands, and it brings me peace to leave them there.

Then my prayers become pure praise, and all I can do is worship and bless you.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

MATTHEW'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Matthew 15:32–16:12**

How can you guard yourself against the "yeast" of unhealthy teachings or attitudes? Has God provided for you recently and how can you respond with gratitude and trust?

FOCUS ON PRAYER:

Kneel in prayer three times today. Bringing your body into submission by kneeling can bring your mind into submission as well. By involving your body, you may find it easier to focus on prayer, even in discomfort. Your prayers don't need to be long or perfectly crafted—even one minute is enough. Slow down three times today to simply be with Christ in prayer.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have,
out of love, willingly, not of necessity;
that I may come to you at any time,
to lay open my needs acceptably to you;
that my great sin lies in my not keeping
the savour of your ways;
that the remembrance of this truth is one way
to the sense of your presence;
that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed
by my own lusts for my own ends.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

WEDNESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

MEMORIZE:

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27–29

WRITE: To aid in memorization, write the verses out.

PRAY:

Thine honor is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that, by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
the guilty pardon,
the unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
unsearchable riches for the needy,
treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
fullness for the empty.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: Luke 18:35–43

How did Bartimaeus' persistent call to Jesus result in his healing? What obstacles do you face when you call out to Jesus and how can you overcome them?

FOCUS ON WITNESS:

Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is an important part of our walk with him and should be done with those who do not know Christ as well as those who are in relationship with him.

Take time to pray *with* someone who does not know Christ.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for five people by name to share Christ with. Pray for divine appointments with them and strength and fearlessness to share Christ.

Gracious God, just as your holy Apostle St. James left his father and everything he had without delay to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately gave his life for the sake of the gospel, help me also to let go of all worldly desires and be ready to follow your commandments. And when your will makes it my duty, may I willingly and courageously face even death rather than abandon or deny you.

Let me rejoice whenever I have the chance to prove my love by enduring hardship for your truth. May the firm belief in the glorious, eternal rewards you have prepared for those who lay down their lives for your sake strengthen me through any persecution. Grant this, O blessed Lord, who died and rose again for me, and now sit at the right hand of the Father, interceding for me and all your faithful followers. Amen.

– Liturgy of St. James

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

READ: 2 Kings 4:42–44

In Mark 8:1–10 Jesus performs a miracle similar to Elisha. In what ways do you need to trust God to multiply what you have? How can you share the resources God has given you to bless others, even if they seem small?

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY:

Find time this weekend to deepen the relationships you have in your community. You might invite a friend over for dinner, have coffee with a fellow church member or a family member.

Deepen a relationship by asking a family member how you can pray for them.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for the people in your community. This can be your family, work community, church community, friends, or anyone in your life.

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

SATURDAY ____/____/____

RHYTHM OF LIFE

READ: John 6:1–15

How does the miracle of feeding the 5,000 encourage you to trust God to provide for your needs? How can the practice of community help you share and multiply blessings with others?

BUILD:

Take some time today to work on building your own rhythm of life on **page 62** of this journal.

FOCUS:

Reflect on the last 14 weeks. How has fasting or prayer affected your awareness of God's presence? What are some disciplines you want to keep in your rhythm of life to become more aware of God's presence?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

May I never be content with my current spiritual growth but instead add to my faith virtues like goodness, knowledge, self–control, godliness, kindness, and love.

May I never overlook what is essential to build and complete my Christian character.

Help me to cultivate what is wise, develop what is beautiful, bring honor to the gospel, represent Jesus well, and adapt myself to Your will.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

JESUS CHALLENGES

READ: **Mark 8:1–26**

FOCUS ON SABBATH:

The Lord's Day is a day for rest. To sabbath effectively, disconnect from distractions and embrace an unhurried pace. Engage in restful activities that draw you closer to God, such as quiet reflection, prayer, or time with loved ones. Allow this time to refocus your heart on God's peace, and commune with him through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with other believers during Sunday worship services.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

This is Your day, the holy day of rest, the open door for worship, the reminder of Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the rest to come, the day when believers on earth and in heaven unite in praise.... Cover all my past Sundays with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may today bring deep growth in me.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Why do you think Mark records another miraculous feeding account in addition to the earlier one (Mark 6:30–44)? Hint: What conversation does this miracle introduce?
- Why do you think Mark records Jesus healing this blind man in stages (i.e. not fully healed all at once)?
- What is keeping you from seeing Jesus as he truly is? How do we follow Jesus faithfully with our limited understanding?

SERMON NOTES:

READ: **Mark 8:27–9:1**

What does Jesus' call to take up the cross mean for you? How does Jesus' statement about losing one's life for his sake challenge your priorities?

FOCUS ON FASTING:

Practice the discipline of fasting by abstaining from food for 24 hours. Remember to listen to your mind and body as you gain a deeper sense of dependence on God. How does fasting from food compare to fasting from non-food items (social media, TV, phones, the news)? Does a food fast have more or less impact on your walk with Jesus? How does fasting from food positively affect your walk with Jesus?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

There is no true comfort apart from enjoying you and being engaged in your service. You are everything, and any joy I have comes from you alone.

I am content with your will, whatever it may be. And if you ask me to decide anything for myself, I would still choose to trust it all to you, because you are infinitely wise and cannot make mistakes, unlike me.

I find joy in knowing that all things are in your hands, and it brings me peace to leave them there.

Then my prayers become pure praise, and all I can do is worship and bless you.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

MATTHEW'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: Matthew 16:13–28

What does Jesus mean by "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross"? How can you practice self-denial this week as part of your discipleship?

FOCUS ON PRAYER:

Kneel in prayer three times today. Bringing your body into submission by kneeling can bring your mind into submission as well. By involving your body, you may find it easier to focus on prayer, even in discomfort. Your prayers don't need to be long or perfectly crafted—even one minute is enough. Slow down three times today to simply be with Christ in prayer.

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have,
out of love, willingly, not of necessity;
that I may come to you at any time,
to lay open my needs acceptably to you;
that my great sin lies in my not keeping
the savour of your ways;
that the remembrance of this truth is one way
to the sense of your presence;
that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed
by my own lusts for my own ends.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

WEDNESDAY ___/___/___

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

MEMORIZE:

Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:27–29

WRITE: To aid in memorization, write the verses out.

PRAY:

Thine honor is secured and displayed even in my escape from thy threats,
and that, by means of Jesus
in whom mercy and truth meet together,
and righteousness and peace kiss each other.
In him the enslaved find redemption,
the guilty pardon,
the unholy renovation;
In him are everlasting strength for the weak,
unsearchable riches for the needy,
treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant,
fullness for the empty.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Luke 9:18–27**

What is the significance of Peter's confession about Jesus' identity? What does it mean for you to take up your cross and follow Jesus daily?

FOCUS ON WITNESS:

Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is an important part of our walk with him and should be done with those who do not know Christ as well as those who are in relationship with him.

Tell someone who does not know Christ about his resurrection.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying that God would bring people into your life to share Christ with. Pray these divine appointments would be obvious to you and for strength and fearlessness to share Christ.

Gracious God, just as your holy Apostle St. James left his father and everything he had without delay to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately gave his life for the sake of the gospel, help me also to let go of all worldly desires and be ready to follow your commandments. And when your will makes it my duty, may I willingly and courageously face even death rather than abandon or deny you.

Let me rejoice whenever I have the chance to prove my love by enduring hardship for your truth. May the firm belief in the glorious, eternal rewards you have prepared for those who lay down their lives for your sake strengthen me through any persecution. Grant this, O blessed Lord, who died and rose again for me, and now sit at the right hand of the Father, interceding for me and all your faithful followers. Amen.

– Liturgy of St. James

OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

READ: **Daniel 7:13–14**

What does Daniel's vision of "one like a son of man" reveal about the coming Messiah? How does this vision of Christ's authority encourage you?

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY:

Find time this weekend to deepen the relationships you have in your community. You might invite a friend over for dinner, have coffee with a fellow church member or a family member.

Deepen a relationship by making plans to hear the story of a younger Christian.

PRAY:

Spend five minutes praying for the people in your community. This can be your family, work community, church community, friends, or anyone in your life.

"But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

RHYTHM OF LIFE

READ: Romans 8:31–39; Matthew 11:28–30

How does the assurance that nothing can separate us from the love of God give you confidence in your walk with Christ? Read Matthew 11:28–30 in The Message. How can this promise encourage you to persevere and "learn the unforced rhythms of grace," knowing that God is for you?

BUILD:
Take some time today to work on building your own rhythm of life on **page 62** of this journal.

FOCUS:

Reflect on the last 15 weeks. What is one way you plan to continue each discipline in the coming week?

PRAY:

O Lord, my God,

May I never be content with my current spiritual growth but instead add to my faith virtues like goodness, knowledge, self–control, godliness, kindness, and love.

May I never overlook what is essential to build and complete my Christian character.

Help me to cultivate what is wise, develop what is beautiful, bring honor to the gospel, represent Jesus well, and adapt myself to Your will.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____ **JESUS INVITES**

READ: **Mark 8:27–9:1**

FOCUS ON SABBATH:
The Lord's Day is a day for rest. Prepare for the Sabbath by completing tasks ahead of time, allowing you to fully focus on God. Embrace the Sabbath as a gift, celebrating God's provision and resting in his care. Reflect on his goodness and find joy in trusting him with the coming week. Spend the day communing with God through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with other believers during Sunday worship services.

PRAY:
O Lord, my God,

This is Your day, the holy day of rest, the open door for worship, the reminder of Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the rest to come, the day when believers on earth and in heaven unite in praise.... Cover all my past Sundays with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may today bring deep growth in me.

– Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*, editor Arthur Bennett

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- What are common views of Jesus' identity in our world today? Which of these are you tempted to act as if they were true?
- Put yourself in Peter's place in this story. Why do you think Peter felt the need to rebuke Jesus for predicting his own death? How do you think Peter felt when he correctly identified Jesus but moments later was compared with Satan by Jesus?
- Why was Jesus' response to Peter (v. 33) so harsh?
- What does it look like for you to take up your cross like Jesus does?

SERMON NOTES:

START WITH A FOUNDATION

DEEPENED BY:

Reflect on the activities and habits that have drawn you closer to Jesus and deepened your relationship with him. What specific practices help you connect with God regularly? Why do these particular habits strengthen your faith and bring you closer to Jesus? Consider their impact on your spiritual growth.

EXAMPLES: *prayer, morning walks, conversations with others, regular devotional time*

DAMPENED BY

Reflect on the distractions, habits, or attitudes that pull you away from Jesus. How do these affect your relationship with him, making you feel distant? Consider why these specific activities or habits hinder your spiritual growth and dampen your walk with God.

EXAMPLES: *scrolling through social media, unstructured recreational time, too much television*

REFLECTION

Reflect on your current spiritual rhythm. Consider what's going well, what needs to change, and where you want to grow. How can you reshape your rhythm to focus on practices that deepen your faith and avoid those that hinder it? What's one area you feel called to improve in honoring God?

DOWNLOAD:
Visit the website to see resources and previous posts.
theFormed.life/rhythm ▸

Rhythm of Life Resources

CORE VALUES & VITAL BEHAVIORS:

Identify 2–3 core values that define your life, faith, and personality (compassion, discipline, honesty, integrity, generosity, optimism, gratitude, etc.). These values shape your decisions, actions, and goals. For each value, determine specific behaviors you can practice consistently to live in alignment with these principles. What vital actions help you embody these core values in your daily life?

DAILY:

Identify 2–5 daily spiritual practices you want to incorporate into your routine. These habits should help deepen your relationship with God and keep you grounded. Why are these particular practices important for your spiritual growth and well-being? Consider how they will strengthen your faith each day.

EXAMPLES: *regular Bible reading, prayer for others*

WEEKLY:

Now think about the spiritual disciplines or practices that you want to engage in on a weekly basis. These might take a little more time and planning but are important for your ongoing spiritual development. What are 2–5 spiritual practices that you want to engage in weekly?

EXAMPLES: *building relationships, Scripture memorization*

MONTHLY/SEASONALLY:

Identify 2–3 spiritual practices you want to engage in monthly or seasonally. These intentional disciplines require time for reflection, renewal, and focus. Consider practices like extended prayer, solitude, or fasting. How can these practices help you deepen your faith and bring spiritual growth during key moments throughout the year?

CORE VALUES & VITAL BEHAVIORS:

VALUE	BEHAVIOR
EXAMPLE: Honesty	being truthful and sincere in all communication

DAILY HABITS	
WEEKLY HABITS	
MONTHLY / SEASONALLY	

Download a copy of this chart at *theFormed.life/rhythm* ▶

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an Evangelical Free Church

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